

Ten Tips for Adjusting to a New School

Tips to help make your child's first day easier

Whether your child is moving to a new neighborhood or making the leap to middle or high school, the first few weeks may be filled with anxiety as well as excitement. These 10 tips will help your child make a smooth transition to your new school.

1. Make it a team effort. If you're choosing among a few schools, talk with your child about what each school has to offer. When it comes time to select specific classes, make sure your child is part of the process.

2. Keep a positive focus. As the first day draws near, begin talking to your child about her expectations, hopes and fears for the upcoming school year. Reassure her that other children are having the same feelings and that she's sure to have a great year. Present school as a place where she'll learn new things and make friends.

3. Encourage school involvement. Though you don't want your teenager to become over-committed, it's important to encourage participation in one or two activities that particularly interest him. He's more likely to engage academically if he feels connected through a school activity, club or sport. Talk to him about his goals for the school year and how he might like to be involved in school outside of the classroom.

4. Early to bed, early to rise. If your child has enjoyed a vacation of late nights and lazy mornings, getting him up for school on the first day can be difficult. Help make this transition easier by starting his school-year sleep routine a week or two in advance.

5. Take a trial run. Take some time before the start of school to make sure you and your child know where to go and what to do on that first morning. Show your child where the bus stop is, or, if she walks, map out the safest route to school, avoiding vacant lots and places where there aren't a lot of people. Warn your child to always walk with a friend and scout out safe houses to go to in case of emergency. If you can find out what classroom your child will be in, visit the classroom ahead of time so she knows exactly where to go in the morning. You

may even want to call the school in advance to find out about any special first-day procedures.

6. Stock up on supplies. On or before the first day of school, make sure you or your child finds out what [school supplies](#) and materials are required. Most schools should provide a handy list for the younger grades, but if not, take it upon yourself to ask and then purchase them as soon as possible. Middle and high school students should be sure to take along a notebook and pen or pencil on the first day.

7. Prepare the night before. To avoid the morning rush, organize what you can the night before. Lay out clothes, make a lunch and assemble any supplies your child may need. Be sure to get everyone up extra early so you'll have plenty of time to calmly get ready and get out the door on time.

8. Get a healthy start. Encourage your child to eat a good breakfast and pack a healthy snack to help her get through the day.

9. Accompany your little one. Even if your elementary-school child will be riding the bus regularly or walking to school, you may want to take him yourself on the first day, particularly if he seems nervous.

10. Introduce yourselves. Young children are often shy with a new teacher. If you take your child to school on the first day, you might want to go into the classroom and introduce your child to the teacher. Let the teacher know about any special interests or challenges that your child has.

Reading books together about school is a good way to establish the reading habit and to start conversations about school excitement and fears. To get you started, here are some suggestions for elementary school-age children:

The Bernstein Bears Go to School by Stan and Jan Bernstein. Random House, 1978

Arthur's Teacher Trouble by Marc Brown. Trumpet, 1986

The Day the Teacher Went Bananas by James Howe. Penguin, 1987

Curious George Goes to School by Margret Rey. Houghton Mifflin, 1989

[Encourage your child to eat a good breakfast and pack a healthy snack to help her get through the day.](#)