



First Day of Kindergarten!

MONTHLY MESSAGE: Transitioning to Kindergarten

Your child is going to kindergarten! This is an exciting time and a big transition for your family. It is important to recognize the amount of change your child will experience during this time. He or she is leaving a familiar and comfortable setting and faces to meet new people in a different environment. Helping your child have a positive experience matters because it helps sets the tone for your child's future school career. As a caregiver, knowing what to expect can help you plan ahead and avoid frustrations. The transition is a process, not a single event. With some early planning, you can help make the transition smoother for you and your child.

Is your child ready? Many parents ask this question as kindergarten approaches. In Kentucky, school readiness means that each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's success and ability to be ready to grow, ready to learn and ready to succeed. The fact is this process began at birth. Through play, talking and attending early learning programs, your child has been getting ready for school.

Formally, school readiness skills are grouped into five domains. Each domain has a set of indicators families can strive to teach their child prior to kindergarten. These indicators reflect hopes, not expectations, of the skills your child should develop to have a strong start. We recommend families become familiar with the school readiness definition and indicators by visiting the Governor's Office of Early Childhood website at <http://kidsnow.ky.gov> (click the then "Kindergarten Readiness").

Tips for the transition



It may take time for your family to adjust to the new rhythm kindergarten brings. Here are some practical tips you can try to have a strong start.

1. Visit the school. Most schools have a visiting day so children can meet the teacher, tour classrooms and meet future classmates.
2. Talk positively about kindergarten. Do not let your anxiety show to your child. Talk with teachers or other parents if you have concerns.
3. Use stuffed animals or puppets to role play the transition. This gives your child an outlet to express his or her worries and it's a good way to practice coping strategies.
4. Tell your child how you felt when you went to kindergarten or have his or her siblings share their experience. Be sure to share what made you feel better and how it turned out okay.
5. Acknowledge your child's fear. Reassure him or her that it's okay to be nervous and that lots of kids feel the same way.
6. Adjust bedtimes and wake times a few weeks before school begins to create a new routine. Routines provide a sense of security and predictability children need.
7. Read books about starting kindergarten. Some options include *The Night Before Kindergarten* by Natasha Wing, *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate and *Kindergarten Rocks* by Katie Davis. Visit your local library to borrow these or other books.
8. Play with your child outdoors and indoors. They will be spending time outdoors during recess.
9. Let your child know that he or she is growing and is ready for this new experience.
10. Allow your child to pick out an outfit to wear once in a while. This provides a sense of independence and lets him or her practice how to zip and button clothes which might be necessary while at school.
11. Consider weaning your child of his or her favorite comfort toy or blanket. It likely won't go to school with your child so starting now may help.
12. Have a practice lunch date. Pack your child's lunch and let him or her open all the items inside. Tasks like removing lids, unwrapping juice box straws and opening sandwich bags may require some practice.



Enrollment Reminder

To register your child for kindergarten, please contact your local school. If you registered and did not provide the following documents, please remember to submit them to your child's school by the following deadlines:

- Current immunization certificate provided no later than two weeks of the child's enrollment.*
- Proof of a preventative health care exam.
- Proof of an eye exam no later than January 1, 2016.
- Proof of a dental screening or exam no later than January 1, 2016.

*confirm deadline with your child's school as some require earlier

