

HOW TO ALLEVIATE ANXIETY ABOUT GOING TO KINDERGARTEN

It is understandable for children to experience first day school anxiety. Imagine what it must be like to suddenly leave the familiar comfort of home and be dropped into a new environment where everything and everyone is different. The first few days of kindergarten may be tears and trauma for some children who are not used to being away from familiar caregivers. Here are some suggestions to ease and help alleviate some fears and anxiety around entering kindergarten.

Downplay the milestone of entering kindergarten.

- Entering kindergarten is a milestone to be recognized. Try to keep transition smooth by making it familiar to them. For example, practice the walk or drive to school. Relate going to school like going to preschool or a music class. Focus on how school will be a place where they will meet friends and have fun.

Connect Family to School

- Have your child draw a picture of their family. Include names and photos if possible. This connection to home at school gives comfort and familiarity to children.
- Visit the school and the playground before entering kindergarten.

Identify the Roots of Your Child's Fears and Anxieties

- What exactly is your child afraid of? Talk to your child and find out what the worry is. Is it worries around the teacher, conflicts with friends or drop-off? Once you establish what the specific fears are, you will be better able to address their concerns by talking about it. Work with your child and their teacher to find solutions.

Connect Home to School

- There are 19 StrongStart programs where you can have a school experience with other families. Visit https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Student_Learning/Early-Learners/StrongStart/Pages/default.aspx for more information.



- Ready, Set, Learn is a resource to help ease the transition to school for families. Visit https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Student_Learning/Early-Learners/ReadySetLearn/Pages/default.aspx for more information.

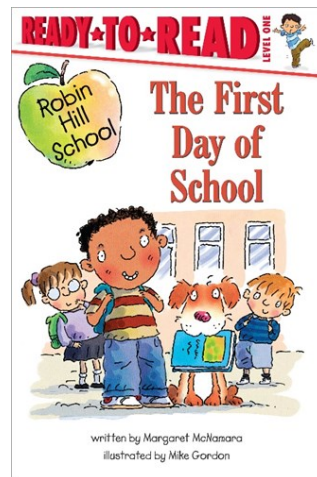


- Welcome to Kindergarten is a school-specific event specifically for four and five year old children entering kindergarten. Visit https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Student_Learning/Early-Learners/WelcometoKindergarten/Pages/default.aspx for more information.



Read Books about Starting School

- Reading books about other children who have fears and anxiety about starting school may be comforting to kids to know that others are experiencing the same feelings.
- Check out “My First Day at School” by Meredith Costain and Michelle Mackintosh and “The First Day of School” by Margaret McNamara.



Quick Goodbyes at Drop-Offs

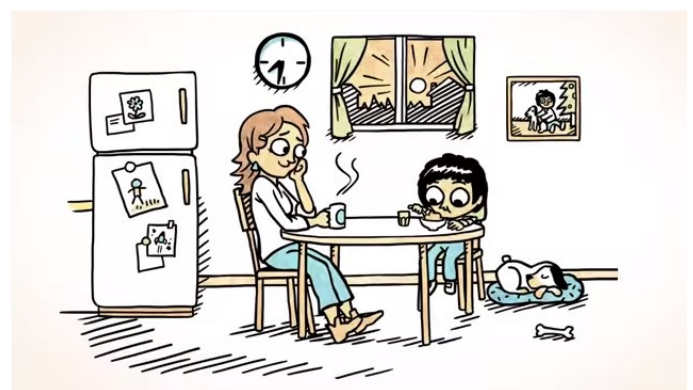
- Reassure your child that you will be back and say a quick goodbye. Lingering with only make it more difficult for your child to see you go. They may cry harder the next time in hopes to get you to stay. As difficult as it is to walk away while your child is crying, know that they are in great care in the hands of the kindergarten teacher. They will soon be playing happily with other friends.
- Avoid sneaking out as this may undermine your child’s trust and could worsen separation anxiety.



Visit Anxiety Canada for More Information



- Anxiety Canada has resources around separation anxiety, fears of being alone, making friends. Visit the links below for more information.
- Separation Anxiety
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/disorders/separation-anxiety-2/>
- Fears of Being Alone
<https://www.anxietycanada.com/fears-worries-and-stressors/fears-of-being-alone/>



- YouTube Video from Anxiety Canada and the UBC Anxiety Projects Lab — Helping Your Kindergartener with Separation Anxiety — https://youtu.be/r_5eiYlo1XM

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