

Mom's Moment: The Preschool Transition

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My son started preschool for the first time at two and half years old. It was January of last year- and I was a wreck. He was my first born- my baby- my preemie- my pal... how could this milestone already be happening? To say the least, I couldn't stop crying. I wrote him a letter before he started school ([click here to read](#)), with tears streaming down my face. And on day one, our sobs were in-sync. I spent the entire morning in the school parking lot crying, knowing he too, was having a hard time missing mama. But I powered through. And so did he.

Picking a preschool actually came pretty easy for us. We chose the school that felt right- that's all. It was simply a gut feeling, deciding on a school we found warm, welcoming, authentic and loving. A school where I knew he would be cared for and taken care of.

It took three solid weeks of hard drop offs and tears. But every day got easier, and within due time, he became a rock star school goer. And then I was the only one crying ([click to read my preschool follow up](#)).

Long story short, the preschool provided ME with a lot of hand-holding throughout the difficult transition. And so, because it's back to school time, I thought it fitting to share the insight with you.

For the record, my son started the 3s class early August. Day one drop-off was a breeze. Not a tear (at least from him). He was happy. He was confident. And I stood proud.

Here are tips courtesy of Leslie Scheck, Director of [Solel Preschool](#).

Getting your child ready for preschool:

- Take your child to playgroup, storytime, gym or music classes, or other social activities with other children.
- Talk about school. Read stories like *The Night Before Preschool*, *Maisy Goes to Preschool*, *I Love You All Day Long*, *Bye-Bye Time*, or *Llama Llama Misses Mama* to start the conversation about preschool.
- Visit the school, get to know the teachers, and become familiar with the classroom.
- Talk about what your child will do at school. Mentally rehearse the day with him/her and explain that "Mommy/Daddy always comes back."

On the first day:

- Do a quick drop-off and goodbye. Long drawn-out goodbyes lead to more tears and delay the inevitable.
- Act confident (even if you as the parent are nervous). Parents send a message of confidence and security when you show that you trust his/her teachers and feel comfortable leaving him/her here.
- Send a family picture with your child so he/she can see you when you aren't physically there.
- If there are some tears, the phase will typically not last more than a few weeks. (Going to school 5 days a week will definitely help speed up that transition process!) Know that your child will bond with his/her teachers and be loved and comforted by them.
- Ask your child about what he/she did at school. Talk to him/her about what will be happening during the rest of the week.

Things to look for when choosing a preschool:

- An environment that "just feels right" – You usually know when you walk in the door if the environment feels good. You will know if you feel safe leaving your child here.
- Low staff-student ratios – You want to know that your child is getting adequate one-on-one attention and interaction with his/her teachers.
- Low teacher turnover rate – You want to know that the teachers are happy, respected, and well cared for. *Some turnover is very common in childcare settings each year.

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