

TIPS FOR STARTING PRESCHOOL

Set the tone - Smile, remind them of what they can expect that day, and talk about how much fun they're going to have. At the same time, don't minimize their concerns. You can reassure them and provide love and connection, but also set the expectation that school is for children and teachers that will lovingly take care of them and that there will be lots of play, fun, toys, and friends!

Setting a Goodbye Routine at Drop-Off - A good routine could be - walking them to the classroom, saying Hello to the teacher, hanging up their backpack, washing hands, finding an activity or friend, hugs and kisses, and saying goodbye. When the child seems more adjusted to the program, a goodbye at the entrance seems to work well.

Helping them transition with an activity or finding a friend - Having a friend they feel comfortable with or an activity that they love to do can be really helpful for a child to feel better about separating from their caregiver. Playdates outside of school and communicating with the teachers about their favorite activities can help them adjust to preschool.

Bringing a transitional object to keep in their backpack - Sometimes bringing a toy from home (or a family photo) could be the thing that gets them out the door and transitioned into preschool. They will need to keep it in their backpack but they are welcome to go to their backpack for a snuggle throughout the day.

Reading books at home - There are a ton of books about starting school and separation anxiety - here's a short list -

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn
My First Day at Nursery School - by Becky Edwards
Love, Mama - By Jenette Bradley
Llama Llama Misses Mama - Anna Dewdney
Mama don't go - By Rosemary Wells
See you soon - By Dilraz Kunnummal
The Invisible String - By Patrice Karst

Practice being apart - I realize with covid in recent history, your child's exposure to socialization might have been limited in their early years. If your child has spent most of their time with primary caregivers, having experience in a child care setting or adventures with family or friends is a good way to help them feel comfortable with others.

OR Spending more time together: While full time childcare is often needed due to work schedules, this amount of time away from home can be hard on young children and can make separation/ behavior management more difficult. When possible, having more down time with primary caregivers or close relatives can help decrease distress over separation, attention seeking behavior, and dysregulation.

Going through the daily schedule with them - Sometimes kids just need to know what comes next, you could go through our daily schedule at home (no need to talk about specific times, they aren't quite there yet :)) Just knowing that first comes play, then snack, then play, then story, then pick up, helps to break up their day in anticipation of seeing you again soon! Here's our morning schedule.

8:45-9:00	Arrival
9:00-9:30	Play and Project
9:30-9:45	Clean Up
9:45-10:00	Circle
10:00-10:30	Snack Time
10:30-11:00	Quiet Centers/Bathroom Break
11:00-11:45	Play or Nature Walk
11:45-12:15	Clean-up, Story, Goodbye

It's sometimes best to just say good-bye - It's important to know not to sneak away from your child as tempting as it may be sometimes, but it is okay to say it's time to say goodbye and walk away even if your child is feeling stressed about it. Most of the time, children adjust to their new surroundings quickly. We usually send an update after 10-15 minutes from drop-off to reassure you. If it takes several weeks of tears or very extreme separation anxiety, the teachers and I will work with you on some strategies that will meet you and your child's comfort level. You are also welcome to stay with your child if that is what aligns with your parenting style and meets the comfort of you and your child but it can make the process of adjustment a little longer and/or harder in some cases.

I hope these tips help in some way and I hope you all know that a big part of Kinderhaus' philosophy is that we want to provide a warm and loving environment for our children to feel safe in so I hope you all know that your children are in good hands! With that said, every child is different and you know them best and this is simply a list of suggestions. We will work with you and your child until your child is comfortable being at Kinderhaus.

