

MARCH 10 and 11 will be the beginning of the new school year for Johor, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu, and the rest of the country, respectively.

For children transitioning from kindergarten to Year 1, the first day at school could be a nerve-racking experience.

Primary school is a lot different from kindergarten.

In primary school, there is no more nap time, more children in the class, no breaks between subjects, and food is no longer served individually.

In short, children will have to be more independent when they enter primary school.

Moreover, the first day of school may not be as challenging to the children as the next few days. On the first day, they will mostly anticipate the situation as they do not know what to expect.

If everything goes well on the first day, they might be excited to go to school the next day.

On the other hand, some may feel overwhelmed and would not adapt readily to the new environment. This could lead to tantrums

Dispelling first-day-at-school blues



due to reluctance to go to school the next day. This is normal but requires a lot of patience to handle.

If the children cry or throw tantrums in the school compound, just leave them with the teachers on duty. You may calm them down a little bit, but do not take too much time. Just walk away. Without you in front of them, they will eventually know that they must stop crying and go to class.

Do not forget that children are very smart. If you succumb to their crying, they will use the tactic again.

Walking away would be stressful, but remember that the “crisis” is just temporary. Before you know it, your child will be excited to go to school.

From now till school opens, parents still have time to mentally prepare their children for what to expect in their new environment.

Following are some tips that parents can use to make their children look forward to their first day at school.

1. Prepare small change for children to buy meals during recess. This is also an opportunity to teach them about the value of money.

2. Give them a good supply of stationery. Also, make sure to keep extra stationery at home. Children tend to lose these items, especially their colour pencils.

3. To make it easier for children to manage their school books, pre-

pare a file for each subject that is big enough to keep a textbook, workbook and exercise book. Label the files according to the subjects.

4. On the first week of school, if possible, try to follow your children to see how they manage themselves if they use the bus to go to and come back from school. Tell them where to go and where to wait, and make sure they know how to identify their school bus.

Children will make mistakes here and there. Do not scold them; guide them instead. Give them some time to adapt to their new environment.

Most importantly, always be there for them no matter how tired you are. Let's enjoy the process and have faith that our children can survive and do wonderful things.

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