

Getting Your Child Ready For School

(By Mrs. Meera Narain, Principal Kinder Valley International School)



Is it time for your child to join a Pre-School? Because if it is, then this article is about just what you wanted to know on beginning School. You could be over anxious and worried as to what you must do to prepare your child to make a smooth transition from a safe cocoon – **HOME**, to a new environment – **SCHOOL**. To facilitate this it is desirable to mentally prepare yourself first for this change so that he/she will not have to struggle to merge into the new environment when the time comes. Remember, as a parent, you exert significant influence over the mind and habits of your child. Therefore, the things you say to and do with your child weeks before School begins will help him to look forward eagerly to the first day he will spend in the company of other children at School.

In these initial weeks, you as a parent, could be somewhat over anxious about your child. Children crying and throwing a tantrum is common at this time. Parents have to prepare themselves as well as their children in beginning school. Parents need to be happy and excited about school, as they want their child to be. It is normal for your child to have some fears about being away from you. Kids, like adults, need time to adjust to the new environment. Discuss any fears. Talk about some of the new people your child will meet at the School. If you are enthusiastic, soon your child will be too.

As each child is different in many ways you may try the following or a combination of the following suggestions to ensure smooth transition to the School.

- First and foremost you must learn to **“LET GO”** of your child gradually. “Letting Go” is a process that begins the baby to separate from his/her parent and it is essential for the healthy growth and development of the child.
- **“Hanging On”**, which is usually done in the name of love and affection, prevents healthy growth. Do not make him cling to you too much or carry him around all the time. Let him explore on his own and be independent.
- Regularize sleeping and eating habits. See to it that the child has food at proper intervals and goes to bed early so that he gets up early and takes his milk, bath and breakfast before he leaves for School. Not only does it ensure discipline but also gives sufficient energy to face the new challenges.
- Drive by the School building several times so that he/she will be familiar with the new place he/she is going to join soon. Take the child inside the building through the main door and around the play area, his/her classroom, toy room etc. with you so that the new environment feels familiar and comfortable. It is very important that the child feels Safe and Secure in the new School.
- Talk about the School as a Fun place where he/she can meet new friends and play around with new toys. Be casual, confident and cheerful in your conversations with your child about School.



- Have your child shop with you some new items of clothing, which he/she will wear to the first day at School.
- Weeks before School begins explain exactly what will happen. It could be something like this – “We will go to your school, meet your teacher and I will help you get started with a game. While you play at School, I will be shopping/working/going to my class (fill the appropriate activity). Then I will be back to meet you after School and we will both go home together.”
- If your child experiences apprehensions about School avoid saying things like “Don’t you want to go to School? Or “Don’t be silly, school is fun..” Do not deny your child’s feelings of fear or uncertainties. Allow him/her to express any fears that he/she may have. A good thing to say is “I can see that you are not sure about this and we are all afraid of new places sometimes. But it is all right to go here”. This kind of positive remark reassures the child and helps him/her to settle down quickly.
- When you come back to pick up your child from School never ask negative questions like “Did you cry?” or “Did anyone scold you?” Be positive in your approach by asking “I know you had a fun time, tell me what you did today”.
- Always bring your child to School holding hands and not carrying him/her in your arms. Say Goodbye to your child once with a hug and do this at the main door. Do not cling to your child or give excessive instructions. Be happy yourself first as you are giving a great opportunity to your child to have new experiences with his/her new friends. Even if you feel sad or anxious try not to express this to your child.
- Many children get great satisfaction from School even though they do not appear to be so happy. It just could be the fear of being away from you, again. If your child appears reluctant when dropped off or picked up from School this is not usually a true judgment of his happy adjustment in School.

At some Pre-Schools like Kinder Valley, great care is taken to settle down the new children. We understand that each child is different and needs different ways of handling. But the most important thing is the love and affection given to the child. First week at school the child should normally attend school for an hour. Gradually, as the child settles down and enjoys the company of other children, the timings should be increased. Once the child feels safe, secure and loved in the new environment, Learning becomes easy. So, go ahead, give a great start to your child.