

# PREPARING CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS FOR PRESCHOOL

For every parent, the beginning of preschool is exciting but it also can be a little daunting. And if you're a parent who has a child with hearing loss, that could even be more so as you think about your little one going off to preschool for the very first time. In this video, we're going to talk about some of the things you can do to ease those first day jitters. We're going to share some resources to prepare you, your child, and your teacher for a great first day and a terrific start to their school year.

Hi, I'm Dr. Teresa Caraway from Hearing First and we're here to support you as parents, as families of a child who has hearing loss so that your child can learn to listen, talk, read, and thrive in life. Preparing for preschool is more than just buying crayons and scissors or that cute little backpack, especially if your child happens to have a hearing loss.

So the first thing you need to do is prepare yourself. First, make sure that you feel comfortable and confident and that you have all the answers to any questions that you may have by talking with your child's intervention team.

Second, prepare teachers, coaches, school personnel, anyone that will be interacting with your child that they know about your child and their hearing loss. And third, prepare your child so that they feel ready for their very first day of school. Good communication and preparation will help the transition go smoothly. Remember, your child's teacher may not have ever met a child with hearing loss or know much about hearing loss, but in the past few years, you have become an expert.

So before that first day, there's a couple of things that you're going to plan to have. Gather information about your child and put it together in a binder or a folder so that it's ready to share with your child's teacher. This includes a simple card or index card that includes very simple 1, 2, 3 steps of how a teacher can troubleshoot your child's device.

Secondly, you and your child can complete the All About Me template or worksheet that we have for you. It's a great way for you to communicate about your child in a quick and succinct way so your teacher can get to know all about your child.

Make sure your teacher has important numbers such as your telephone number where they can reach you quickly and easily. Should they have any difficulty troubleshooting your child's device during their school day.

Make sure that every day your child goes to school with a device kit in their backpack. This could include extra batteries or hearing aid check systems, whatever that is for your child's specific device. After you've gathered these things, now you're ready to schedule a time to talk with your child's teacher. That would

be to schedule ideally way before school starts so that you have opportunity to sit down with them and talk to them and show them your child's hearing device and how to troubleshoot it.

You can also at that time give some insights about your child and their needs, but also you can learn from the teacher. And it would be a great opportunity to take pictures of the classroom, each individual perhaps learning center that your child will be going into, and what the teacher labels those or calls those so that your child has that vocabulary that they know what each center is for and what to do in them.

It could also be that you take pictures around the school such as the library, such as the lunchroom, or the music room, so that your child has a sense and you can talk about those pictures with them before they ever get to their first day of school. Also, very fun to go out and play on the playground a little bit and go visit the playground and to take pictures of the playground equipment and also to talk about those in advance.

When you're meeting with the teacher, ask them if there's any special vocabulary or phrases that they may be using with their students so that you can familiarize your child with that in advance. And remember, ultimately the goal is for you to overcommunicate with that teacher and provide them information so that they can be best equipped to be your child's teacher.

Think about all the things you've learned that would be important for them to know about your child to make that learning and that transition easier. Let's talk about how you can prepare your child for their first day. Get some books about going to school for the first day. Share those, talk about those.

Take the pictures that you've taken in your child's classroom, in your child's school or playground and talk about them and make a special book about them. Talk about what their school day might look like and what their schedule might look like. Your child might get some questions about their hearing technology and about what it's for and why they have it, so practicing that with them in advance and giving them those words lets them feel confident and lets you be assured that they will know how to handle that situation.

Remember, you are not alone, you're not the first parent to have first day jitters, so come join the Hearing First Facebook group where there's hundreds of parents who have been in your same shoes that you can trade insights, that you can learn from, that you can ask questions about what they did and what was successful for their child. It can feel like a lot, but we've attempted to make it easy and provide resources for you that are for you, but also that you can download and give to your teacher.

Check the link out below. Remember, starting school is exciting and to have fun with it. It's the beginning of your child's school career and you've been doing a terrific job to get them off to a very great start. All your hard work has paid off so that they can go to school and have a terrific first day.

Wherever you are in this journey, you are not alone, and Hearing First, we're here to support you every step of the way. So check out the link below for more information, more resources, and subscribe to our YouTube channel.