

Parent Tips:

Ways to Help Your Child Ease into Kindergarten

Courtesy of Continuity Project, Austin Association for the Education of Young Children

Before School Starts:

- ✓ Set a routine for waking, eating breakfast, dressing, going to bed and sleeping. Adjusting from a "summer schedule" to a "school schedule" should occur gradually over approximately three weeks prior to the first day of school.
- ✓ Help your child to express feelings (happy, sad, etc.) to let you know how he/she feels about going to kindergarten.
- ✓ Remind your child that the school knows how to get in touch with you and that the teacher and the office have your emergency numbers.
- ✓ Visit the park/playground at your child's school.
- ✓ Feel confident about your school choice and let your child know how you feel.
- ✓ Shop for practical clothing that your child can manage alone.
- ✓ Make sure the transportation plans to and from school are clear to your child and to school personnel.

After School Starts:

- ✓ Review and prioritize your expectations.
- ✓ Communicate with your child's teacher (ask questions about lunch procedures, rest times, routines, etc., and tell your child).
- ✓ Try to be accessible, helpful and available to your child's teacher.
- ✓ If you have concerns, talk to your child's teacher.
- ✓ Try to have a calm start to each day.
- ✓ Help empower your child. On the first day of school, allow your child to pick out his/her own clothes, lunch box, and backpack. Let your child decide what to have for lunch.

Things to Remember:

- ✓ In preparation for your child's developing independence, help your child practice dressing himself / herself, including putting on and securing (buttoning, zipping, tying, etc.) clothing and shoes.
- ✓ Your child may be emotionally and physically exhausted for the first six weeks. Allow time for your child to adjust.
- ✓ Help your child learn the new "rules" at school and to not be afraid of making a mistake or asking for help.
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions about their school day. "What was the best thing about school today?" "Who did you play with on the playground today?" Remember, even though you are eager to hear about the day, your conversations will be more productive if you wait until your child is ready to share their day with you.

A child's entry into kindergarten is an exciting new adventure for both the child and the parent. The child's smile and knowledge that learning is fun is rewarding for everyone involved with the child's education.

Remember, you are your child's first and best advocate!