

PREPARING YOUR CHILD TO TRANSITION TO A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Once you have selected the child care provider that is right for your child, your next steps are to prepare your child for what to expect so they can make a smooth transition.

Here are tips for how to prepare your child before they go to a child care provider, when the first day arrives, and when the first day is over.

Before Your Child Goes

- Talk early and often. Talk to your child about what to expect on their first day with a child care provider. You could say, *"Your first day starts next week. I'm so excited for you! Here are some of the things you will get to do that day..."*
- Arrange a visit. *"Tomorrow we are going to go to your school to meet your teacher."*
- Start your new routine early. For example, if you must get up earlier or do things differently than you normally do, start practicing those things before the day arrives.



When the Day Arrives

- Be positive and confident when dropping your child off with the new child care provider. Your child will sense your feelings. Feel confident in your choice and share your confidence with your child.
- Don't sneak away when your child isn't looking. Be honest and tell them you are leaving and provide reassurance that you will be back.
- Even though you have prepared your child, it might not go as smoothly as you had hoped. Your child might cry or hold on to you trying to convince you to stay with them. If this happens:
 - Take a deep breath to calm yourself.
 - Get down on their level so you can look them in the eyes and provide reassurance that you will be back. You could say, *"I know this is a new experience, and new experiences can be a little scary, but I know you can do it. I am going to leave now, but I will be back to get you."*

When the First Day Is Over

- When you pick up your child, check in with the child care provider and discuss how the day went.
- Check in with your child. You could say, *"I am so excited to hear how the day went for you. Tell me all about it."*
- Stop by unannounced at various times in the coming weeks and months.

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