



The Red House Academy

322 Union Street, Holbrook, MA 02343 781-767-3110

The Preschool Countdown: What to Do and When

As you begin the countdown to the first day, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Purchase a backpack together with your child. If possible, encourage to pick a non-superhero backpack.
- Label all items—backpack, lunch box, lunch containers, water bottle, jacket, shoes, blanket, cuddly,, etc.—with your child’s name.
- Figure out how your child will get to school and how she will come home. Talk to your child about the morning and afternoon routine so that she/he understands that she/he will be safe, okay, and cared for by his/her teachers.
- Start using your child’s “school bedtime.” Children often go to bed later as the summer months, and longer days, kick in. Help your child get into a preschool schedule by keeping to his or her school bedtime before school starts.

The Night Before Preschool

- Answer any last-minute questions from your child.
- Let your child choose (weather- and school-appropriate) clothes for her first day. Make sure that your child goes to bed on time.
- Pick a bedtime that gives your child a good night’s rest before his or her first day. Keep the bedtime routine soothing and relaxing. Don’t focus too much (or at all!) on the first day of school unless he/she wants to.



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The First Day

- Wake up early enough so that you and your child don't have to rush to get to preschool.
- Make breakfast for your child and, if possible, sit down to eat together—or at least talk with her/him as she/he eats and you get ready.
- Review the day's routine (what preschool will be like, how your child will get to school/come home).
- Pack your child's backpack together. If your child is bringing lunch, select foods that you know are his favorites. Having some familiarity on his first day is helpful as he adjusts to so many changes.

- Let your child choose a special stuffed animal or blanket to bring to school with her. These "loveys" can help children make the transition from home to school, and can also make naptime easier, too. You may want to send your child with a family photo or favorite book as well. These familiar objects can help if she feels lonely during the day.

Saying a Good Goodbye

These strategies can ease the jitters of separating on your child's first day at preschool.

- **Plan to stay a little while.** Staying for 5-10 minutes on that first morning can help ease the transition.. Together, the two of you can explore the classroom, meet some other children, play with a few toys. When you see that your child is comfortable, it is time to leave. If he is having a harder time getting engaged, you may want to ask your child's teacher to stay with your child as you say good-bye so that when you leave, he can turn to another caring adult for support.



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- **Keep your tone positive and upbeat.** Children pick up on the reactions of the trusted adults in their lives. So try not to look worried or sad, and don't linger too long. Say a quick, upbeat good-bye and reassure your child that all will be well.
- **Think about creating a special good-bye routine.** For example, you can give your child a kiss on his or her palm to "hold" all day long. Or, the two of you can sing a special song together before you leave. Good-bye routines are comforting to children and help them understand and prepare for what will happen next.
- **Resist the rescue.** Try not to run back in the classroom if you hear your child crying, as upsetting as this can be. This is a big change and your child may, quite understandably, feel sad and a little scared. But if you run back in, it sends the message that he is only okay if you are there and it is likely to prolong your child's distress and make it harder for him to adapt. Rest assured, teachers have many years of experience with helping families make the shift to preschool. Instead, you can wait outside the classroom for a few minutes to ensure that all is well, or call the school later in the morning to check-in.
- **Discuss School.** Talk to your child how his/her day was at the school. What do they like the most? What do they like to play with? What did they not like? Plan with the child together to make the situation pleasant. When discussing with the teacher make sure your child is busy and not around. Lets plan and make the transition easy for you and your child!
- **Help build a positive relationship by keeping home and school rules consistent.** This will allow the child to follow them without getting confused.