



# Preparing Your Child For the First Day of School



On my oldest child's first day of school, he held on to my leg and screamed when I left him at the school for first grade. I thought we were prepared, but you never know for sure what your child is thinking. What can YOU do to help prepare your child for the first day of school? (Hopefully, it will go better than mine.)

**Go to the school and meet the new teacher, if possible.**

Play on the playground, if possible. Go to the lunch room. Some first day apprehension can be resolved if they know where to go and what might happen. Make note of any special rules from the school (no peanut butter, clothing restrictions, etc.).

**If possible, get together with other children in their class.** Just one friend can make lunch seem less scary! Host a neighborhood back to school party.

**Make it a fun trip to buy the school supplies.** Involve your child in finding and buying the needed school supplies. If possible, grab a new lunch box (and some fun snacks), or backpack, or even a new outfit or uniform for the first day of school.

**Re-establish routines.** Start preparing physically a week or so before the actual date. Start going to bed and getting up at the time you would when school starts. Give them an alarm clock and train them to get themselves up (especially if they are in upper elementary and middle school).

**Make checklists.** What do you expect them to do each morning? Write it out and post it so everyone can see it and check off each item as they do it (especially until it becomes a habit).

**Teach them basic skills**—especially if they are entering kindergarten. Can they tie their shoes (if not, buy Velcro)? Can they zip their pants? Can they use the bathroom and wash their hands? Can they write their name? Teachers are pretty skilled at handling most situations, but you will help both if you work on important skills at home.

**Talk about it...a lot.** If you are excited, they will probably be excited. Reassure them. Let's face it; new situations can be pretty scary for lots of kids.



**Make the first day special.** Get ready and go out for breakfast. Eat special food. Take a picture. Pack the backpack the night before. Give them lots of hugs and kisses and tell them you'll see them at the end of the day.

**Pray with them.** Just a quick prayer before they head out the door can set a good tone for the whole day. Then find a time to pray for them, their teachers, their friends, and their school. Go to [www.momsinprayer.org](http://www.momsinprayer.org) for a prayer calendar and other resources.

