

# Helping my child adjust to school:



Why is my child having a hard time adjusting to school? What can I do to help them?

Imagine you are starting work at a new company, in a new building and having to get to know new people. The feeling can be nerve wrecking and scary. In addition to nerves, you may be feeling stress, anxiety and fear. You may process all your feelings by talking to a loved one, exercising, and self-encouragement to build resilience.

Our little ones go through similar if not more daunting experiences when they enter a new school. They are struggling to process all the new stimuli as well as trying to understand why they have to be sent to spend an uncertain amount of time in this new place, with new faces. As far as babies go, they may not even know if mummy or daddy are actually coming back to get them home.

Even if they have been attending the same school, reentering the new year with a new teacher perhaps, or having to readjust to the school routine from their holiday schedule are all stressors for our little ones. While we as adults have ways of processing our stress and emotions, our kids are still learning how to do so, and need our guidance.

Allowing our children to express themselves helps build trust and connection. We want our children to feel like they can share with us their struggles and fears, and even feel comfortable telling us if there is something of concern happening in the school.

Our kids are struggling to process all the new stimuli as well as trying to understand why they have to be sent to spend an uncertain amount of time in this new place, with new faces.



They need us to help them process their stress and emotions. They need to feel assured of their connection to us, and learn to trust and understand the process.



Prepare your child by supplying them with factual information.

*"When we wake up, we will have breakfast, get ready for school, walk over and teacher (name) will bring you into the classroom. I will pick you up after lunchtime, and bring you home."*



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Listen empathetically  
and validate their  
feelings.



*"Yes, you felt scared and you didn't like being in a new place with new faces."*



*"There's nothing to cry or be scared about. Stop your crying."*



Help them  
understand and trust  
the process over time  
with consistency.

*"Mummy & Daddy have to work so we are sending you to a safe and fun place to spend the day with teachers and friends. Mummy / daddy will always pick you up from school, after your lunch"*



Project confidence  
and be authentic.

*"Yes I know it is hard to let go of me right now, I wish I didn't have to leave you too.  
I am going to hug you for another minute and then pass you to the Teacher.  
I will see you at pick up after your lunch."*



Spend some time  
to reconnect.

*"I missed you so much today.  
I thought about you a lot.  
I am so happy to see you  
and I want to hear  
all about what you did today."*



Be kind and  
compassionate to  
yourself.

*Remind yourself of the reasons for wanting / having to send them to school.  
Know that you are doing your best and seek help / support to get you through difficult moments.*



Assess to see if your child is communicating that there is something of concern happening in the school.  
Get to know the school.  
Take time to chat with teachers and build common ground around wanting to give the children a safe and nurturing environment.

