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THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL – READING, WRITING, AND ANXIETY

The first day of school is just around the corner. If your child is about to enter kindergarten, you may be feeling excitement as well as anxiety.

School is just one of many new situations your child will face in life. Since children may lack coping skills, it's up to you to help your child see this change as a challenge.

First, examine your own feelings. If you're experiencing fear and anxiety, your child is likely to be uncomfortable too. To ease these feelings, do your homework. Check out the school. Talk to the principal and teachers. Before school starts, plan a trip to the school with your child. This will help both of you feel more comfortable about this new place.

Your child may know colors, numbers, and letters, but what about the other qualities necessary to start school?

- The ability to separate from parents.
- Curiosity expressed by asking questions and the desire for new experiences.
- The ability to communicate verbally with adults and other children.
- Social skills demonstrated by sharing, taking turns, participating in groups, and the appropriate expression of negative feelings.
- A lengthening attention span.
- Can play with toys, with and without direction.
- The ability to eat, use the toilet, and go up and down stairs.

If your child lacks some of these skills, help him/her to develop them in the areas needed.

As the first day approaches, plan a couple of relaxing days at home, rather than rushing back from a hectic vacation.

Once the big day arrives, take your child to school. This could mean riding the bus with him/her. Don't be concerned if, in spite of your efforts, your child cries and refuses to leave your side. Clinging and crying are actually healthy coping skills for young children. Generally once the activities begin most children are excited to get involved. Don't sneak out when you leave, this can cause your child to feel abandoned. Instead wave good-bye or give your child a quick hug for encouragement.

Your job doesn't end here. There are many ways you can help your child succeed, both in and out of school.

- Teach your child that every new experience broadens life.
- Be positive. Avoid talking about subjects you disliked in school or your negative experiences.

- Read to your child.
- Set a good example by reading more than you watch television.
- Ask for your child's opinions and involve him/her in family discussions.
- Attend school meetings and activities.
- Volunteer at your child's school.
- Visit the library, art galleries, science centers, zoos, museums, etc.
- Ask questions about school and pay attention to the answers.

Starting school is one of the most challenging good-byes between a child and parent. Successfully mastering this new challenge enhances a child's feeling of self-confidence and security. You play a significant role in this accomplishment.



PRESSURE GAUGE TESTING

Master Food Preservers will be testing pressure gauges at the following locations:

10-2	August 25	Anacortes Ace Hardware
11-3	August 25	Freeland Ace Hardware
3-6 p.m.	August 28	Oak Harbor Ace Hardware
10-1	August 29	Skagit Gleaner's in Burlington

A food safety and preservation clinic will be held at the Mt. Vernon Farmer's Market on August 25 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. If you need food safety and preservation information call the hotline at 428-4270 from 10-2 weekdays.