

There may be certain concrete skills that your child's kindergarten will want them to have. This can vary depending on the school. When registering your child for kindergarten, ask the school about the skills they would like your child to have at the start of kindergarten. If there are certain skills that your child needs to work on, take the time before school starts to practice, and make sure that your child care provider is aware as well. They can partner with you to help your child gain the necessary skills before they head off to kindergarten!

How You Can Help with the Kindergarten Transition

Your work to ensure a smooth transition starts well before the first day of school. The way that you talk about school and the emotions you display will help your child learn how to think about this change. Here are some things that you can do to prepare your child for kindergarten success:

- ❑ The best thing you can do is to be positive and to help your child develop a love for learning and an eagerness to try new things! Your child is guided by things you say and do and by the feelings you show. If your child can tell that you are happy and excited about kindergarten, they will follow your lead.
- ❑ Talk with your child about the new places, people and things they will experience in kindergarten. If possible, find out about the routine in the classroom that your child will be joining, and tell them what kinds of activities and transitions may take place throughout the day.
- ❑ Read books about starting a new school. Encourage your child to express feelings about starting a new school by telling stories, drawing pictures or asking questions.

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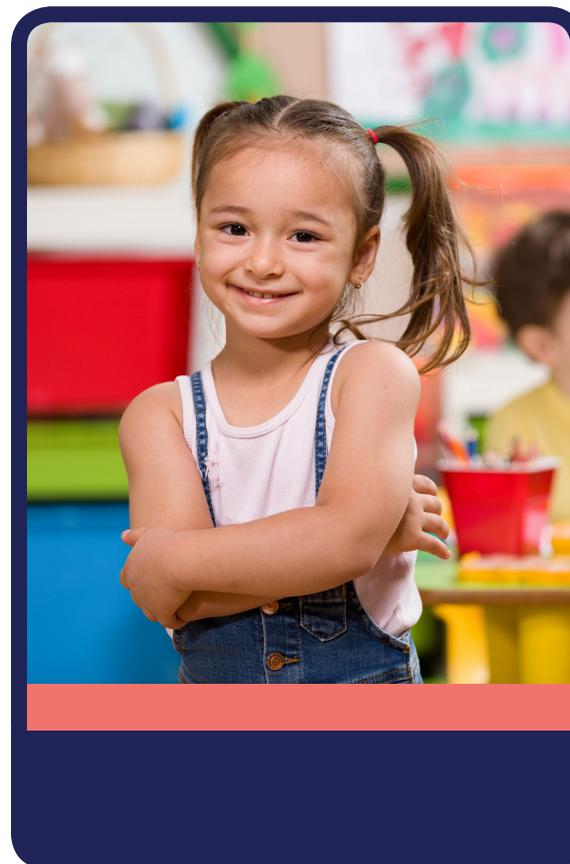
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Working Together for Kindergarten Success: Making the Transition from Child Care to Kindergarten



If you are like many parents, sending your child to kindergarten feels like a huge step! Even if your child has been in child care since they were an infant, elementary school may bring new emotions and expectations for you and your child. The good news is that you do not have to navigate this transition alone; your child care provider and your child's kindergarten teacher will be your partners as you work toward a successful kindergarten transition.

Is My Child Ready for Kindergarten?

Not all kindergarten-age children will have the same abilities and knowledge. Children develop and learn skills at different rates. It is important to remember that school readiness is less about academics and more about whether a child has the foundation to be successful in school. This foundation is being built from the time children are born when they have positive interactions with trusted adults. Back-and-forth conversations, read-aloud time, pretend play, following routines, helping with tasks around the house, talking about feelings – all of these seemingly simple things are helping your child get ready for school.



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- ❑ Start a routine. Kindergarten programs can be more structured than many early childhood programs. Set up a daily schedule to help your child get into the habit of doing things at the same time every day.
- ❑ You may need to adjust bed time to make sure your child gets enough sleep. Nap time or rest time may not be a part of your child's kindergarten schedule.
- ❑ Make play dates with children who will be in your child's class. It will help your child to already have some friends when kindergarten starts.
- ❑ Talk to your child about leaving the friends and caregivers they've grown to love at their child care or preschool program. Let them know it is all right to be sad and to miss friends. Arrange times for your child to get together with old friends even after kindergarten begins.



Working with Your Child Care Provider

Your child's caregiver will be a valuable partner in this process. Discuss with them how you can work together to help your child make a good transition. Talk about what you are doing at home, your child's progress in child care or preschool, and the steps you both can take to ease the transition into kindergarten. There are things your child care provider can do to help your child:

- ❑ Talk to your child about the upcoming change and the new things there will be to do in kindergarten.
- ❑ Have a photo album of the new school for your child that includes pictures of the school (inside and outside), school bus and teachers.
- ❑ Read books about going to kindergarten.
- ❑ Set up play areas with "school" props.

- ❑ Take field trips to kindergarten classes in your community.

- ❑ Make a book or folder with your child's "work" (drawings, pictures, pretend writing, etc.) for your child's kindergarten teacher.

Working with Your Child's New School

Arrange a meeting with your child's new teacher, if possible. If you do not know who the teacher will be, meet with the school principal. Have an open discussion about your child's strengths, challenges, personality, likes and dislikes. Share the steps you and your child care provider have taken to prepare your child for kindergarten. Ask for additional suggestions and input.

Visit the school with your child. During the visit, show your child where kindergarteners play, eat lunch and are picked up after school. If possible, introduce your child to the kindergarten teacher.

Beyond the First Day of School

Once your child is attending the new school, stay involved! Communicate often with your child's teacher about how they are doing. Ask how you can support what your child is learning in school at home. Whenever you can, participate in school activities like PTA, fundraisers, and school projects. Take time each day to talk to your child about the friendships they are making, the activities they enjoy, and the challenges they are facing. Your engagement in your child's education shows them that you think what they are doing and learning is important. By investing your time and energy in these and other ways, you contribute to their success later in life—a gift that will last a lifetime.

