

Tips for Working Parents: Children 3 to 5 Years



Children age 3 to 5 are starting to show independence. They are better able to express their feelings. And they can now put into words their frustration when things don't go their way. Managing these new skills can be hard for a working parent. You may have limited flexibility and need to keep things on schedule.

On the upside, children may now enjoy playing with or near other kids. And they can follow classroom rules. They may begin to look forward to going to preschool. But routines and transitions are very important for this age group. Kids may struggle with new childcare settings or goodbyes.

Transitions

Experts advise being clear and consistent with rules. Knowing what to expect gives your child some security and confidence. Help get your child ready for a transition with frequent reminders. This lets your child know what's coming up next. At home, setting a timer can help take the power struggle out of a transition. Set the timer for 5 or 10 minutes before a change in activity. Then let the buzzer have the final say.

Set routines

When dropping a child off at preschool, have a short and upbeat goodbye routine. For instance, listen to your child's favorite song on the drive to school. Sign in and say hello to the class pet. Teachers often have a set of welcome activities to help ease this transition. This may include moving a child's picture from an "Out" to "In" bulletin board when they arrive. Or they may have kids gather for circle time or sign up for a helper role.

Don't drag out goodbyes at preschool or daycare. Manage your own anxiety, too. Send your child off with a confident smile and encourage them to have a great day.

At home, set up a routine for after work that lets you spend a few minutes together and share the details of your days. Preschoolers often enjoy a sense of responsibility. Have your preschooler help with dinner prep or setting the table.



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