

Preparing Your Child For Preschool: Important Advice For Parents

(NAPSA)—If your child starts preschool this fall, now is the time to begin preparing for the big first day. There are a number of fun activities that parents can engage in with their children to make the transition easier.

Gary Mangiofico, CEO of Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), a nonprofit organization that promotes access to high-quality preschools in Los Angeles County, shares ideas to help make your child's preschool experience enjoyable and rewarding for both parent and child:

- Before the first day of preschool, talk to your child about the transition. Remind children that once you leave the classroom, there will be a supportive, loving teacher to care for them.

- Stay with your child a little longer before leaving to ease anxiety. Assure your children that you will return in the afternoon to pick them up.

- Tour the preschool with your child before the first day of school. Visit important locations such as the classroom, bathroom, playground, drop-off/pickup area and so on. Make sure your child joins you on this visit so he or she can meet and spend time with the future teacher.

- Create a profile/snapshot of your child to share with the new teacher. This profile will provide a unique viewpoint of your child and can include information such as his or her birthday, likes/dislikes, food allergies, medications, important contacts and the like.

- Read books with your child about starting preschool, such as "What to Expect at Preschool" by Heidi Murkoff or "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn. Discuss how your child is feeling about the



Mom and daughter say goodbye as she starts her first day of preschool.

new classroom and ask what he or she is most looking forward to about preschool.

- Attend preschool-sponsored orientation events to introduce yourself to your child's new teacher(s). You will also learn what you can do to ensure a positive preschool experience for your child.

- Practice going through the first day of school morning routine, such as waking up early, brushing your teeth, picking out what to wear, walking/driving to school and so on.

Mangiofico also suggests hiding notes such as, "I love you" in your child's lunch bag or backpack to discover throughout the day, which will help foster a feeling of security. Finally, he recommends asking the teacher how to support your child's education at home, including developing social/emotional and academic skills.

Preschool is an important step for your child, an experience that will have a long-lasting effect. Not only will your children be better prepared for kindergarten and beyond, they'll enjoy the social benefits, such as making new friends.

For more information on choosing a preschool or about LAUP programs, visit www.laup.net.