

# Helping Your Child (and You!) Feel Ready for Kindergarten

## Acknowledge Feelings

It's normal to feel nervous, worried, or even excited. Encourage your child to talk about their feelings and label emotions (happy, nervous, scared, excited). Research shows that naming emotions supports self-regulation and coping skills.

## Talk About Kindergarten

Share stories, pictures, and what a typical school day looks like. Read books about starting school and explore how characters cope with new experiences. Knowing what to expect helps children feel confident and prepared.

## Practice Social Skills

Encourage turn-taking, sharing, and playing with peers before school starts. Role-play common school situations like greeting friends, asking for help, or lining up. These experiences build confidence and friendship skills.

## Build Routines and Independence

Establish predictable morning, bedtime, and mealtime routines. Support self-care: dressing, using the bathroom independently, washing hands, and managing belongings. Children with consistent routines feel secure and ready for school.

## Use Calm-Down and Coping Strategies

Practice simple techniques like deep breathing, counting, or quiet reflection. Create a "calm kit" with a small toy, stuffed animal, or visual cue. Children who know how to self-regulate adapt more easily to new routines.

## Gradual Exposure and Familiarity

Visit the school, playground, or classroom before the first day. Attend open houses, StrongStart programs, or orientation events. Short separations or "pretend kindergarten" mornings can reduce anxiety. Familiarity builds confidence and comfort.

## Encourage Curiosity and Resilience

Talk about what's exciting about school: making friends, learning, and play. Praise effort and bravery in trying new things. Encourage questions and problem-solving. Resilient children learn to cope with challenges and grow from them.

## Model Calm and Positive Coping

Your reactions influence your child. Show calm, confidence, and optimism when discussing school. If parents feel anxious, acknowledge feelings but model strategies for coping.

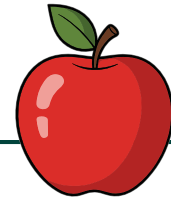
## Connect with Teachers & Other Families

Share your child's concerns with the teacher—they can provide extra support. Build connections with other families to exchange tips and support. Family-school partnerships strengthen children's adjustment and sense of belonging.

## Seek Support if Needed

If your child's worries are intense or persistent, consider talking with a school counsellor, psychologist, or family therapist. Early support can prevent anxiety from becoming overwhelming.





## REMEMBER:

Starting kindergarten is a big milestone for children and families. Feeling nervous is normal—but with preparation, support, and encouragement, children can enter school with confidence, curiosity, and excitement for learning.

## References & Resources

- BC Early Learning Framework (2019) – [www2.gov.bc.ca](http://www2.gov.bc.ca)
- Learning in the Primary Years (BC Ministry of Education) – [www2.gov.bc.ca](http://www2.gov.bc.ca)
- HealthLink BC Milestones of Development – <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics>
- OECD Starting Strong Reports (Early Childhood Education & Care) – [www.oecd.org/education/school/startingstrong](http://www.oecd.org/education/school/startingstrong)
- Research on Parental and Child Anxiety in Kindergarten Transitions – Springer & other peer-reviewed studies



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