

First Day of Pre-K

Helpful Hints for Parents

On the first day of Pre-K plan to spend a few minutes in the classroom with your child. This is particularly important for children who have never been to preschool before. Take a few minutes to help your child become engaged in a play activity and/or help him/her to become acquainted with another child. Reassure your child that you will return shortly. Follow the cues of the teacher as what to say to the child and when to leave. Generally, once the child becomes involved in an activity the anxiety of separation is lessened. Many children quickly adapt to the preschool routine and are eager to come again. However, it is perfectly normal for some children to take several days to become comfortable away from mom or dad. Teachers realize this and do all they can to make this separation a pleasant one for all concerned. Keep these simple points in mind:

1. Tell your child what is going to happen. For instance, say "You are going to stay at school while I go to work (home, shop, etc.)." Reassure your child as often as necessary that you will be back to pick her/him up soon.
2. When you bring your child into the room plan to stay about five minutes, unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher. When it's almost time to go, tell your child you will be leaving soon.
3. Don't sneak away. Though it may be easier for you to leave while your child is out of sight, it is not easier for him/her. Immediately before you go, say "I'm leaving now. I will be back soon," accompanied by a hug or a kiss for good measure.
4. Once you start to leave, don't hesitate even if your child cries. Most children stop crying within seconds after you are out of sight. Others take only a few minutes to calm down. Again, the teacher may offer suggestions when necessary. When you leave the room, do not linger outside the door where your child may see you. If your child sees you peeking in the window, it will start the separation process all over again.
5. Teachers and assistants are adept at reading signals from children and offer comfort to those children having difficulty.
6. After class, review the day's activities (story, snack, toys, and friends) and discuss future fun at school with your child. This will help encourage his/her enthusiasm for coming to Pre-K the next time.