



# Guiding Your Child from Preschool to Kindergarten

## Five Tips for Families

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The move from preschool to kindergarten is a big one, with new teachers, routines, and expectations. Families can help their children navigate these experiences by embracing flexibility and acknowledging both the excitement and challenges of this new time. Consider the following strategies to guide your child gently from one threshold to the next.

### **Acknowledge Your Child's Feelings**

Transitioning to kindergarten can bring up different emotions in children. Some may feel upset or worried; others may be bursting with excitement and anticipation. Identify your child's emotions, and let them know their feelings are normal: "I know you're (excited,

worried) about starting at your new school. I feel that way too when I'm looking forward to something new. I'm here for you."

## Prepare Your Child for the New Setting

Before the school year begins, think of ways you can ease the transition. Many schools offer tours so that children can get to know the people, places, and things they'll encounter during their first days. Before you visit, think of questions to ask. For example, you might be curious about who greets the children when they arrive each day or if the school has advice to make the transition easier.

You can also involve your child in preparations for the new year: Encourage them to help you gather school supplies. Talk with them about new routines, and practice those routines as the first day approaches. Consider visiting the local library. This setting is similar to a school environment, and librarians can suggest books about starting kindergarten, riding the school bus, and making new friends.

## Introduce Yourself

Talk to your child's school (and their teacher!) about the best ways to communicate. Some teachers prefer emails while others prefer phone calls or meetings. Use this preferred method to introduce yourself and your child, and share ways to reach you too. These efforts will help with ongoing communication throughout the school year. Also, take advantage of any events your school offers to incoming kindergartners.

## Create Responsive Routines at Home

Once school begins, your child will be adjusting to new sights, smells, sounds, people, schedules, and more. This means their system may become overloaded with new experiences that demand their attention and energy. When your child comes home from school, you may notice that they need time to rest, play, or reconnect with you. Make time to ask about their day: What was the best part? The hardest part? Consistent mealtimes and bedtimes are important, but so is making space for your child to reset after school.

## Tap into Resources Beyond the Classroom

As you and your child make the preschool-to-kindergarten transition, consider where opportunities for growth and support exist within your community. Discuss any concerns you may have about your child's adjustment, and ask the school about available resources or strategies.

## About the Author

**Mary Hewitt** is an early childhood specialist, speaker, writer, consultant, and founder of Unlocking Childhood in Ontario, Canada.

This message is meant to be printed out, photocopied, and sent home with children as a resource for families!

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