



Tips to Help Your Child Transition to a New School

Transitioning to a new school can be difficult for kids. Whether it's your child's first day of elementary school, their first day of high school, or you're moving to a new school district, starting a new school can affect a child's academic performance, social development, and mental state.

There are things you can do before and during your child's switching to a new school to help them feel comfortable, and get used to their new environment.

1. **Talk it out:** Ask your child questions like what are you most excited about for your first day of school? What are you worried about? The way you talk about going to a new school will shape how your child views it.
2. **Replicate first day of school traditions:** Continue on with former traditions like making a special breakfast for the first day, or planning a stop at the library, or a visit to grandma's house after school. Offer your child a little extra TLC and minimize changes within the home.
3. **Make new friends early:** Take advantage of the time before school starts. If possible let your child join a sports team or attend a day camp where they can make friends that go to their new school, and have these friends over for a play date.
4. **Take a test run:** Do a practice first day of school and take your child to their bus stop or drive them to school. If possible arrange to meet their teachers before school starts and have a tour of the new school. Make teachers and administrators aware of the last school your child went to and ask if they have any helpful suggestions.
5. **Stock up on school supplies:** Choosing their own backpack, lunchbox, binder or clothes might help your child feel more confident and in control on their first day.
6. **Be involved:** If possible volunteer at your child's school or help out with a school sport or club. Try to take an active role in their school environment and get to know your child's friends and the other parents.
7. **Be patient:** During a transition phase, your child may be quieter than ever, or begin to question everything. They might have more attitude than they normally do. Remember they're reacting to a new environment, and you shouldn't change your standards for how they're expected to behave, but they will need time to adjust.
8. **Play school:** Try role playing with your child before school starts. They can be the teacher and you can be the student. This helps them think about what these respective roles mean, and they'll get to play with the concept of school, and see it as a fun scenario.
9. **Don't miss out on ZZZs:** During a stressful time, anxiety can make sleep difficult. Sleep deprivation can adversely affect mood and academic performance. Routine is really important during a high stress time of change. Make sure your child is getting enough sleep!

After your child has started a new school, you want to be on the watch for signs of strain and stress. Look out for these signs your child needs some help adjusting to their new school:

- repeatedly refusing to go to school
- throwing tantrums whenever school is mentioned
- recurring meltdowns when you try to bring them to school
- suffering separation anxiety and needing you more than they have in recent months or years
- changes in sleeping or eating habits

If you notice your child's showing signs of poor transitioning, it's important to talk to them about it, and to meet with their teachers and administrators so you can work to target the sources of your child's discomfort. School guidance counselors and school psychologists can also help with difficult transitions. They can sometimes designate a faculty member as a contact person with whom you can communicate. The school may even be able to pair your child with a "buddy" like a built in friend who is comfortable in the school already.

Source: <https://pathways.org/blog/tips-to-help-your-child-transition-to-a-new-school/>