

Beginnings at Preschool

What Your Child Needs at Our Preschool

- cloth bag for clothes (in cloakroom)
- shoes for classroom (not slippers)
- **labelled clothing for classroom, labelled clothing for garden**
- spare underwear and socks (kept in pocket wall hanger in classroom)
- box of tissues
- glue stick, labelled scissors (best on string or bow)
- toothbrush and own toothpaste (all children, even the youngest, use their own toothpaste)
- pyjamas (does not apply to children in kindergarten)
- Kindergarten students: **triangular crayons (please do not bring any other type)**, 10 sheets of white paper and a block of coloured paper

Instructions for the parents of new students

1. Talk to your child about what takes place at preschool and what it's there like.
2. Get your child used to being left on their own.
3. Guide your child toward independence.
4. Let your child know that you understand their fears of starting preschool...
5. If your child cries, be kind but firm.
6. Give your child something comforting to take along.
7. Keep your promises.
8. Establish a clear idea of how you view the new situation.
9. Do not promise your child any rewards in advance for being in preschool.
10. Talk to your child's teacher.

1. Talk to your child about what takes place at preschool and what it's there like.

Talk to your child about what takes place at preschool and what it's like there. You can use a picture book or talk to a child who is already in preschool (it should be someone who enjoys preschool, not someone who will scare your child with bad stories). Avoid negative descriptions such as 'they will teach you how to listen' or 'no one is going to bargain with you there'.

2. Get your child used to being left on their own.

Get your child used to being left on their own. For example, when you are leaving to go to the cinema without your child, tell them with confidence and love that you are leaving, but that you will return. Your child needs to know that they can rely on you. It is a mistake to sneak away from home in secret. Your child will feel betrayed, and you will only deepen their fear of separation.

3. Guide your child toward independence.

Guide your child toward independence, especially with regard to personal hygiene, getting dressed and eating. Your child will not be embarrassed that they are the only one who can't get dressed or go to the bathroom on their own.

4. Let your child know that you understand their fears of starting preschool...

Let your child know that you understand their fears of starting preschool, but reassure them that you are confident they will manage. You will increase your child's self-confidence in this way. If you want your child to enjoy going to school, they must have a positive feeling about school. Therefore, never threaten your child (your child will never like something they regard as punishment), and avoid threats such as 'if you misbehave, I'll leave you at preschool the whole afternoon'.

5. If your child cries, be kind but firm.

If your child cries, be kind but firm. Don't let your goodbyes go on for too long. Of course, don't leave in a rush or secretly, or even angry after arguing with your child.

6. Give your child something comforting to take along.

Give your child something comforting to take along (a stuffed animal, toy, scarf).

7. Keep your promises!

Keep your promises – if you say you'll come after lunch, you should come after lunch.

8. Establish a clear idea of how you view the new situation.

Establish a clear idea of how you view the new situation. Children are very good at picking up on the fears of their parents. Help your child conquer their anxieties by vanquishing your own. If you are afraid of being separated from your child and are not fully convinced that you want to put your child in preschool, you should rethink your decision to enrol them. An alternative solution is having the parent with less anxiety take the child to school.

9. Do not promise you child any rewards in advance for being in preschool.

Do not promise you child any rewards in advance for being in preschool. Children experience stress not only from being at preschool on their own and adapting to a new environment. They are also afraid that they will fail and not receive a reward. Naturally, if their day at preschool goes well, praise your child and perhaps buy them some small treat. But material rewards should not become a habit or your child will demand a toy every day.

10. Talk to your child's teacher.

Talk to your teacher about possibilities for helping your child gradually adapt, e.g. you can come into the classroom at the beginning or you can leave your child at preschool for only two hours, etc.