

Before School Starts, Consider This

Counselors and teachers offer these tips for decreasing school anxiety for children and parents:

- Establish a routine by enforcing earlier bedtimes and a morning schedule.
- Smile, Mom and Dad. Children will become more frightened if they sense your apprehension.
- Tour the school and visit the classroom before school starts.
- Read children's starting-to-school books such as "Dinofours: It's Time For School"; "Tiptoe into Kindergarten"; "First Day Jitters"; "The Kissing Hand" and "Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come."
- Teach children it's OK to ask to go to the bathroom at school.
- Teach children to zip or button their pants.
- Teach children to open fruit cups and milk cartons (3-5 year olds.) (For the Older Two's -we prefer for the teacher to open these.)
- Teach children to sit in a chair for lunch and respect boundaries.
- Label sweaters, backpacks and lunchboxes.
- Ask children a variety of questions – "Who sat next to you today?" or "Do you like your teacher?" – instead of the standard "How was your day?"
- Be on time.