

# How to Prep Your Child for Every Grade in School, According to Teachers

Educational experts weigh in on how parents can help their kids get ready for the new academic year ahead whether they are in elementary.

Going back to school is exciting, but it can also be overwhelming and stressful for kids. Fortunately, there are some practical things parents can do to help students prepare. Since no one knows how to get ready for a new school year better than a teacher, we asked some who teach K-12, as well as counselors and principals, how to start the new school year off right. They share a handful of helpful grade-by-grade tips for elementary school.

## Elementary School Prep

Going into kindergarten looks a lot different from the start of fifth grade, but make no mistake about it: These formative years are all important. The biggest thing parents can do to prepare their elementary school-aged kids for the upcoming school year is simpler than you think you might think...

"Let them have summer," says Kayla Marston, an elementary school counselor who runs a blog called The School Counselor Kind. "It's a built-in break to recharge and rest up before another year of hard work. Whether that means attending a summer camp, hanging with family, or just staying home, allow time for some pressure-free fun."

Then reestablish a routine at least two weeks before the first day of school. "If your child is used to going to sleep at 11 p.m. during the summer but needs to go to bed at 7:30 p.m. [to wake up for school], not resetting for school could be problematic," says Mary Amoson, a kindergarten teacher and founder of Sharing Kindergarten, a resourceful site for educators.

Sending kids out the door with a healthy, nutritious snack is key to helping them stay full and focused in class. "I think applesauce pouches are especially great because they're hands-free," says Klara Knezevic RD, LD, CLT, a registered dietitian with Rebecca Bitzer and Associates. We like Mott's Applesauce Pouches with no sugar added—they are clear so you know exactly what's in there. "You don't have to worry about a spoon or the mess that comes with it."

Beyond that, here are some specific pointers for K-5.

## Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a major milestone so it can seem a little scary. Amoson, who has been teaching kindergarten for the past ten years, recommends parents talk to their kids about what to expect before the first day of school.

"You can also read many first day of school books with your little learner," she says. "And because children love their parents, throw in some fun first day of school stories of your own."

Most schools offer rising kindergarteners a chance to meet the teacher before the first day of class. "This is a great time to see the school, the classroom, the teacher, and even check out to see if a friend or neighbor is going to be a fellow classmate," says Amoson.

She also recommends making a habit of "reading to and with your child every night." Ask them open-ended questions, take time to explain any "big words" they do not understand and work with your child on sitting and waiting. As Amoson says, "Just being able to sit and wait for a few minutes without having a task or something to occupy them is a skill!"

### **First Grade**

"Rising first graders should continue to read over the summer," says Erica Bohrer, a first-grade teacher and founder of Erica's Ed-ventures, a blog for teachers. "Flashcards for sight words and math facts are also a great way to stay prepared...You can make your own flashcards or search for smartphone/tablet apps that drill math facts, such as XtraMath."

### **Second Grade**

By this age, many kids are able to read independently. Do not just load them up with books you think will help improve their comprehension, though: Help them find books that are fun to read!

"These can be different for every child," says Danny Brassell, Ph.D., a former teacher and educational adviser who specializes in reading. "But the little boy who reads 'Captain Underpants' is going to be a better reader than the little boy that's not reading anything."

### **Third Grade**

Although many kids play online when they are much younger, many parents wait until their children are around this age to really introduce them to the internet. Matt Renwick, an elementary principal in Wisconsin, urges parents to be proactive when it comes to discussing online safety with kids.

"They should start having conversations as soon as their child becomes acquainted with any type of screen," says Warwick, who runs an educational blog called Reading by Example. "As kids get older, come up with agreed upon terms for how to use these tools."

### **Fourth grade**

Every school district is different, but some teachers begin assigning over-the-summer coursework to kids starting at this age. If students are struggling to find the motivation to complete this coursework, parents may want to implement a plan.

"I'd suggest finding a balance between doing a little work, and doing something of the child's choosing," says Marston, a school counselor. "I've seen some parents implement a chart that outlines a few activities their child needs to do before playing video games/having screen time. Summer coursework could easily be included in that."

To read the full article go to:

<https://www.parents.com/kids/education/back-to-school/how-to-prep-for-every-grade-according-to-teachers/>