

# KINDERGARTEN CONFIDENCE: “TIPS FOR A CALM START”

It is natural for children to feel anxious on their first day of school. Imagine suddenly leaving the familiar comfort of home and entering a new environment where everything—and everyone—is different. For some children, the first days of kindergarten may include tears and distress, especially if they are not used to being away from familiar caregivers. The following suggestions can help ease fears and support children as they adjust to kindergarten.

## TALK ABOUT ATTENDING SCHOOL POSITIVELY

Entering kindergarten is an important milestone. Help make the transition smoother by building familiarity—practice the walk or drive to school, and connect school to experiences your child already knows, such as preschool or music class. Emphasize that school is a place to make friends, explore, and have fun.

## IDENTIFY THE ROOTS OF YOUR CHILD’S WORRIES

Find out exactly what your child is afraid of by talking with them. Are they worried about the teacher, making friends, or being dropped off? Identifying specific fears allows you to address them directly. Collaborate with your child and their teacher to find solutions and provide reassurance.

## REDUCE ANXIETY AHEAD OF TIME

- Visit the school or playground together.
- Discuss your child’s day and the fun activities ahead.
- Share your own schedule.
- Clearly explain the start and end of the day.

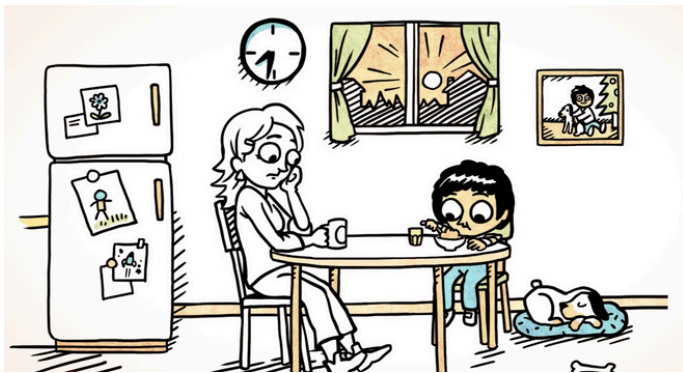
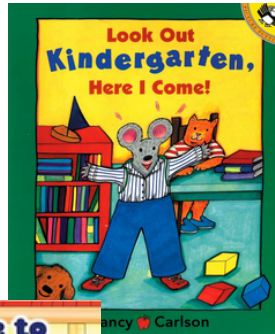
## SUPPORT BIG FEELINGS

- Practice deep breathing with your child regularly.
- Stay close when they’re upset and reassure them.
- Model calm by breathing deeply yourself.
- Continue breathing together until they regain control.
- Acknowledge feelings: Validate that their emotions are real, normal, and healthy.



## READ BOOKS ABOUT STARTING SCHOOL

Reading books about children who feel nervous about starting school can reassure kids that they are not alone. Consider titles like The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn.



Video from Anxiety Canada: Helping Your Kindergartener with Separation Anxiety – [https://youtu.be/r\\_5eiYlo1XM](https://youtu.be/r_5eiYlo1XM)

## QUICK GOOD-BYES AT DROP OFF

Reassure your child that you will return and say a brief, confident goodbye. Lingering can make separation harder and may encourage crying to delay your departure. Trust that your child is in caring hands and will soon be happily engaged with friends. Avoid sneaking out, as it can undermine trust and worsen separation anxiety.

## RESPOND TO ANXIETY HAVE A PLAN

- Follow a flexible timeline (Let your child's comfort guide how long separations last—don't rely solely on the clock.)
- Parent, child, teacher roles (what will everyone do to help)
- Communicate the plan.
- Stick to it!
- Revisit the plan if the separation anxiety isn't improving -it's time to re-examine the plan

VISIT ANXIETY CANADA FOR MORE INFORMATION  
<https://www.anxietycanada.com>

