

I'm Going to Kindergarten!

Helping your family create a successful beginning to school

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Taking that Step to Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is such a wonderful time for children and their families. Many exciting opportunities await with this first step into more formal schooling. Such a big step can also come with worries and questions, which is perfectly understandable. To help respond to those worries and questions, the months leading up to the first day of kindergarten provide an important “transition” time. Use all the resources available in this transition time.

If your child has been in a child care center or half-day preschool, talk with the teachers about what they are doing to help children feel comfortable and excited about starting kindergarten in the fall.

Schedule your child's well-child exam with your child's doctor to be sure everything required for school entrance is up to date.

Find out what school your child will attend and be sure to go to kindergarten registration meetings, kindergarten screenings, and school visits. These are usually scheduled in the late spring.

Call the school your child will attend and schedule a time to visit the school and even schedule a tour. You likely won't meet your child's teacher - and that's OK. The point is just to increase comfort with the change coming and to help your child feel a little more familiar with the setting before the first day of school.

Find out about when and where a free “Triple P” (Positive Parenting Program) session might be and sign up to attend! Parenting is hard work and everyone benefits from a little support from time to time. Call the Children's Resource Center at 828-695-6565 to learn more!



Studies have shown that positive first experiences with school lead to greater learning gains and enjoyment with the whole school experience.

While many children have had educational experiences outside the home prior to kindergarten, the elementary school experience is still an adjustment. The building is larger. The playground is larger and has different equipment to master. There are more adults and more children. Children move between spaces during the day as they go to lunch, or to special classes like art, music, and PE.

Even with these differences, it's an exciting time, and it's the perfect time to plant positive seeds about school. Families are the first, most important, and lifelong teachers for children. Your role in creating positive feelings toward school really makes a difference!

Friendly Reminders to Make a GREAT Transition to Kindergarten!

- ★ Start each morning with a good breakfast or plan to arrive at school in time to eat breakfast.
 - ★ Label all personal belongings such as backpacks, jackets, and lunchboxes.
 - ★ Set up your child's transportation plan (car rider, bus rider, riding home with a friend or relative) and be sure your child and your child's teacher knows that plan. Send a note when that plan needs to change. Have an emergency plan too for when school might close for weather.
 - ★ Arrange for before-school and after-school care if you need care for your child beyond the school day. **Call the Children's Resource Center at 828-695-6565 or go to www.childrensresourcecenter.org to explore options.**
 - ★ Set aside time every day to talk about school. Ask questions like “What was your favorite activity today?” “What did you do in art, music, or PE?” “What is your favorite center? What do you like to do in that center?” “Tell me about a new friend in your class.” “What book did you read today?” “What did you talk about in math today?” Sharing like this is an important time each day to set a positive tone about school and to let your child see you care about what he/she does when away from you at school.
 - ★ Go with your child the first day of school, but don't stay too long. It's hard to let go, but your child needs to grow and see that you feel good about kindergarten. Every child is different, and some will have some anxieties about going to “big school.” Listen carefully to those concerns, and support your child to feel empowered to be successful.
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What Can Families do to Support your soon-to-be Kindergartener?

- Prepare healthy foods and offer a balanced diet.
- Limit screen time on all screens. Five-year-olds should only have 1 hour of screen time a day.
- Give choices whenever appropriate. This supports decision-making skills and self-regulation.
- Read, talk, sing, write, play! See this website for suggestions: <https://catawbakids.com/ready-to-read>
- Provide plenty of reading material. Visit your local library often and read to your child daily.
- Provide writing tools and paper. Scribbling is OK at first; that's how the fingers get going!
- Encourage your child to play. Play is the child's work, and too much sitting still is just hard at this age! If encouraged to get the wiggles out with lots of moving now, sitting still later on in first grade is easier. Find ways to get plenty of exercise.
- Notice your child doing positive things and tell him/her you like what he/she is doing. "I like how you brushed your teeth and put the cap back on the toothpaste." When children hear in words what it is that you want them to do, they will be more likely to do it again.
- Support your child when disappointed, sad, or even angry. Talk about feelings and positive ways to work through feelings to feel better.
- Don't "give in" when your child is persistent about something you've said they can't or shouldn't do. Accepting "no" is very important for later learning.
- Call Children's Resource Center at 828-695-6565 and ask about our FREE "Triple P" Parent Education Program ... it's a wonderful resource for ALL parents!

Before the First Day of Kindergarten

Establish a good school time schedule

Having a regular sleeping routine is important for children. Young children need about 10 hours of sleep each night. Getting up and getting ready for school takes planning! Involve your child in deciding who will do which tasks to get to school on time. Talk with your child about setting a wake-up time that will allow time to get dressed, pack lunch, and get daily supplies ready to go without feeling rushed. Use your chosen wake-up time to figure out what time bedtime needs to be, allowing additional time each evening before bed for bath and some quiet wind-down time to read a book or just talk about the day before falling asleep. Be sure to start your new bedtime and wake-up schedule at least a week before school starts so that everyone will be used to it by the first day of school. A peaceful morning makes for a good start to the day!



Practice Using Public Restrooms



Many children don't have a lot of experience using a public restroom, but this is a necessity at school. When you are out in public, give your child the opportunity to use restrooms. Start with familiar places like your church or the library. Talk about health and safety issues, including how to tell if the stall is clean enough to use, why it's important to respect other people's privacy, how to fasten pants, and the importance of washing hands with soap.

Encourage Independence

It's important to begin "letting go" just a little as your child enters kindergarten. Your child's teacher is definitely there to provide support, but your child is ready to do many tasks on his/her own if you encourage it. Some skills to work on over the summer:

- Using the bathroom independently.
- Putting on a coat or sweater with zippers or buttons independently.
- Putting on shoes with no help and fastening them with limited support. Tying shoes takes practice!
- Washing hands with soap and water and drying them independently.
- Taking responsibility to clean up after oneself and putting belongings in their proper place.
- Using good health habits like covering sneezes and coughs, and using tissues.



What to Expect in Kindergarten

ALL children who turn 5 by August 31st are eligible for kindergarten!

Each child is an individual, and develops at his or her own pace. Here are some of the skills that children begin to master in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

- ★ Know how to begin independent play or join in the play of others in a positive way.
- ★ Respond to rules and accepts when an adult suggests another option to what a child might want.
- ★ Manage emotions and behaviors by self-comforting, seeking out an adult for support, or beginning to be willing to wait for what they need.
- ★ Handle daily routine with some adult support and changes in routine without becoming overly upset.
- ★ Identify own and others' emotions and can tell what caused those feelings.
- ★ When in personal conflict with another, can suggest positive solutions, using words.
- ★ Have growing control over hand and fingers in the control of writing tools, puzzles, and blocks.
- ★ Follow 2-step directions for simple tasks on his/her own with no reminders.
- ★ Tell stories about prior experiences with a sensible order and some detail.
- ★ Focus on interesting tasks with growing ability to ignore distractions.
- ★ Fill in a missing rhyme or tell whether two spoken words rhyme.
- ★ Recognize about ten letters, especially those in his or her name.
- ★ Know common parts of a book: title, author, and illustrator.
- ★ Know that words are what is read on a page and show where to start reading.
- ★ Identify numerals 1-10, verbally count to the number 20, and count at least 20 objects accurately.

How can you help your child to have a good school experience?

READ...Spend time reading each day to your child. Reading aloud to your child is one of the most important ways to build skills needed for school success. Sign up for the "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" program at your nearest library!

TALK...Building vocabulary and learning to take turns in a conversation are important school success skills. Spend time talking as a family and ask each other questions about the experiences you do together.

CREATE LEARNING SPACE AT HOME...Set up a place at home where school work can be done. Provide learning materials such as paper, pencils, crayons, magazines, and books. Take advantage of educational experiences in the community like libraries, museums, and parks.

BE INVOLVED...When children see their families taking part in special activities at school, children feel more positive about school. Find out how families can be involved and choose something that fits with your schedule. Be involved as often as you can.

SUPPORT THE SCHOOL...Be sure to understand the school rules and follow them. Rules are there to keep everyone safe, so help your child understand the rules too. Keep good contact with your child's teacher so everyone works in partnership. Be sure to talk about how important school is so your child works to do his or her best.

