The Church of United Brethren in Christ Social Service Division

Joyful Start - Pre-primary Institutions Social Work Service Team

Back to School Tips for Pre-primary Children

Introduction

As the time for back to school of kindergartens comes closer, pre-primary children will enter into a new learning stage soon. To most of the pre-primary children, having to separate from parents in young ages in order to adapt to a new school environment and social life would definitely be a great life challenge for them.

During the adaptation period, children may experience different emotions, such as feeling worried, anxious or uncertain. Children would have better adaptation to the school life if parents could facilitate the mental preparation of the children before they come back to school.

The “Back to School Tips for Pre-primary Children” handbook aims to assist parents to deal with children’s daily lifestyle attunement, preparation for school items, personal hygiene, emotion regulation and learning needs, so as to facilitate children’s adaptation to the school life.

Chapter 1 : Attuning Daily Routine

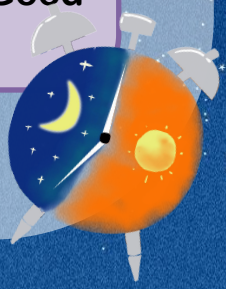
"I don't want to sleep. (Stay up late)"

"I will count down from 3 to 1. You have to sleep as soon as possible, otherwise you're not allow to go out tomorrow!"

Suggested Responses

<u>Response for children from lower grade:</u>
"Daddy knows you want to chat with me and I want to do so as well (saying with a kiss). Let us finish this book and then go to sleep. We will continue our chat tomorrow."

<u>Response for children from upper grade:</u>
"Daddy knows our sweetheart has not felt sleepy yet. However, it's time to go to bed! Let us close our eyes and calm down ourselves. I believe you can do it (saying with a kiss). Good night!"



Chapter 1 : Attuning Daily Routine

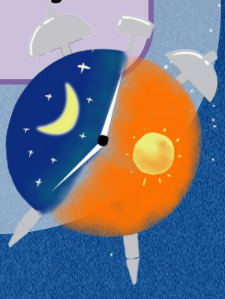
"I don't want to get up from bed! I want to sleep!"

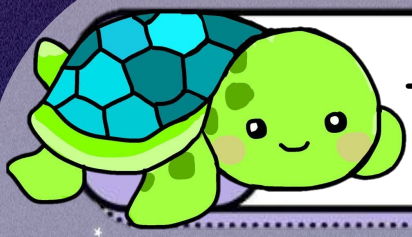
"Get up! Don't throw a tantrum."

Suggested Responses

<u>Response for children from lower grade:</u>
"(Daddy opens the door and curtain, speaks to the child gently with a kiss) It's time to wake up. I prepared your favorite fried egg for breakfast. Please get up and enjoy (Hug and kiss the child)!"

<u>Response for children from upper grade:</u>
"(Daddy opens the door and curtain, speaks to the child gently) The alarm clock is ringing. Do you need to sleep for five minutes more? I will wake you up after five minutes and I believe you can get up from bed on time."

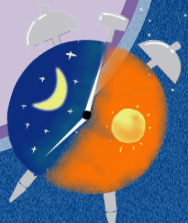




Tips for Chapter 1

Children age from 3 to 6 years old normally need to have 10 to 12 hours of sleeping time daily to ensure they have enough rest. Let's try the following suggestions to develop a good resting habit with children!

1. Develop static pre-sleep rituals such as parent-child reading time or bedtime kiss.
2. Avoid doing activities that make the child hard to fall asleep, such as watching TV shows till mid-night, using electronic devices before bed, over-exercising or doing activities that make the child feeling exhausted.
3. Ensure to reserve sufficient time to wake up the child. Otherwise, the emotion of the child may be provoked.
4. Create expectations for the child, such as prepare the child's favorite food for breakfast, reward the child with surprised gifts or place the encouragement card at the living room, so that the child can get it when he/she wakes up in the morning.
5. Set up feasible daily schedules with the child. Review and make modifications of the schedule from time to time.
6. Praise and encourage the child when he/ she makes little improvements.
7. If parents have tried different methods but the child still cannot improve his/ her bed habits, parents could let the child experience the consequences brought by this behavior. The consequences must be informed to the child in advance and executed as planned if needed. For instance, the family planned to go out to play this coming weekend. However, the family trip will be cancelled if the child fails to wake up on time as promised.
8. Adjust the child's wake up time gradually one to two weeks prior to the actual back to school date.



Chapter 2: Preparation for School Items

"Sweetheart, come and try to wear the school uniform."

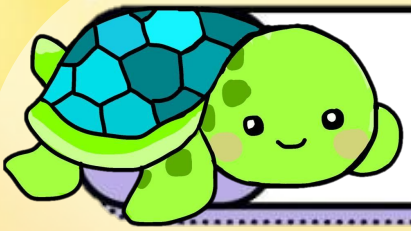
"No, I don't want to wear it!"

"Why don't you just come and try? Come over quickly!"

Suggested Responses

<u>Response for children from lower grade:</u>
"Mum would like you to try to wear the school uniform and see if it fits you. Do you want mum to help you for the fitting or you would like to try it yourself?"

<u>Response for children from upper grade:</u>
"I know you don't want to try on the fitting. However, since you grow taller now, mum feels worried that the school uniform doesn't fit you anymore, so please try on the fitting first."



Tips for Chapter 2

Let's help children to prepare the below school items and get ready for back to school. Let's check the list!

1. School uniform, jacket, white bottom shirt, white socks and shoes.
2. Water bottle, towel box, dry and wet towel and tableware (Depends on the school's request).
3. Schoolbag (Don't hang accessories or chains on it).
4. Face Mask for child (Depends on the quantity requested by the school).
5. Epidemic prevention hat (Depends on the school's request).
6. Diapers (If needed), spare school uniform and underwear (Store inside the ziplock bags).
7. Bedtime necessities (For children who attend whole-day classes).
8. Student name tags. Stick the name tags on all the child's belongings for identification.

Chapter 3: Personal Hygiene

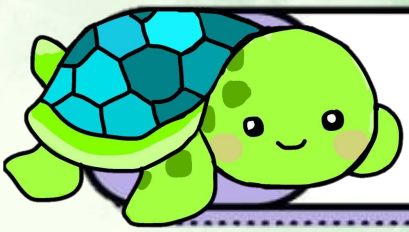
"I want to go back school without a mask. It is hot and uncomfortable."

"Everyone has to wear a mask! You cannot go back school if you don't wear it."

Suggested Responses

<u>Response for children from lower grade:</u>
"Yes! it is a bit uncomfortable. Mum helps you put more clean masks into the school bag. It will be more comfortable if you change another one during drinking water "

<u>Response for children from upper grade:</u>
"It should be uncomfortable of wearing the mask for long time. However, there are many viruses in the surroundings. Wearing a mask can help protect yourself and others. It is safe for you to chat with other kids if you wear a mask. I trust that you can do it!"



Tips for Chapter 3

It is important to raise the awareness of personal hygiene in order to protect yourself and others. It will be safer for going back to school.

1. Parents are advised to explain the measures for good hygiene at school, like wearing face masks and measuring the body temperature, etc.

2. Tell the child to maintain social distance with classmates and teachers beforehand, like not holding hands, shaking hands, and hugging. If they want to greet, they can nod, smile or wave their hands instead.

3. Prepare anti-epidemic kits for your children, including spare face masks, handrub, tissue, mask boxes, etc., to explain and practice the use of materials for children so that they can use them when they return to school.

4. Parents can sing hand-washing songs during washing their hands, wear masks for dolls, do role play for the scene of going to school and contact with classmates, etc., to strengthen awareness of hygiene and epidemic prevention.

5. You can also use movies and picture books to explain why it is necessary to maintain good hygiene and social distance with others, so that they understand the importance of epidemic prevention.

6. For children's worries and doubts, parents should express acceptance and understanding, so that children can gradually accept and understand.

Chapter 4: Emotion Regulation

"I don't want to go back school. I want mum…(sobbing)"

"Sweetheart, don't cry! You can see the classmates near you. They are brilliant that they don't cry."

Suggested Responses

<u>Response for children from lower grade:</u>
"I know that you really want to be with mum and don't want to go back school, if you miss mum (pressing own thumb on the child's chest), you can touch the chest and mum are staying with you."

<u>Response for children from upper grade:</u>
"I know that you really want to be with mum. You may not be used to schooling. If you miss mum during schooling, you can look at the photo and we will meet again after school."

Chapter 4: Emotion Regulation

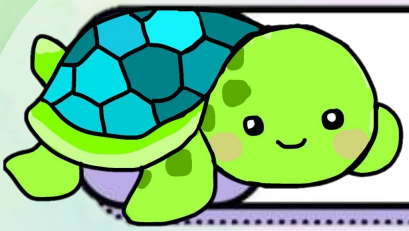
"Will i be sick? I'm very scared that I will get sick."

"What are you afraid of? There is nothing to scare."

Suggested Responses

<u>Response for children from lower grade:</u>
"I know that you are a bit worried. It is okay if we wear face masks and wash our hands immediately after we have arrived at school and home. "

<u>Response for children from upper grade:</u>
"I know that you are worried of being sick. It is okay if we try hard to protect ourselves. We need to wear the face mask properly with covering our noses and mouths and wash our hands for 20 seconds after we have arrived at school and home. "



Tips for Chapter 4

To assist children in cultivating emotional stability so that they can go through the adaptation period more smoothly and can be happy of schooling.

1. Before starting school, if parents observe the child's discomfort, it is better to have preparation with him/ her. When the child misses own family members, he/ she can see the photo or practice hand gesture to comfort himself/ herself.
2. In the first few days of school, it is better for parents to accompany the child to the school gate and send him/ her back to school earlier so as to let him/ her be familiar with the classroom environment and teachers. After school, parents should pick up your child on time, so as to avoid the child feeling anxious or uncomfortable.
3. Parents' attitude is very influential to their children. They should be relaxed and happy all the time when they accompany their children to school. Don't stare at children as they will be relaxed and be concentrated in the lesson gradually without being stared.
4. If the child has not been separated with parents or is not feeling well with separation, and cannot stop crying, parents should accompany him/ her for a while, let the child knows that you accept his/ her emotion, and trust the teacher's arrangements.
5. In the first few days of school, parents should spend time on accompanying with the child after he / she returns home in order to let him/ her feel warm and safe. Frequent questions on school life should be avoided so as to reduce the burden and pressure that the child may have.
6. Use more positive speech in the conversation with the child, for instance, "I see that you are happy to go to school".

Chapter 5: Interesting Learning

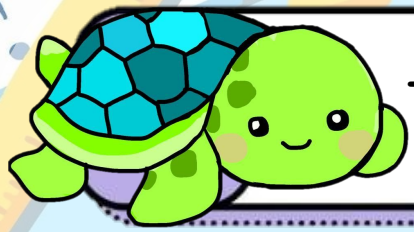
"I don't want to do homework anymore! It is exhausting that there are so many words to write and remember. "

"Kids must do homework. You are naught if you don't do homework."

Suggested Responses/ Games

Response for children from lower grade:
"Yes! It is really boring of doing homework for a period of time. Let's have a ten-minute break and continue when the clock alarm rings (setting the alarm)! After the break, you can try to play the matching game of pictures and words. You can be the little teacher and see whether Dad does the matching correctly."

Response for children from upper grade:
"I see that you are a bit tired. I really appreciate that you were determined in writing these words. You wrote them clearly. Let's have a ten-minute break! After that, we can try to use clay to build up these relatively difficult words to enjoy the learning fun! "



Tips for Chapter 5

To assist children in maintaining interest towards studies, studying with motivation continuously, being willing to learn at home and school, as well as developing positive and active learning attitude.

1. Use different senses to assist learning, for example,

(a) Hearing: Through listening and speaking, like listening to kid songs or invite the child to be the teacher for explaining, children's learning memory can be strengthened;

(b) Touch: Learning through touching things with hands, direct participation in operating different objects or gaining direct experiences;

(c) Sight: Through visible things, pictures, and videos to learn.

An example of game: Put an apple into a box; Cover the child's eyes by the eye mask and let him/her have a touch on the texture of the item (touch); Let him/ her put the nose near it and smell it (smell); Let the child guess what it is; Put off the eye mask so that he/ she can see a red apple (sight).

2. Encourage children to learn gradually and according to their abilities and interests; Avoid putting too much pressure and urge on children, which may diminish their interests and motivation in learning.

Conclusion

As long as parents accompany children in the process with support and encouragement, it is believed that children can adapt to school life gradually. Parents should maintain good communication with schools, and understand the situations of children in school adaptation. If parents have any concerns in children's development, please feel free to contact the school social worker.

Useful information

"Together, We Fight the Virus!", Department of Health
https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/chi/index.html

Psycho-education information Hub for Combatting the Novel Coronavirus, Social Welfare Department
https://www.swd.gov.hk/tc/index/site_pubsvc/page_cps/sub_2020/

The Church of United Brethren in Christ Social Service Division
https://cubc.org.hk/

Joyful Start - Pre-primary Institutions Social Work Service Team, The Church of United Brethren in Christ Social Service Division Facebook Page

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