

8 TIPS FOR A GOOD DROP OFF AT OUR SCHOOL

For the child

1. Bring something familiar.

A reminder of home will make those first few trips to daycare a little easier and provide comfort on difficult days. Wittenberg recommends "anything that smells like home" for babies. That might be a lovey, blanket or mom or dad's T-shirt or other clothing item. A laminated family portrait that an older child can hold onto can help too.

2. Create a goodbye ritual.

OUR School recommends families create a consistent goodbye ritual to create a fuss-free drop off. That might mean giving a high-five, saying, "I love you," or a kiss on both cheeks — whatever feels natural to the parent and child. Try and make sure you do the same routine each time, so your child knows what to expect. This daily sendoff helps set a "limit for yourself too," so you won't be tempted to linger too long at the door, making the goodbye harder for you both.

3. Talk it through.

Even the youngest babies will benefit from parents talking through what this new transition means. For example, you can say, "Starting tomorrow, we're going to drop you off in the toddler room and there are going to be other kids there, and you're going to have lunch and play with these toys, and then after naptime and snack, I'm going to come pick you up."

Your child is picking up on the cadence and the emotional tone and they're going to get a sense of reassurance. It gives them a sense of predictability and that everything's going to be OK. Repeat the story once the transition starts for continued reassurance.

4. Try a gradual start.

The ideal transition into a new environment is one that is gradual, this is why we begin the process a month before the actual transition. This ensures the child doesn't immediately plunge into a five-day-a-week, full-time schedule.

For the parent

5. Do your research.

Every working parent has likely read a childcare horror story or two in the news, making our fears about sending kids into the arms of new care givers that much harder to face. OUR School provides Bios of each staff member so you can more easily get to know who is with your child when you are away.

Don't be afraid to trust your own instincts and please feel free to ask any questions at any time if you have a question or concern.

6. Create a night-before checklist.

Childcare veterans will likely tell you one of the hardest things is actually just remembering to pack all that stuff! Children need sippy cups filled and labeled, pacifiers, crib sheets and more, not to mention diapers, wipes, extra sets of clothes and lunches

.Post the provided checklist near the front door or on your phone to help remember daily items, but also seasonal stuff like sunscreen and hats or boots and hats and mittens. Pack everything the night before and you might just minimize a bit of that morning chaos, improving everyone's mood!

7. Do daily Board Checks.

Letting someone else care for your baby can make many parents feel a loss of control. You might worry about how much they're sleeping or wonder how often they needed a diaper, or who their favorite friend is at daycare. Foster a rapport with the provider to make asking such questions easier. It'll provide a better glimpse into their new world away from home — hopefully one that makes you both happy. It goes back to communication. Because pick up and drop off can be the busiest time of day for teachers, please come a few minutes early if you would like details about your child's day, otherwise please check our communication boards.

8. Expect some tears.

It can take anywhere from one day to four weeks, depending on their temperament, for a child to adjust to a new environment. Until then, you might see a few tears upon pickup and drop-off.

Some children have been saving it up all day. Everyone needs to decompress after a facing a new social situation and your child can't do it any other way but crying sometimes.

Those tears are also an important milestone for growing children as they learn to adapt to different social situations where there might be different rules than at home. This really helps them with flexibility and adaptation.