Ready for School, *the Real List*

What preschool and kindergarten teachers actually hope children can do on day one, with a three-month tracker, a picture page for your child and a page to prepare your first talk with the teacher.

A companion to **The Everyday Montessori Preschooler**, 3 to 6 years.
Print, pin it up, and practice a little at a time.

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HOW TO USE THIS LIST

Skills to practice, *not a test*

Ask teachers what they wish children could do on the first day, and you rarely hear "read." You hear about the toilet, the coat, the lunchbox, asking for help and getting along. Those are the skills on this list.

1. Pick two or three items to work on, not the whole list. Start with what your child can almost do already.
2. Practice in real moments. A lunchbox picnic at home, putting on the coat before the park, waiting for a turn in a board game.
3. Show the task slowly, with few words, then hand it over. Correct later by showing again, not in the moment.
4. Once a month, shade a circle for each item. Watch the progress, not the gaps.
5. Tell the school what your child still needs help with. Teachers expect it, and it helps them help your child.

○ Not yet ◐ With help ● On their own

FROM THE BOOK

Module 6 explains what to look for in a school and how to handle the first goodbyes. Module 4 shows how to teach a task so it sticks, and Module 3 covers the hour after school.

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Self-care

○ Not yet ◐ With help ● On their own

PRACTICE AT HOME	MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3
Toilet and handwashing			
Pulls pants down and up alone	○	○	○
Wipes, flushes and washes hands with soap	○	○	○
Asks an adult for help when needed	○	○	○
Dressing and belongings			
Puts a coat on and takes it off	○	○	○
Puts on their own shoes (straps or slip-ons)	○	○	○
Opens and closes their own bag	○	○	○
Recognizes their own things	○	○	○
Lunch			
Opens the real lunchbox and every container in it	○	○	○
Opens the water bottle and drinks alone	○	○	○
Eats sitting down and puts trash in the bin	○	○	○
Nose and germs			
Blows nose and throws the tissue away	○	○	○
Coughs and sneezes into an elbow	○	○	○

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Talking, hands *and getting along*

○ Not yet ◐ With help ● On their own

PRACTICE AT HOME	MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3
Listening and talking			
Follows a short, two-step direction	○	○	○
Says what they need ("I need help," "I need the bathroom")	○	○	○
Tells an adult about a problem	○	○	○
Hands			
Cuts along a thick line with child scissors	○	○	○
Holds a crayon between fingers and thumb	○	○	○
Draws, builds and uses playdough (neat worksheets aren't the goal)	○	○	○
Being in a group			
Takes turns and waits a short time	○	○	○
Copes with losing a game	○	○	○
Asks to join in ("Can I play?")	○	○	○
Saying goodbye			
Has a short goodbye ritual	○	○	○
Copes with a few hours apart with another adult	○	○	○
Knows who will pick them up	○	○	○

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I can do it!

Color a star each time you do it by yourself.

I wash my hands

I zip my coat

I open my lunch

I blow my nose

I ask for help

I wait my turn

I cut with scissors

I say goodbye

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BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING

My first talk *with the teacher*

ABOUT MY CHILD

What helps when they're upset

What they can do alone

What they still need help with

What they love right now

What's new or changing at home

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- When does my child eat, and how much do they usually eat?
- Is there a rest time or a quiet place to go during the day?
- How noisy is the room, and how does my child handle the busiest times?
- Does my child ask for help, go to the bathroom and talk about problems at school?
- Have you noticed anything that seems hard for them, even small?
- What's the best way to reach you, and when?

NOTES FROM THE MEETING

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THE FIRST GOODBYES

Our goodbye *plan*

A short goodbye that's the same every day helps more than a long one. Invent it together, practice it at home, then use it at the door. Under a minute, then go, even if there are tears.

Our goodbye ritual (a handshake, a kiss in the palm, a little phrase)

What I'll say when I leave ("I'll be back after outside time.")

Who picks up, and when

PRACTICE SEPARATIONS

DATE	WITH WHOM	HOW LONG	HOW IT WENT

WORTH KNOWING

Tears at drop-off are very common in the first weeks, and most children settle soon after the parent leaves. If your child is still distressed most of the day after several weeks, or stops eating or sleeping, talk to the teacher and your pediatrician.

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