

Transitioning to Kindergarten



Children come to school at many different levels. Some will know how to count to 30 or write and others won't. These skills will be practised and mastered throughout the school year. And you can help by continuing to reinforce them at home. Don't worry about grades or reading levels in kindergarten. Use them as a guide for feedback on what areas to work on at home, rather than letting them stress you out! What's important is that your child is happy and is enjoying school, that's a real achievement. The rest will come later. Focus instead on explaining the basic school rules. Like putting up their hand to ask a question, asking to go the toilet, washing their hands, opening their lunch box, listening quietly, and putting their things away (so they don't misplace everything!). There's a helpful '[Getting Ready for School](#)' handbook, produced by the NSW Department of Education, with a good checklist. You can also help your child prepare emotionally by reading a children's book about starting school. You could try [Starting school](#) by Janet and Allan Ahlberg, or [Starting school](#) by Jane Godwin and Anna Walker.

2 Learn to Let Go

The first day at school will be emotional for you and your child. Prepare some tissues and have something planned for after drop off (if you're not rushing to work). Maybe a brunch with friends who have kids starting kindy too. Go see a movie or a swim. Anything! It'll give you purpose and you'll be less occupied with thinking "what are they doing at school?"



Once your child has passed the classroom step, you need to learn to let go. A little bit like the first day at day care, but less tears, at least from your child. This is the place where your child will learn to make new friends, buy their own lunch from the canteen, put their hand up when they didn't understand something in class and look after their own belongings, among many other things. Remember, that school not only teaches them academically but helps prepare them for adult life. Photo credit: Marcia Liss



3 But Keep an Eye Out too

You are probably not going to get much elaborate feedback from your child about school. A lot of things happen and there's a lot for them to take in over the first days (weeks/ months). Don't let it discourage you if all you get from them is "I can't remember" or "Uh, I don't know." Ask specific questions about the activities or their peers.

Another good thing is to have open communication with their teacher. But remember not to flood them with questions early in the morning before class. Best time is at pick up in the afternoon. Or even better organise a specific time with the teacher. Remember you will likely have two teacher interviews per year, where more adequate feedback can be given. Plus give the teacher some time to get to know your child. You can also learn the names of other parents from your child's class, even if you're busy rushing off to work. Get to know your child's friends. Ask who talks the loudest, who is the quietest, who is the most helpful, who brings what for lunch. Find out what makes them feel nervous or unsure – The big kids? The big halls? Losing their library book? – because something undoubtedly will.



4 Your Child is Going to be Tired

Starting school is a big change for your child (and you)! And they will likely be very exhausted, and a bit grumpy. Make sure they are going to bed early and keep the first few weekends fairly quiet. Plus, consider putting their after-

school activities on hold while they settle in.

5 Make Lunch Easy to Eat



There are going to be a LOT of distractions at lunch time so make their lunch as easy and quick to eat as possible. This will improve the chances of them eating it and leave more time for play. Which in turn will improve their concentration in the afternoon and reduce your stress levels worrying about whether they have eaten or not. Go with bite size pieces where possible and things they can easily open. <https://healthylunchbox.com.au/builder/>

6 Reduce the Morning Stress as Much as Possible

There will be a lot going on in the mornings before school so make it as easy as possible for yourself and them, by preparing as much as you can the day/ weekend before. Like having lunch made, school uniform ready and bag packed.

7 Their Belongings

Labelling their uniforms, lunch boxes, hats, bottles, is a must! Write their name down and maybe even the class number. You will be amazed how easy these things get forgotten somewhere on the school grounds. Their heads are still in the clouds and sometimes even year 6 kids forget their jacket or lunch box at school. Also, don't let them bring toys to school, especially their favourite ones.



Photo credit: Organised Housewife

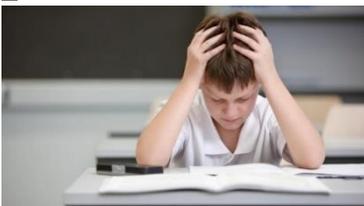
8 Get Involved at School

Volunteering at school, in whatever capacity your family can manage, has huge benefits. It will help with becoming part of the school community and good chance for you to learn more about the place where your child spends six hours without you. Plus, your child seeing you active at school is actually a real buzz for them.

From the first week of school your child's backpack will be flooded regularly with notes, requests for money and supplies. You will be shocked, and then amazed, by the efforts that parents like yourself put into making schools better places for teachers and children. Your contribution makes the entire school a better place for all its children.



9 Difficulties at School



If your child is having difficulty with another child in their class or outside, talk it over with their teacher first. The teacher knows both children and understands their classroom dynamic and may have a solution to try first. Only if you don't see any resolution, ask to speak with the Principal or the Assistant Principal.

Photo credit: Essential Kids

10 Drop Offs and Pick Ups

To help your child settle into the school day better, try getting there well before the bell. Pick them up on time, particularly in the beginning, as this helps them feel more secure. If you're early for pick-up, it gives you a chance to meet other parents, and makes organising play dates easier.

