

10 tips to get your child ready for school

Starting school is an important step in your son's or daughter's life—and yours. It's a big change. It's exciting. It's even a little scary. Here are 10 tips that will help you get your child ready for that first day of school.

1. **Get familiar with the school.** Before the first day of school, visit the school with your child so that the route, the building, and school surroundings become familiar.
2. **Start the routine early.** About a week or so before the start of school, begin putting your child to bed at a normal time for a school night. For a week before school starts, be sure your child then gets up, dressed, and fed like a regular school morning.
3. **Practise sharing.** Give your child all kinds of opportunities to be with other kids, to learn to share, wait, and take turns. That's what school is all about.
4. **Children should dress themselves.** You won't be at school to help your child get ready for the outdoors. Encourage children to practise at home putting on and taking off their own jacket, snowpants, boots, etc.
5. **Dress your child accordingly.** Your child is going to be active at school. Choose clothes and shoes that are comfortable and durable. Give your child outdoor clothing for all types of weather.
6. **Teach the importance of listening.** School means being able to listen. Kids need to understand and practise listening, things like: look at who is talking, don't interrupt, and think about what is being said.
7. **Learn at home.** Include learning in your child's everyday life. For example, a child can practise by reading package labels or weighing produce while shopping. Read to your child. Play word or counting games.
8. **Develop young muscles.** Give your child every opportunity to exercise and develop larger muscles by running, climbing, playing with a ball, etc. Smaller hand muscles can be strengthened with *Play-Dough*®, pencils, and crayons.
9. **Set "at home" ground rules.** Figure out priorities for after-school activities, homework, chores, TV time, and video games before the first day of school. This will allow you to agree on a schedule and avoid confrontation later on.
10. **Encourage questions.** Give your child the confidence to ask questions in all situations. Let your child know that it's OK to tell the teacher if something is hard to understand.