

## Preparing Little Ones for Kindergarten! (Adapted from Parents.com)

**Keep a positive mindset.** Your child will take cues from you, so be calm and confident that everything will go well. Don't ask your child if he/she's scared too many times as that might cause more fear. But if your child seems anxious in the days preceding school, reassure him/her that it will be okay and that there are helpers at school if need be (teachers, counselors, and other staff).

**Role play.** Pretend play with stuffed animals can help your child adjust to the idea that he/she'll be leaving you, but you'll come back! (For example: little teddy bear goes to school with some other furry friends, and Mommy Teddy leaves and returns after the school day is done).

**Read books.** Books that describe what happens at school, as well as validate a child's feelings, can help quell jitters. These books provide your child with a sort of dry run of school in the comfort of home, where he/she feels safe.

### Books To Help Prepare Your Kindy (suggested by Scholastic.com):

1. ***Clifford Goes to Kindergarten***: It's Emily Elizabeth's first day of kindergarten, and she can't help but feel nervous! "What would happen if I missed home," she wonders, "or if I didn't make any friends?" Thankfully her teacher gave students permission to bring something from home to make the day easier, but her teacher didn't expect Emily to bring something as big as Clifford! See how everyone's favorite gigantic red dog helps Emily through her very first day of school.

2. ***The Kissing Hand***: It's the first day of school in the forest, but Chester Raccoon doesn't want to go. He begs Mrs. Raccoon to let him stay home — school is just too scary! But Mrs. Raccoon comforts Chester and shares a special family secret with him: the kissing hand. With the love of his mom and the power of the kissing hand, Chester feels brave

enough to face his first day of school. This sweet modern classic is the perfect antidote to your little one's worries about missing home.

3. ***Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten:*** As Miss Bindergarten gets ready for kindergarten, so do her 26 students: Adam Krupp wakes up and Brenda Heath brushes her teeth, while Christopher Beaker finds his sneaker and Danny Hess rushes to dress. *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* will help your child practice the alphabet and shows the myriad of ways Miss Bindergarten's students get ready for their first day of class, from hopping along to school to packing a pet bunny!

4. ***Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes:*** Who's the coolest cat around? It's none other than Pete the Cat, of course! Read as Pete grooves all over the school in his cool school shoes. *Rocking in My School Shoes* comes with a link to a groovy new song that'll get your child excited for everything school has to offer!

5. ***Tool School:*** A hammer, saw, tape measure, screwdriver, and pair of pliers are all excited for their very first day of tool school! They have fun playing games together, but when it comes time to build, they all split up and work by themselves. The tools soon learn that working together is how they'll get this task done. Your kid will love the colorful illustrations and the rhyming text, while you'll love the messages of cooperation and teamwork.

6. ***Off to Kindergarten:*** Bill's first day of kindergarten is approaching, and he gathers everything he'll need to bring with him: his teddy bear, a chair, a pillow, cookies and milk, books, mud... Soon his pile grows so large, he'll need a moving truck to get it all to school! But his mom reassures him that all he'll need to bring is himself. This lighthearted read will soothe kids' first day fears with its humorous text and bright illustrations.

7. ***Scholastic Reader Level 1: Noodles: I Love School!*** Get your little one ready for school with an adorable puppy that makes the journey relatable and fun! When Noodles first arrives at school, it seems a little intimidating. But soon, he makes fabulous friends, and learns just how fun going to class can be.

8. ***How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?:*** From the wildly-loved "How Do Dinosaurs..." series, this book explores the hilarious ways a very large Ceratosaurus might stomp into class or how a Silvisaurus might just decide to jump on a desk! Your soon-to-be kindergartener

will join the fun as dinosaurs ride the bus, have fun on the playground with their friends, and read their very favorite books.

9. ***The Night Before Kindergarten***: It's time for backpacks and pencils: Gear your child up for the first day of school with the excitement captured in this book about kids laying out their clothes and gathering their school supplies the night before the big day. Your little one will be eager to do the same after story time!

10. ***Peppa Pig: Level 1 Reader: Peppa's School Day***: It's Emily Elephant's first day in Peppa's class, and she's a little shy! However, Peppa helps her get used to school, and soon they're learning, playing games, and jumping in muddy puddles together. This sweet read will help your child look forward to making new friends throughout the school year.

## How to Handle Kindy Drop-Off (Adapted from Parents.com)

No matter how much you prepare, your child may still be full of nerves on the first day of Kindy.

That's normal! Here's how to make drop-off a little easier:

**Create a goodbye ritual.** Having a goodbye routine provides comfort and familiarity, so your child knows what's to come. This could be anything you and your child decide on, such as a special hug or handshake followed by a "See you later, alligator!" Once you've said your goodbyes, it's best to skedaddle so that your child doesn't become preoccupied by your presence. A long farewell scene might only serve to reinforce a child's sense that school is a bad place.

**Bring a comforting object.** Have your child bring a little reminder of home to ease the separation anxiety. If your child doesn't have a favorite doll or blankie, even a beloved book can do the trick. Comfort objects may seem like small stuff, but they can provide a real sense of security to kids in an unfamiliar environment.

**Never make comparisons.** Don't chastise your child and say, "Nolan doesn't cry when his mom leaves." Honoring your child's process is the best way to make the transition as smooth as possible. Remember that every child is different in working through feelings. Some require more assistance, some need a longer time to sit with their emotions, and others will bounce back fast!

**Manage your own emotions.** The most effective thing parents can do is to manage their own anxiety around the transition. Children often do fine in new environments, new routines, and schedules. Our children often pick up on our own stress, and this can make the adjustment harder for them. It's not only okay, but perfectly normal to feel nervous about a new school, or to feel sad about how fast your child is growing up! The problem occurs when we project our emotions onto our children or assume they are feeling the same thing we are.

**Take a deep breath.** After drop-off, no matter how easy or difficult the transition may have been, take a deep breath and know that you are doing the best for your child by encouraging his/her attendance at school. Repetition will help your child understand the daily routine, and that he/she and *you* will be just fine 😊