



Check off each item as you go – the week before, the night before, and the big morning itself. Rehearse the **day**, not the academics: a calm, practiced routine is the best first-day gift you can give.



The week before

- ☐ Shift bedtime & wake-up to school times
- ☐ Practice the route – point out their door
- ☐ Meet the teacher / visit, if offered
- ☐ Lunchbox drill: open every container solo
- ☐ Backpack practice: zip, hang, find the folder
- ☐ Bathroom independence check (buttons too!)
- ☐ Rehearse: “Can you help me, please?”

Ten minutes of rehearsal beats an hour of flashcards this week.



The night before

- ☐ Clothes chosen – by your child
- ☐ Backpack packed and by the door
- ☐ Lunch made as far ahead as possible
- ☐ Ordinary evening – dinner, one story
- ☐ No “tomorrow is HUGE” speeches
- ☐ Early, unhurried bedtime

Big speeches create big nerves – keep it wonderfully boring.



The morning of

- ☐ Wake with time to spare – no rushing
- ☐ A real breakfast
- ☐ Doorstep photo (one, quick!)
- ☐ Arrive on time – early enough to settle
- ☐ Goodbye ritual → then leave, warm & quick
- ☐ Never sneak out – always say goodbye

Tears at drop-off almost always stop within minutes of you leaving.



Our goodbye ritual

A hug, a kiss, a handshake, a phrase – agree on it in advance, keep it short, and do it the same way every day. Write yours here:



At pickup, expect...

- ☐ Tired, hungry, quiet – totally normal
- ☐ Snack first, questions later
- ☐ Try: “What made you laugh today?”

Why it works: children take their emotional cue from you. A rested child who can open their own lunchbox, and a parent with a short, confident goodbye – that's the whole recipe for a smooth first day.



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