

Helping Your Child Have a Successful Start in Kindergarten

"Things Your Child Wants You to Know"

Transitioning to kindergarten can be both an exciting and a stressful time for you and your child. Children are leaving either the home environment or the familiar environment of their early education setting to go to a new place. Your child may be expected to do many new things in addition to the typical things we think of learning in school. They will also learn new rules, ride a bus, eat in a cafeteria, and make new friends. Families can help their child have increased confidence and success in school by helping them in the following ways:

Your child needs:

How you can help:

I need to have a good foundation for learning.

- Help me be prepared by reading to me every day and by providing opportunities for me to count, sort, cut with safety scissors, draw, and learn nursery rhymes.
- Help me to recognize and begin to write letters and numbers.

I need to feel good about myself.

- Praise me for my strengths and little accomplishments.
- Help me feel good about all the things I can already do.
- Pay attention to me and listen to my ideas.
- Teach me that all my feelings are okay, but not all my actions are okay. For example, it's okay to be upset, but it's not okay to hit somebody.
- Teach me ways to calm myself down when I get frustrated.

I need to learn to get along with others.

- Help me find friends at day care, preschool, or in the neighborhood that might go to Kindergarten with me.
- Show me ways to make new friends, by having some of my classmates over to play.
- Help me understand how I can be friends with children who are different from me.
- Teach me what to do when someone hurts my feelings.

I need to know how to talk with others and to listen to them.

- Talk with me about things I'm interested in.
- Teach me how to know when it's my turn to speak and when I need to listen.
- Teach me words to describe my feelings and needs, and when to use them.
- Above all, please model the behavior, attitudes, and values you would like to see me learn.

I need to be able to identify myself.

- Help me memorize my full name, your name, my address, and phone number.
- Practice printing and recognizing my name with me. I will need to write it on my school papers and to be able to recognize things that are mine.

I need to be healthy and strong.

- Teach me to eat a well-balanced diet. I learn by watching you.
 - Make sure that I get regular medical and dental care. I will need to have all of my immunizations before I can go to school.
 - Give me the opportunity to run, jump, and play outdoors.
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I need to get familiar with my new school ahead of time.

- Decide which school I will attend well ahead of time and register me so that we will be included in activities to help us prepare.
- Take me there and walk around with me.
- Take me to play at the playground if the school allows.
- Point out my drop-off and pick-up point.
- Show me where my new classroom is and where the office, cafeteria, restroom, and playground are.
- Introduce me to my new teacher and principal when we visit.

I need to learn how to handle changes in my relationships.

- Help me adjust to leaving friends and caregivers that I won't see as frequently when I move to Kindergarten. Get contact information for my friends and preschool teachers. I may want to visit or send them a note about how I am doing in my new school.
- Keep a folder of my "work." I could give it to my new teacher as a gift to help us get to know each other.

I need to know what Kindergarten routines will be like and get prepared for them.

- Teach me to follow directions by giving me simple steps for simple chores.
- Help me to learn how to share with other children, to wait my turn, stand in line, and to sit in a circle for a story with my friends.
- Put me to bed and get me up at the new times for two weeks before school starts.
- If needed, walk me to the bus stop and point out some landmarks for me.
- Make sure to get me the supplies requested by the school (book bag, crayons, glue, tissues, etc.).

I need to eat a good breakfast before school and feel confident if I will eat snack or lunch there.

- Help me eat balanced meals.
- Find out whether my new school serves breakfast.
- Teach me how to use a cafeteria. I could get experience by going to buffet restaurants where I have to carry a tray, get silverware, etc.
- Teach me to open things by myself. Cardboard milk cartons and other containers can be hard to open without practice.
- Put my lunch money in a Ziploc bag or in a marked envelope.

I need to feel comfortable dressing myself and using the school restrooms.

- Go with me into public restrooms when we are away from home to practice.
- Help me to feel confident by sending me to school in clothes I know how to buckle, snap, zip, and button by myself.
- Show me where the restroom is when we visit my new school.
- Mark my coat, boots, back pack, etc. with my name.
- Send an extra set of clothes to school *just in case*.

I need to know that you think going to school is exciting and safe for me.

- When you say goodbye on the first few days, you may be sad. Please smile and wave goodbye (even if you cry after I leave) so that I feel confident and won't worry about you.

I need your support at my new school.

- Talk with my teacher on a regular basis about how I'm doing.
 - Attend parent meetings at my new school.
 - Volunteer to help out at school activities.
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The Butler County Early Care & Education Council is a community collaboration focused on improving school readiness which is made possible through the support of community partnerships and coordinated by Lifesteps, Inc. For more information, contact the Council Coordinator at Lifesteps 724-283-1010 ext. 310 or visit www.lifesteps.net
