

# "First Day Jitters"

Remember your first day of school, or going to a new school for the first time? Back to school changes and "first times" can be very intimidating for some children, and parents too!

Changes and newness can be intimidating whether it's your child's first day of school, first day at a new school, in a new grade level at their old school, first year of high school. Preparing can help your child feel more confident and have a more positive school experience.



## 11 tips for calming "School Jitters":

1. Talk with your child about being apprehensive, nervous, or excited about school. Treat going to school as part of the normal course of events. Assure your child that fears and concerns are normal feelings and that many of the children, parent and teacher will be have these same feelings.
2. Attend school informational meetings with your child. Take a school tour. Help your child find their way around the school and the location of their classroom, where the bathrooms are, the office, the cafeteria, and the library. If your child will ride the bus, show him/her where the bus will drop her off.
3. If your child requires medication, treatment or special needs, talk to the school nurse, teachers, and administrative staff. Talk to your child about how their needs will be handled at school (what time to go to the office for medication, what foods she must avoid in the cafeteria, etc.)
4. Make a plan when any emergency situation happens, what should they do if you are late picking them up, or if no one is home when they arrive home. Having a plan will help your child avoid panic and stress.
5. Make arrangements with your child as to the drop off and pick up plan if a car rider. Go over that process with your child.
6. Start a morning routine, allow enough time for a good breakfast, and time for slow-moving, sleepy kids. Going to bed early and getting up 15 to 30 minutes early so everyone is not rushing around and start the day flustered.
7. Each night before bed have your child pick out the outfit they plan on wearing to school the next day. This will save time and stress on busy school mornings.
8. If your child is going to school for the first time, expect to feel emotional about it, but try to keep your own emotions in check until you are out of sight. Don't make a big deal out of saying goodbye. If your child cries or is very upset, try not to overreact. Comfort and reassure them and say goodbye. After you leave, kids calm down once they know you are gone and the teachers know how to re-direct their attention.
9. Talk to your child about their day, let him tell you all about it and encourage him to share his experiences.
10. Don't schedule too many after school activities. Kids need time for rest and free play before doing homework, dinner, bath time and bedtime.
11. Encourage your child to share his or her feelings, praise your children for handling the changes in their schedule well, volunteer at their school if possible, encourage them to talk about the excitement of starting at a new school, and discuss any concerns your child might have. Be a good listener.

Parent Involvement Commission  
California State PTA