

# Strategies for a Successful First Day of Preschool and Kindergarten

(For you and your child))

It's time for your child to start school and you are worried about leaving your child. Will your child cry or fuss or hang on to your leg, not wanting you to go? What about you? Will you be confident, enthusiastic about this next step or close to tears? What's the best way to handle all these conflicting emotions? You want your child to be excited and eager to go and have a successful start, but you know separation might be difficult.

First, be aware that it is normal for many young children to cry when they separate from you and try a new experience. Sometimes your child may be fine until other children start crying. Usually the crying ends rather quickly. Separation anxiety can occur at any time during the school year.

There are things we do at Desert Sun to make this new situation easier for the children and families. There are also things you can do to support your child.

1. Attend parent orientation. This will help you learn what to expect from the teacher and classroom environment.
2. Please bring a photo of your family to put in the classroom or class book. If your child starts to miss you, looking at the pictures really helps.
3. Talk to your child about his or her new teachers and new classroom. Discuss what he or she will be doing at school. For example, reading books, painting, playing with blocks, taking care of animals and meeting new friends.
4. Do some pretend play with your child and play school.
5. Make sure your child gets plenty of **SLEEP** and **NUTRITION** before school.
6. Allow enough time to get ready for school so you don't feel rushed and stressed.
7. Agree on a good-bye ritual: help your child get involved in an activity. When it is time to leave tell them you are leaving and will return at Adios Amigos time (snack time, outside time, etc.). Don't waver. Make departure quick and matter-of-fact, being careful not to feed drama. However, do hear your child out and validate feelings as important. Teachers will help in the transition. Make sure you return when you told them you would be back. Never sneak out of the classroom.
8. **DON'T HANG AROUND AFTER YOU HAVE SAID GOOD-BYE.** Sometimes we will walk the child around the school if they are upset. If your child sees you are reluctant to leave, it makes it even more difficult.
9. Be confident in the school that you have chosen. Realize that your child will be loved and cared for.