

TRANSITIONING BACK TO SCHOOL

It is back-to-school time and your child may be starting in a new classroom. Making such a change or transition can bring on stress or anxiety for your family. You play a big part in this transition. Create a partnership, establish a daily routine, and be confident and supportive. This can help make the back to school transition an enjoyable experience for you and your child.

Create and Nurture your Parent-Teacher Relationship

- Share pertinent information with your child's teacher everyday at drop-off and pick-up times. Ask questions to clarify any concerns that you may have. Keep the lines of communication open.
- Teachers are trained and prepared for tears and other emotional situations with young children. During the first few weeks of school, arrive a bit early to help your child settle in. Allow the teacher to greet you and your child as you walk in.

Create a Daily Routine

- Invite your child to help set out their clothes, pack their back pack, or choose a photo or favorite stuffed animal to take to school.
- In the morning, after you have greeted the teacher, sit down and do a quick puzzle, picture, or dough sculpture with your child. Follow-up with a special good-bye ritual – give a hug, blow two kisses, give a high-five, etc. If necessary, transition your child to the teacher and say good-bye. Never sneak-out on your child. This creates distrust and more anxiety for them.
- In the afternoon, read daily events posted by your child's teacher. Greet the teacher and then play for a brief moment with your child to help them transition out of their school day. Allow them time to finish up what they are doing. Talk with your child about what you read in the posted daily events.
- Create a routine with consistent drop-off and pick-up scheduled times. This reassures your child and offers you and the teacher a time frame to refer to.

Be Confident and Supportive

- Be positive and show confidence when you say good-bye to your child. Reassure them they are safe and let them know when they are going to be picked up and by whom. For example, say, "Dad will be here to pick you up after you finish your afternoon snack."
- Be patient if your child has occasional emotional meltdowns. They may exhibit past behaviors such as bedwetting, thumb sucking, clinging to your leg, or resistance. This is normal transition behavior.
- Encourage your child to talk about how they feel. Support their feelings and talk with your teacher regarding books or ideas that can help them through this transition time.