

Getting Ready for the Adventure of Kindergarten

As the first day of school approaches, you may want to do a these things to help your child get on the path to Kindergarten school success.

1. Find out if the school that your child will attend has a registration deadline. Some schools may have a limited number of slots for children. Start early to find out your school's policy and procedures.
2. Learn as much as you can about the school your child will attend before the school year begins. Schools, even in the same district, can differ greatly. Don't rely only on information about kindergarten that you have received from other parents. Their schools may have different requirements and expectations. You will want to know the following:
 - ❖ Name of Principal
 - ❖ Name of your child's teacher (teacher may be assigned at a later date)
 - ❖ What forms you need to complete
 - ❖ What immunizations are required
 - ❖ Description of the kindergarten program
 - ❖ School yearly calendar and kindergarten schedule
 - ❖ Transportation procedures
 - ❖ Food Services
 - ❖ How to become involved in your child's education and in the school.

Some schools will send you this information. Additionally, most schools will hold orientation meetings in the spring for parents for parents who expect to enroll their children in kindergarten the following fall. If your school does not plan such an event, call the school office to ask for information and arrange a visit.

3. Find out in advance what the school expects from new kindergarten students. Knowing the expectations ahead of time, will allow you an opportunity to prepare your child. There are instances when a parent/caregiver may not feel that the school's expectations are right for their child. For example, they may believe that the school does not adequately provide for differences in children's learning and development, or that it's academic program is not strong enough. If you don't agree, you may want to meet with the principal to discuss the expectations.
4. Visit the school with your child. Walk up and down the hallways or campus to help him/her learn the different rooms and areas –the classroom, library, cafeteria, etc. Allow your child to observe other children.

5. Talk with your child about school. During your visit, make positive comments about the school. Example: "Look at all the boys and girls drawing. That looks like fun." At home, show excitement about the big step in your child's life. Let him know that starting school is a very special event.

Talk with your child about the teachers, and how they will help him/her learn new things.

6. Consider volunteering to help in the school. It is a good way to learn more about the school and to meet the staff and other parents, while supporting your child's education.

When the long-awaited first day of kindergarten arrives, go to school with your child and be patient. Many young children are overwhelmed at first. They may not like school immediately, and may even cry or cling to you, but with support from you and the teacher, this will rapidly change.

As your child leaves home for the first day of school, tell him how proud you are!

*U.S Dept. of Education

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