

How to Prepare when Transitioning from Preschool to Kindergarten for Students with Disabilities

There can be a significant difference between Preschool (PK) and Kindergarten Programs! Here are a few suggestions to help you and your student with special needs make this transition as smooth as possible!

Before Preschool Ends:

- Discuss with PK staff and school district where your child will be attending in the fall. Based on the level of support your student's needs, school placement may be determined by the IEP team.
- If helpful and time allows, request an IEP transition meeting that would include staff from the Kindergarten program
 - .Come prepared with questions.
 - Express concerns.
 - Ask if special education support will increase for a full day program?
 - Discuss drop off/pick up/transportation, lunch/snack time, bathroom routine, etc.
- Ask your student's PK teacher and/or IEP case manager how information will be shared with next year's team.

Summer Before Kindergarten:

- Provide structure and routine for your child.
- Consider a day camp or classes at the local recreation center (swimming lessons, art classes, etc.)
- Have your child participate in any reading programs offered through the library.
- Consider your student joining a social activity with similar aged peers.
- Practice basic academic skills at home; reading books together, identifying colors, shapes, numbers, and the alphabet. Make the activities fun!

Be Aware!

- Most Kindergarten students on IEPs will be in a regular learning environment. This means:
 - Going from part time school to a full day. An increase of school staff, class transitions (art, PE, music, etc.), distractions, noise, etc.
 - Larger class size with one teacher.
 - Increased expectations of academics, behavior and independent skills.

At the Beginning of the new School Year:

- Practice a routine at least two weeks prior to the first day of school. Ex: getting up, getting ready for school, bedtime routine.
- Discuss this new transition with your child in a positive way, making sure to talk about feelings.
- Attend the Back-To-School Night.

- Introduce yourself to school staff who will be involved with your child. If you did not have a transition meeting the previous spring, ask about drop off/pick up/transportation, lunch/snack times, bathroom routines, etc.
- Consider sharing a one-page description of your child's unique: strengths/needs, sharing what works, what doesn't work, and suggestions for success. Share with the new teachers.
- Become familiar with the school's website and parent portal for specific student information.
- If your child receives private therapy, share relevant information with the school.
- Throughout the school year, look for ways to provide social opportunities for your child.

Suggested Books to Read with your Child:

- "On the First Day of Kindergarten" by Tish Rabe and Laura Hughes
- "First Day Jitters" by Julie Danneber
- "Kindergarten Rocks" by Katie Davis
- "Off to Kindergarten" by Tony Johnston
- "Miss Bindergarten gets Ready for Kindergarten" by Joseph Slate
- "The Night before Kindergarten" by Natasha Wing
- "Little Critter First Day of School" by Mercer Mayer
- "I Love You All Day Long" by Francesca Rusackas
- "Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!" by Nancy Carlson
- "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn

Suggested weblinks:

- <https://www.worksheetfun.com/kindergarten-worksheets/>
- <https://www.superstarworksheets.com/kindergarten-worksheets/>
- <https://www.education.com/worksheets/kindergarten/>