

Helpful Tips



Each level of schooling may involve different preparation, educational strategies, professionals and communication approaches for your child. Here are some general tips (choose the ones that work best for you and your child) and timelines (it doesn't always work this perfectly):

- **August:** Begin talking about school with your child as well as, what to expect & look forward to. You'll also want to begin working on good sleep routines so they are ready to go in the morning!
- **First week (or two) of School:** Email the teacher(s) to introduce yourself and open the lines of communication. Let them know you are involved and want to know about any issues or areas you can support success in their classroom. Let them know your preferred method of communication and be sure to ask for theirs (often it is email).
- **First Week (or two) of School:** Meet the EA(s) working with your child and show them the Back N' Forth book. This is a simple, yet effective way for the parents and EAs to maintain regular contact with respect to the successes and challenges of your child.
- **First week (or two) of School:** Be available to proactively support and encourage your child. Carefully observe their communication and behaviour as well as, talk to those at the school to determine how they are doing.
- **First week (or two) of School:** If you have any concerns, communicate with the school directly (EA, Teacher, Learning Support Coordinator or Principal, etc.) to review and discuss options. The sooner you can find solutions and get your child settled into their new grade, the better.
- **Second or Third week of new school year:** Provide a letter to the teacher for distribution to classmates and their parents (Note: This is a personal choice for families and may not be a good fit for all families. In our situation, it was a good fit and we did this letter from Kindergarten through to Middle School - I had parents come up to me in the parking lot thanking me for the letter and some even said they were so touched, they cried. Knowledge is power and it can create a tremendous amount of compassion and understanding for your child. What we observed was the creation of an amazing group of advocates and exceptional classmates for our son. This is a sample of our [Letter](#) from Grade 2).
- **September-October-November:** Attend the meeting with the school to create or update your child's Individual Education Plan. This is a very important meeting. Within a few weeks, you should receive a copy the updated [I.E.P](#) from the school which outlines the goals identified for your child and the strategies to achieve them.
- **May:** Communicate your "Wish List" to the school for the following year and put it in writing.
- **June:** Show gratitude to the school team who helped create success for your child this year - say "Thank You".

- **Last week of August:** Communicate with the school if there are items on the "Wish List" that require follow up.

In addition, be communicative throughout the school year as well as, attend the Parent Teacher Interviews.

Helpful Tools

Depending on the age of your child and their specific support requirements, here are a few other items that may assist in creating predictability, organization and good communication.

- **Visual Schedule** of Class Days by time including Subjects and Breaks (recess, lunch, go home)
 - This can be in picture or word form or a combination of both
 - This can be attached directly to the child's desk, kept in a locker or put in a binder for easy reference
 - This can also be kept digitally on a device they can readily access
 - Here is a sample of an [EMCS schedule](#)
- **Back N' Forth Book** used by the EA, Teacher and Parents to communicate on a regular basis
 - This can be a simple coiled notebook with lined pages of smaller size (24 x 15 cm)
 - This should be checked and reviewed every day
 - It's also a great place to secure any notices that need to be sent back and forth
- **Day-Timer or Agenda** for your child to use to stay organized
 - This can be in hard copy (school-specific or generic) or digital on a device
 - Choose the format which is most effective for your child
 - It can be used to keep track of homework, projects and test due dates
 - It can also be used to keep track of after-school or extra-curricular activities

