

BACK-TO-SCHOOL CHECKLIST ✓

ELEMENTARY GRADES by Andrea Gutierrez

Get Started

- Make sure your child is enrolled and all registration paperwork is complete.
- Find out when the semester starts and what time to arrive.
- Obtain school policies and review them with your child before school begins (school closures, disciplinary action, procedures, etc.)
- Determine which preparations for the school day are best accomplished in the evenings and which should be part of the morning routine.

Medical Requirements

- Ask your family physician if your child is up-to-date on immunizations. (You can obtain a list of required immunizations from the school district.)
- Inform the school of your child's medical needs, allergies or medications (if any) that will require special attention.
- Schedule a physical exam if it's required for PE or extracurricular sports participation.

To and From School

- If your child will ride the bus, become familiar with the pick-up and drop-off times and locations.
- If you will be driving your child to school, find out the school's policy on pick-up and drop-off times and locations.
- Inquire about carpooling groups if you're interested in making arrangements with other families.
- If your child will walk to and from school, determine the safest route, and find out if there are crossing guards at busy intersections. Walk the route with your child. Practice crossing the street at designated crosswalks and review pedestrian safety.

Meals and Snacks

- Inventory your pantry to determine which items you'll need to purchase for sack lunches and snacks. Make a shopping list.
- Have quick breakfast options available for your child. Determine if the school has a breakfast program, if you're interested.
- Find out if your family qualifies for free lunches or reduced pricing based on household income.
- Find out the cost of breakfast and lunch menu items and the method of payment.
- Make note of whether your child will be required to bring his own healthy snack each day or if the teacher wants students to contribute to a shared snack cabinet.
- Inform the teacher of your child's food allergies (if any).

School Clothes

- If your child's school has a dress code or guidelines for gym class attire, shop for needed apparel.
- Involve your kids in purging closets of outgrown clothes, shoes and coats. Donate items to charity.
- Organize wardrobe and determine items that need to be purchased. Write out a shopping list of needed items.

School Supplies

- Search the school's website or call the office for a supply list.
- Go through your school supplies from last year to see what can be reused.
- Follow back-to-school sales to get the best price on each school supply.

- Buy extra supplies to keep at home for homework assignments. Keep them in a central location.
- Label your child's supplies, as well as his coat and lunchbox, with his first and last name.

Teacher and Classroom

- Find out who your child's teacher is and where the classroom is located. Tour common areas such as the nearest restrooms, the library, the cafeteria and the gymnasium.
- Ask your child's teacher how he or she prefers to communicate with parents. Obtain the teacher's and principal's phone number and email address.
- Ask the teacher for the scope and sequence of what your child will be learning in this grade level.
- Update your calendar with scheduled parent-teacher conferences, fundraising events, volunteer opportunities, etc.

After-School Schedule

- Establish a consistent routine for homework, snack time, playtime and bedtime.
- Set limits on screen time for the TV, computer and video games.
- Limit the number of organized activities that they will be involved in during the semester.
- Decide which school activities your family will participate in.

KINDERGARTEN by Katrina Cassel

Use the following guidelines to assess your child's readiness for kindergarten:

Motor Skills

- Can your child . . .
- throw a ball?
 - walk in a straight line?
 - color, draw, use a pencil and scissors?

Academics

- Can your child . . .
- tell a short story in sequence?
 - count to 10?
 - recognize basic shapes and colors?
 - spell her name?

Social Skills

- Can your child . . .
- share with others?
 - play alone?
 - focus on schoolwork around other kids?
 - stick to a single task for several minutes?

Personal Skills

- Can your child . . .
- use the restroom?
 - fasten her pants?
 - wash her hands?
 - put on her coat?

To enroll your child in school, you'll likely need to provide the following:

- documentation of a physical exam by your pediatrician
- record of up-to-date immunizations
- your child's Social Security number (preferred but often not required)
- birth certificate
- proof of residency in the school district

This article first appeared in the Discovery Years edition of the August 2008 issue of the Focus on Your Child newsletters. Copyright © 2008 Katrina Cassel. Used by permission. ThrivingFamily.com.