



ALL SEASONS

CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER

Preparing Your Preschool Student

Make sure your child has had some supervised time away from you before they enter school. This may be a day care or preschool experience or with friends or relatives. Letting your children occasionally be in an environment away from you helps develop more independence among young children.

Talk to your child about going to school. Tell them about positive experiences you remember from your first days of school. Talk to them about what they'll learn in school.

Take your child to school. Let him/her visit and play in the yard while you are there. Let him get acquainted with the other children, the staff, the toys, and the layout of the building.

Tell him/her the principal's name, the names of the teachers, if possible. Assure him/her that it is natural to be frightened. Everyone is here to be his/her friend.

Never use school as a threat, such as, "You can't go to school today because you are bad," or "You have to go to school today to learn how to listen." Parents and schools should be perceived as people and places that show comfort and safety.

Take your children to "Observation Day" if these are available. Let him/her meet the teacher and time to spend in the classroom.

Set aside a day to gather the supplies they will need for school. If you need to purchase materials, empower the child to decide what he/she wants and needs. Include items of comfort.

Talk with your child about what the first day will probably be like. Tell him/her about fun with other children, with books and puzzles, with the big blocks, outside play, learning new things, and snack or lunch breaks.

Make your child aware that every child goes to school and that schools are wonderful places to learn. It is your child's job to be a student, just like it is your job to go to work. Talk to your child about friends who will also be at school.

Prepare your child for his/her first day. For example, "Tomorrow I'll be taking you to school so that you can be in Mrs. Smith's class. It will be so much fun and you will make many new friends.

If you see a few tears when you are leaving the classroom, don't worry. The tears disappear once Mom or Dad leaves. A few tears may return if you meet your children after school, but be assured; that most tears disappear almost the minute parents are out of sight.

If your child clings to you and cries at the top of his/her lungs about your leaving, the best thing to do is to leave quickly. The longer you stay, the more difficult the situation will be. Those who cling and cry loudly calm down within a few minutes and enjoy school. Some of these children will continue this behavior for several days or even weeks. It's hard on the parents and teachers alike. Be assured that if your child continues to be upset after you leave and the teacher cannot calm him down, someone from the school will call and let you know.

School personnel will identify children who continue to display anxiety about coming to school and who may need extra help in dealing with those anxieties. Keep in close touch with your child's teacher. Schooling is an on-going partnership between teachers and parents.