

Being Prepared for the First Day of Kindergarten!

Being prepared and knowing what to expect for the first day of Kindergarten is important so both you and your child can feel as comfortable and at ease as possible. Equipped with the right knowledge, you and your child can feel confident that you will have a smooth, fun, and stress free transition!

Reminders:

- Ensure your child's immunizations are up to date
- Take your child for a free eye exam – check out Eye See Eye Learn
- Visit the Erin Oak website and do a communication check-up
- Take your child for a dental check
- Visit your doctor for a check-up

Label all of your child's belongings. This includes clothes, lunch boxes, lunch/snack containers, shoes, coats etc. Labeling all items will help to reduce stress about losing personal items

Keep all school items in one place at home. This makes it easier for your child to become independent and prepare themselves for school each day.

Practice the route to school. Walk to the school or practice waiting at the bus stop. Let your child see the school, look at the kindergarten play yard and become familiar with the new environment.

Prepare healthy snacks and lunches. Your child will need lots of energy to make it through the day and that comes from healthy food.

Make a strong connection with your child's teacher and always maintain open communication. If your child sees that you have a connection with their teacher, they will be more connected to their teacher. Having this relationship will allow your child to feel comforted when at school.

Examples of How To Establish a Strong Connection:

- Writing a note to your child's teacher on the first day of school saying how much you look forward to working with them this school year
- Let your child see you talking to & building a relationship with their teacher
- Talking positively with your child about their teacher

What to Expect

Separation Anxiety

Your child may have difficulty separating from you. Kindergarten is a new experience, a new environment and their teacher is a new person to them. It is completely natural for your child to experience separation anxiety.

Support your child by:

- Comforting them
- Reminding them of the daily routine & that you will see them when school is finished
- Send a family picture or a comfort item that reminds them of you
- Read books to help them prepare for separation (i.e. The Kissing Hand, The Invisible String)
- Practice separating beforehand. Have them separate from you for short periods of time in a comfortable environment (i.e. going to their grandparents house, having a babysitter come to your house)

Parental Anxiety

Kindergarten is a big step and as parents, you worry about many things... will they make friends, will they have fun, will they like their teacher, will they learn. Here's how to work through your own anxiety:

- Stay connected with the school and your child's teacher
- Build a relationship with your child's teacher
- Get involved in the school/classroom as much as you can
- Trust that your child is competent and capable and will adjust quickly!

NOTE: Don't let your child see your anxiety, they will feed off of it and it will be more difficult for both of you.

“Two of the greatest gifts we can give our child... roots and wings to fly!” – Hodding Carter

Stressors In The Classroom

- **Physical** – visual, noise, hunger, tired
- **Emotional** – mad, sad, excited
- **Cognitive** – learning new skills, distractions
- **Social** – learning to get along with others, taking turns, making friends
- **Prosocial** – learning empathy, dealing with others stress

You can help manage these stressors by helping them build self-regulation skills.

Your Child Will Be Tired

The Kindergarten classroom can be overwhelming & over-stimulating for some children and will exhaust them. Your child will be extremely tired the first day, week and even the first couple months. They will need lots of love and patience. You may even see new and challenging

behaviour as a result of their exhaustion. This is a normal part of the process, try to be patient and spend lots of time together.

Sleep Challenges

Sleep challenges may arise as your child adjusts to Kindergarten. Stick to their bedtime routine and provide comfort when needed. You may also need to move bedtime a little earlier if you see they are struggling. Their sleep should return back to normal once they are comfortable and have adjusted to Kindergarten.

Disruptions in Eating

Do not be alarmed if your child returns home from school with their lunch half eaten or not eaten at all. This is all a part of the adjustment period. The environment and routine are new. They do not have a lot of time to eat lunch, so try to pack healthy and easy to eat items. Explain the importance of eating during the day to keep their energy up, continue to send healthy food and provide encouragement.

On the First Day

- Acknowledge your child's feelings, be positive & remind them you'll see them after school
- Give your child a hug, kiss and make sure to say goodbye
- Don't hesitate or linger after saying goodbye. This will be difficult to do, but will make it easier on all of you in the end
- Greet your child with a hug, smile and positivity at pick up time

REMEMBER...being patient, understanding & supportive during this transition will help you & your child navigate through this new stage of life with flying colours! Enjoy the journey as you let your little ones soar!