



1 I want my child to enjoy going to school: How to deal with school anxiety



Why don't you want to go to preschool?

Both children and parents are filled with anticipation when children start preschool. Parents feel at ease when their children are happy to go to preschool.

However, some children say they do not want to go or that they want to stay home. If your child refuses to go, you might ask yourself, "Why is my child like this?", especially when you see other children going to school happily.

It is natural for children, who have spent so much time at home with their family until now, to feel lost or anxious about spending a long time without their parents around. Even children who seem to enjoy preschool are in fact nervous deep down and trying hard to adjust to the new environment. They can be clingy when they come home.

At the preschool, the teachers listen and respond to the anxiety and confusion that the children are feeling. They stay close to them, provide a lot of physical contact, and try to find out what kind of play they are interested in.

The teachers help the children gradually become accustomed to life at preschool by showing them that it is a fun place, that they can depend on the teachers, and that their parents will come to pick them up.

You may feel anxious and find it difficult to leave your child, but children can sense parents' anxiety easily, so it is best for you to see them off with a smile saying, "It'll be fun. Have a nice day." You can trust the teachers at preschool.

If your child cries hard or is reluctant to go, we suggest that you refer to the methods on the right to come up with a family ritual before leaving home. Children will sense your affection, cheer up and change their mood.

After they get home, let your child relax and cuddle. Such bonding time will give your child the strength to go back to school the next day.



Do you think Mimi is at school?

Talk to your child using expressions that may change his/her mood.



Have lots of fun.

Hug and say, "Have a good day!"



A butterfly is here to say "good morning" to you.

Make the walk to preschool fun, such as by looking at flowers along the way and hunting for insects, etc.



2 Learning to use chopsticks well: How to hold chopsticks

Many parents worry about their children learning to use chopsticks correctly.

The way children hold chopsticks is associated with the development of hand function.

If a child is holding a spoon as shown in ① and ② in the diagram below, hand dexterity is not fully developed so they cannot hold chopsticks correctly even if they are taught how. At this stage, it is important for them to gain a lot of experience in using their fingers through play, such as by playing with clay or blocks, or by drawing.

When they start holding a spoon or a pencil as shown in ③, it may be a good time to start showing them how to hold chopsticks and letting them try. However, their attention span is limited, so do not force them. Help them use chopsticks sometimes, while letting them use spoons and forks too.

When children get to stage ④, it is necessary to start to show them the correct way of holding chopsticks. Use ingredients that are easy for them to hold, or cut them into good sizes, so they will have a successful experience and feel the joy of being able to use chopsticks.

It is important that you are patient and do not pressure children when showing them how to use chopsticks. You also need to try to hold them correctly yourself. You should understand the development of your children's hand function and which stage they are currently at; when they start to spill or drop less food at one stage, it would be a good idea to move on to the next stage.

Using chopsticks is a part of traditional Japanese culture that should be passed on to the next generation, so help your child to be comfortable with using chopsticks.

My child still can't use chopsticks well.



	Spoon	Chopsticks	Pencil
① Palmar pronate grasp Palmar supinate grasp (1 - 1.5 years old)			
② Palmar pronate grasp (2 - 3 years old)			
③ Static tripod grasp (3.5 - 4 years old)			
④ Dynamic tripod grasp (4.5 - 6 years old)			

From "How to teach activities for daily life to a child whose development is of concern"



3 Enjoying meals together: How to deal with fussy eating



Understand the connection between diet and health, and try to prepare a well-balanced meal.

Season meals lightly and get children accustomed to various ingredients and dishes according to their development.

Early childhood is an important period when children start to form varied life routines consisting of sleeping, eating, and playing, as well as a foundation for eating patterns that continue throughout life.

It is also a period when they are brimming with curiosity. Value children's motivation to eat so they can take an interest in food.

It is best that children eat in a pleasant atmosphere with the whole family.



I'm hungry.

Children need to form a life habit of engaging in physical activities and playing sufficiently, feeling hungry and having an appetite, and eating meals on a regular schedule.



I want to eat it! I like it!

Children may be able to eat food they do not like if you cook it differently. Gradually increase the number of items they like and can eat, instead of forcing them to eat what they dislike.



You have eaten everything, good job!

Through experiencing fun mealtimes with the family, children will develop a sense of security and trust, which creates motivation to eat. Encouraging words such as "this is delicious" and "You have eaten everything, good job!" will motivate your child to eat a meal willingly.



It's fun! It's delicious!

Cooking with you and eating vegetables that they grow in your own garden from early childhood will spark children's interest in eating, and they will notice how good the ingredients taste. Shopping, choosing ingredients, and considering cooking methods together is also recommended.



4 Can you tidy up?: Tidying tips



"My house is a mess because we have children." "My kids never put things away." "The toys just keep piling up." Tidying up is always an issue when you raise children.

Parents tend to just tell their children to tidy up, but in fact, "tidy up" is a vague expression. Children do not understand what to do or what to put where based on this expression alone.

"Tidying up" means putting what you have used back where it belongs.

It will be a little easier for your child to know what to do if you say, "Let's put your toys back where they belong" or "Let's return these toys to where you got them."

Firstly, you need to take another look at how you store things. Designating where things belong helps your child put them away easily and quickly.

Here are our suggestions:

Toys



- Classify toys by type (toy vehicles, toys for playing house, picture books, puzzles and board games, and blocks, etc.) and store them separately. Designate where to store each type of toy using boxes, drawers, and shelves, so your child can easily take them out and put them away.
- It is a good idea to put photos or illustrations in storage areas identifying what is to be stored in them.



If your child has taken out too many toys all at once, hand him/her the toys one by one asking, "Where is this toy's home?" to help him/her know where to put it.



Clothes



- Classify clothes by type (underwear, T-shirts, pants, etc.) and store them separately.
- Think of a way that allows your child to take care of his/her clothes easily, such as putting the clothes he/she has taken off into a basket in the washroom.



Once you have identified where to put toys and clothes, it becomes easier to see how much can be stored in a place. You should regularly check how much your child has, and if there are too many toys and playthings, hiding some away for the future is one possible solution.



It is also important that children feel a sense of cleanliness and comfort after they tidy up the room. Acknowledge children's effort with specific words such as, "The room is now clean, thanks to you" and "It feels nice when the room is tidy," and repeatedly let them know that they can keep the room tidy by putting the toys away.