

# **Ease the Kindergarten Jitters**

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## **Before school starts:**

- Make an appointment to visit your child's new school. You may want to take a walk around the building and walk the route to your child's new classroom.
- During your visit, take pictures of your child in different places around the school. Use these to make your own "book" about going to school.
- Take advantage of Kindergarten orientation – this is a great time for your child to meet her new teacher, explore her classroom, and meet new classmates!
- Drive your child's bus route. Look at points of interest along the way.
- Go to the library and check out books about starting school.
- Get your child used to new faces – arrange play dates with future classmates.
- A week or so before school starts, begin waking your child at the time he will need to wake up in order to go to school. This will help you know how much sleep your child will need so that he or she is rested for school. Adjust bedtime accordingly.

## **On the first days of school:**

- Make sure your child has something to eat in the morning. Hungry children spend more time paying attention to their stomach than to the teacher.
- Give your child a picture of your family to keep in his desk. He can look at it whenever he feels lonely.
- Give your child a way to remember you – a piece of jewelry, a rock you found together, a "lipstick kiss" on paper, etc. to keep in his book bag or desk.
- Go through your child's book bag each day after school – look for teacher notes, homework, school news.
- Celebrate – families should proudly celebrate the first day of Kindergarten as an important passage in a child's life.

## **If your child doesn't want to go to school:**

- Be matter of fact – let your child know that going to school is expected of them.
- Don't give in to pleading – as hard as it is, if you give in to your child's pleas not to go to school, it will make it that much harder for him to go next time.
- Don't repeatedly tell your children how much you're going to miss them when they go to school. This will only make it more difficult to separate from you.
- Most children are afraid of the unknown – preparing your child *beforehand* will relieve many of their fears.

## **Parent Jitters:**

- Try to keep your own anxiety in check. Children can often sense when their parents are upset and can become nervous themselves.
- Talk it out – if you are nervous about your child "leaving the nest," talk with someone you trust... a friend, your parents, a clergy member, or a school employee (teacher, school counselor, school psychologist).

