

First Day of Preschool: An Open Letter

Welcome to the _____ Preschool! The first day of school is an exciting milestone in your child's life. Your child is embarking on a journey that will lead them on many roads of discovery and learning. As wonderful as this new experience may be, it can also be quite stressful for the young child. New situations and change can, at times, be unsettling for all of us. For many children this may be their first experience of separation from parents or care givers at home. It is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious the first day of school.

We have provided a few suggestions for assisting your child during this time. Remember the preschool staff will be available to provide support and assistance; making your child's first school days happy days.

- Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect. Answer all questions directly and honestly.
- Convey a positive attitude. Young children are aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure the child that school can be a fun and exciting place.
- Establish a routine involving both the night before a school day as well as morning preparation. Rituals and routines will add predictability and are comforting in unfamiliar situations.
- Bring something from home. This is acceptable and often reassuring in helping the child with the initial adjustment to school. This item may be a treasured blankie or even a photo from home.
- Clearly state to your child where you will be and when you will return. It may also be helpful to discuss what will happen when you are reunited.
- Maintain a clear good-bye routine. This may include warning the child you are leaving in 3 minutes, a kiss and hug, or a wave from the window. Once you tell your child you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the good-bye with, "Ok just one more kiss, and then I really have to go" tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it. Avoid sneaking out, as this seems to encourage children to become less trusting and makes the second day of school even harder.

Again, please know we are here to help make the first day of school a happy transition and we look forward to an exciting and fun year. Welcome!

Sincerely,