

## **Kindergarten Jitter Bugs**

Labour Day is rounding the corner and that means summer is ending and a new school year is nearing. There are many parents out there getting a great chuckle from the Staple's commercial "It's the most wonderful time of the year". I know that I do and it drives my kids insane (that's why I comment on it every chance I get...as a parent it is my right to play with their minds...a little). But there are a group of moms and dads that are not so thrilled that their "baby" is going to school. You might be reading this and think who on earth can that be?? And WHY?? Think back to the day your "baby" went to school for the first time. Here you are trying to act all excited and your child might be the one clinging to your leg not wanting to go into the room with the other children. What did you do to help your child warm up to the idea that school was fun? I mean sandboxes, water tables, colouring, dress up centers, and nap time what is not to like?

Your child might have anticipatory anxiety around what to expect from his/her new school. This anxiety can occur when a child starts school for the first time, goes from kindergarten (SK) to grade 1, changes schools, or even enters high school. Sometimes the child is so worried that the first day of school can cause a panic attack. A panic attack can paralyze you and rob you from a great and happy experience. If your child is typically the type of child that worries over things that you find not necessary to be concerned about, you might consider Homeopathy. Some children's anxiety issues are more than the typical anticipatory concerns and need medical intervention. Homeopathy will gently help your child and allow you to reclaim your child without the side effects of drugs.

Whether or not your child needs to see a professional for their anxiety issues these are some great tips to help your little one adjust to the idea of going to school for the first time:

1. Talk about what your child should expect when they go to "Big" school. If your child goes to day care explain the similarities between school and day care; centers, a place for friends to come together and play, circle time, snack time to name a few. If your child has never been to day care this is their first big transition and you need to explain that this is a place where they can play with other friends and name some activities they can look forward to. Familiarity will help in the adjustment so try to find comparable activities to what they are use to.
2. Explain how long their day will be (is it every half day, or every other full day).
3. Involve them in the process of getting ready for school. So make a day out of getting school supplies and allow them to choose their "new" backpack, their lunch container, even special outfit for the first day of school. This will start communication and help you find out what they could possibly be anxious about.
4. Drive by the school or if you are close enough walk to the school and show them the route they will be taking.

5. Get your kids started on a back to school routine at least 1 week before school begins. Set bedtime routines a week before so their bodies will adjust and be ready for the change in routine...this will also help mom and dad!
6. Don't forget to shake out the "jitters". When they get nervous or scared have them stand up and shake out the jitters...much like they would shake the "sillies" out. You'll get them to laugh and they may forget why they are nervous.
7. Most JK/SK programs have staggered entry which means the children slowly get introduced into the program before the routine begins. It is a great idea if parents can take their child to school or walk them to the bus and wait for them to get on. This is a BIG day and your child may need you. Yet 9 times out of 10 they will come home from school filled with excitement about the day and you will be left wondering what all the anxiety was about.

Just remember to listen to your child's needs and allow them to tell you what they are concerned about. You have the ability to make this a FUN and exciting time for them as they grow and experience a new adventure. "Happy Back to School".