

The first day of Pre-K can be a scary time for some kids (and some moms and dads too!). Starting school is something that kids have probably been thinking about all summer. Now, they walk in to a new room with all these new kids, and new grownups, and new “stuff” and maybe Mom looks a little teary-eyed that her “baby” is growing up so fast... well it’s no wonder some kids suddenly cling to parents and cry! Here are a few tips for getting through those first few days.

- Try to act confident yourself. If you seem anxious and unsure about leaving your child at school, children pick up on that and start wondering if there really is something to worry about!
- If possible, plan on staying for 5 or 10 minutes the first day getting your child settled. A longer or shorter amount of time may make separation harder.
- When it is time for you to leave, make sure you say goodbye. Trying to “sneak out” when the child is busy and not looking, sometimes makes kids panic a few minutes later, and may make separation even more difficult the next day.
- Separation problems sometimes show up on the second or third day, just when you think you’re getting off easy! It is also common for children to have problems when there are major changes in the home. Let me know if there is anything happening at your house that you think is important for us to know.
- Please know I realize how hard this can be. I understand that you are entrusting me with a very precious gift, and I feel very honored that I will be your child’s first teacher.
- If your child is having an especially hard time, I will give you a call at home or work.

I’m looking forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Bethany Flynn

## Center Time

It's nice to have a wide variety of materials in the centers for the children to use, but this can be overwhelming at the first of the year. It's better to have less to begin with, let them get used to the room and how things are set up, then bring more materials out a few at a time. I introduce most materials at large group time before I put them in the center. I don't have closet space to put things away, so I actually do have lots of things on the shelves at the beginning of the year, it just isn't all available. It's also a good idea to keep everything in the same place all year because it is less confusing for the kids. You don't want to rearrange things on your shelves too much because the kids will never understand how and where they should be put away.

The first few weeks of school, I only have the blocks, housekeeping, art, and reading center available. I slowly add other centers.

I do a lesson for each center before the kids use it, and we go over each center's rules every day for the first few weeks. We take a few things down and put them away asking the children if they remember where they go. Then, each child is given one or more items from that center and the children take turns putting them away. There are times when we have to repeat this. If things get out of hand in a particular center (safety issues or clean up issues), I close that center for a day, and we review the rules before using it again.

### Tips for each center:

- **HOUSEKEEPING:** I don't add dress-up clothes until October (2nd month of school for us).
- **BLOCKS:** At the beginning, we only have the basic wooden blocks. I don't add cars and trucks or animals until later.
- **ART:** My art center has a lot of materials. The first few weeks, the only materials available are paper, markers, crayons, glue, and scissors. I wrap the other materials in butcher paper and write the contents on the package.
- **WRITING:** This is done basically the same way as art. The first week, only paper, markers, and pencils are available.
- **MATH and ABC:** I put the manipulatives in to tubs. That way the kids can't get into them and spread them all over the room before we've had a chance to go over the center rules.
- **READING:** I only have a few board books out in the beginning. More books are added later.