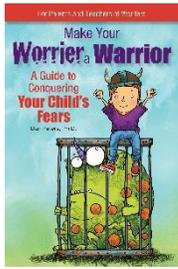


# HELPING ELF: PREP FOR PREP

Tips to support your child starting school



**BE** calm yourself – don't feed their anxiety.

**EDUCATE** yourself on anxiety, and explain what this means.

**TEACH** them breathing and relaxation but don't wait until they are worried – make it part of your daily routine.

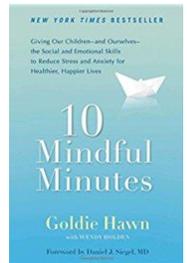
'**MAKE** Your Worrier a Warrior' by Daniel B Peters and '10 Mindful Minutes' by Goldie Hawn are great books to help you do this.

**EXTERNALISE** their worry by using their favourite cartoon characters or interest (ask "what would..... do?").

**BE** an emotional role model – **It is ok** for you to express your emotions to your child, but model coping behaviours (e.g. "I am worried.....but this is what I am going to do.....").

**IF** you know you are going to get overwhelmed and are unable to keep calm during the drop off, ask someone else to do it.

**MAKE** sure you have someone you can 'offload' too. Not only are you a parent – you're a person!



**MAKE** starting school an adventure. Find the fun!

**EXPLAIN** what will happen and that you will be there to meet them at the end of the day.

**HAVE** a 'special' goodbye ritual, such as a fun handshake or gesture (and once completed, **it is time to go**).

**MAKE** goodbyes short and sweet (**don't** linger for 'just one more hug').

**BE** organised in the morning, allow plenty of time. If they are resisting, don't make your language too complex. Consider the use of the 'broken record' technique (repeating the same words – simple, specific and clear) It is not a negotiation – remain firm but fair.

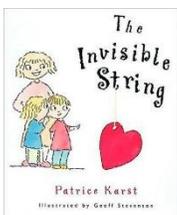
**CELEBRATE** at the end of the school day with lots of praise (be specific).

**CONSIDER** the use of a reward chart (make the behaviour simple and achievable and the daily reward small, such as special one to one 'mummy/child' or 'daddy/child' time playing a game/reading a story, etc. with a bigger reward when they have managed 5 days/10 days, going into school with just the ritual goodbye).

**ASK** what they did at school, but **don't** overload with too many questions.

**ASK** the teachers to take photographs of their activities during the day and make a photo book. When they are having doubts about going again, look through the photo book together and remind them of what they did.

**If** ever they are sick and need to stay off school, make the time when they should be at school as **boring** as possible.



'**THE** Invisible String' by Patrice Karst and 'The Kissing Hand' by Audrey Penn are beautiful stories about how to connect when not physically together.

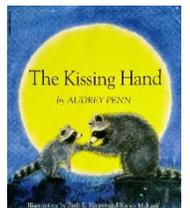
**PROVIDE** them with something from home or something they can refer to during the day to remind them of you, (if not using the 'kissing hand', such as a heart gemstone, little teddy bear, photo keyring) although abide by school rules.

**AS** an alternative, try the following as a self-regulator:

**Head** = *loving thoughts* - touch hand to head and think about Mummy/Daddy coming to collect you, or think about a happy time/place.

**Heart** = *loving feelings* – touch hand to heart and feel the power of Mummy/Daddy's love and picture Mummy/Daddy giving you a special magical hug (even though you aren't together at the moment, you are always connected by an invisible string).

**Lips** = *loving words* – use a statement, affirmation, word for you both to share and as you put your hand (or finger) to your lips say that either quietly aloud or in your head.



Contact Helping Elf, Relaxation and Resilience for Kids for more strategies to support yourself/your child

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