

The start of kindergarten is so memorable. It signifies a major milestone. While this is exciting, it can also be difficult. Here are a few tips and tricks to help us manage.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Like you, your son/daughter will feel a range of emotions and thoughts as well as various behaviors (new or intensified).

- Excited, Nervous, Timid, Silly, Tired, Hungry, Fidgety
- May be clingy
- May be teary-eyed (Crying does not necessarily mean they do not want to go)
- May be excited
- All may seem well...Then, it may hit a few weeks down the road
- May talk to you a lot or may process quietly (new experiences, friends, peers, recess, snacks, teachers, academics, structured vs. unstructured times, etc.)
- Tired (Need 11-13 hours of sleep-Sleep Hygiene)
- Hungry
- Fidgety (try exercise in a.m.)
- More behaviors at home because they are 'good' all day at school

WHAT CAN HELP EASE THIS TIME

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Regulation refers to the ability to recognize and manage one's emotions to help build positive self-control, self-discipline, and impulse control.

While the change in routine, lack of sleep, high emotions will be whirling around, it is important that your child can learn to control actions and manage feelings, and, as adults, we help model that for our children, even though we are also feeling a range of emotions. The following can help with emotional regulation:

- Make Sure Basic Needs Met (Food, Sleep)
- Implement Healthy Coping Skills
- Deep Breathing, Mindfulness, Meditation, Prayer, Yoga, etc.
- Model How to Appropriately Manage Feelings
- Talk about Process of Managing Strong Emotions in Healthy, Positive Ways

MAKE TIME TO TALK - TIPS TO HELP TALK WITH CHILD

1. Get on their level
2. Listen (non-verbals; restate)
3. Validate their feelings (may not validate behaviors if they are counter-productive to emotional regulation)
4. Give them time (carve it out daily; no distractions, including cell phones)
5. Coach them through (scaffold supports so they learn to go through it independently)
6. Provide Ongoing, Loving Support

EASING SEPARATION CONCERNS

What if my child seems to have "Separation Anxiety?"

- Comfort Child
- Let them know you love them
- Tell them what is going to happen (e.g., while they are at school, you are going to go to work, clean the house, etc.)
- Good-bye Ritual (same every time)
- Tell them you will be back at a certain time (important to then be on time)
- Encourage your child to do an activity and tell them you want a report when you pick them up (e.g., tell a friend a joke)
- Endorse the teacher to keep your child excited about him/her
- Make a story together about kindergarten
- Play school at home
- Take your child to play on the school's playground in the evening or on weekends so they have fun and associate the school with you and good memories
- Arrange for playdates with kids in class
- Limit after school activities, especially early in the year (may be too tired, which stresses their ability to emotionally regulate)
- Give the child a small memento that is school appropriate that remind them of you. There are many ideas on the web (e.g., Pinterest, Etsy, etc.).
 - Trace your hand, kiss it and let them carry it in their pocket when they miss you
 - Matching Parent/Child necklaces or bracelets



BOOK CORNER

- Clifford's First Day
- First Day Jitters
- I Love You All Day Long
- Kindergarten is Cool
- Off to Kindergarten
- Jack Starts School
- Llama, Llama Misses Mama
- Mommy, Don't Go
- The Kissing Hand
- Wemberly Worried