



# Bear Creek Preschool

Faith • Mind • Heart

## TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING TO PRESCHOOL

### PREPARING YOUR CHILD

Take advantage of any orientation opportunities.

Go to a summer play date and try to facilitate bonding with just one or two other kids. Schedule a one-on-one play date with a classmate.

Make sure your child is familiar with the school. Do a quiet walk through before or after a play date. Make it low key. You can talk about things that are around the building to help build a point of reference for your child.

Attend the Back-to-School Social and the one-on-one with your child's teacher.

Take time to connect with your child's teacher. Take a picture with teacher during the one-on-one and put it on the fridge or special spot at home so your child will have a visual of this special person with whom he/she has connected. Speak fondly of teachers: "I bet your teacher will love to hear about..."

Start a dialogue with your child early about what a typical day will look like at school.

*"We will get up and have breakfast and get dressed and get in our car and drive to school and mommy or daddy will walk you in. We will put your things away and say hello to your teacher together. You will sit down to start your day and mommy/daddy will give you a hug and kiss. Then mommy/daddy will say goodbye and leave. We always come back. I can't wait to see you then and hear all about your day."*

Introduce your child to classroom type activities such as coloring, sitting quietly while listening to a story, looking at books, and following directions.

Help your child practice self-help skills so that he/she can independently:

- Wash his/her hands
- Put on coat, boots, and mittens
- Put on shoes (make sure to purchase shoes your child can put on without help)
- Drink from a cup (not a sippy cup)
- Manage bathroom needs, including asking to go to the bathroom
- Blow his/her nose in a tissue
- Cough and sneeze into his/her elbow

Consider signing up for Bear Creek Summer Camp so your child can meet teachers and potential classmates and practice being in a classroom environment.

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## DEALING WITH SEPARATION ANXIETY

If you have a child who may have trouble separating, make sure you have given many opportunities to practice separating from you before the first day of school.

- Start with enrolling in a dance class, soccer class, or music class where he/she is participating with a group of peers but you are still nearby.
- Leave him/her with a babysitter or family member.
- Enroll in summer camps.
- Attend Sunday School at church.

If you are concerned about separation anxiety, talk with the teacher about it at your one-on-one appointment. Ask the teacher how she will plan to handle tears and for ideas or input on how to make the transition easier.

Model confidence. If you are worried about the transition, your child may pick up on your cues and become more worried. Be calm and positive about this new opportunity for your child.

Know that even with much preparation some children still may have trouble separating. This is normal and natural because school is a new space for your child.

Create a goodbye routine that is predictable and fun.

## TOILET TRAINING

Make sure your child is not just toilet trained but able to be bathroom-independent before the first day of school.

- Dress him/her in clothes he/she can easily (and quickly) pull up and down on his/her own (no difficult buttons or snaps).
- Provide plenty of opportunities to use a regular toilet, not just a potty chair.
- Make sure he/she is comfortable going to the bathroom in new places.

Bring in a change of clothes to school in case of accidents. Your child's teacher will request that you put a change of clothes in a Ziploc bag, labelled with your child's name.

## THE FIRST DAY

Enter the classroom confidently and step back to let the teacher connect with your child.

If your child cries or does not want you to leave, remain calm, and take cues from the teacher.

While it may be difficult, the less time you spend in the classroom on that first day the easier the transition will be on your child.

Make sure to say goodbye to your child without sneaking out. Once you have done so, promptly exit the room.

Feel free to bring in a comfort item in the first few weeks if it will help your child transition.

Your child's teacher is well equipped to deal with crying, and usually students recover quickly once parents have left. If there is prolonged crying, she will contact you. Know that your child is in a safe and loving place and will be happy to see you when you return!

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