



WELCOME TO THE TODDLER PROGRAMME



Sending your child to school for the first time can be an anxious experience for both the child and parents. However, there are certain steps that will help make the process feel as smooth as possible for the whole family.

Before The Big Day

Preparation is the key for a calm start to formal school. Start talking to your toddler early on about where they are going, how much fun it will be and what they will do in school. Explain the class daily routines and reassure your child that you will always be there to pick them up at the end of the day. You may also want to purchase books aimed at young children that share the experience of other children starting school, this would be a good introduction of the concept of 'starting school'. Here are some examples of some books you can use:

Chu's First Day at School by Neil Gaiman and Adam Rex
The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Before your child joins Toddler class, it is strongly recommended that you attend a few British School of Guangzhou (BSG) Little Learners sessions. These are held every Tuesday (Olympic Park Campus) and Friday mornings (South Lake Campus) for two hours each week. Attending a few of these mornings will help both you and your child become familiar, comfortable and confident within our school environment before your child attends without you as accompanying support.

On The First Day

- Make sure you're organized! Prepare clothes and bags the night before so that in the morning you and your child are calm and relaxed as you prepare to leave for school.
- You are welcome to pack your child's favourite toy into their school bag as it can be very useful to have something from home to give comfort in the first few weeks of starting school. Please note it is important you place your child's name clearly on the toy and on any items you send from home so they are easily identifiable.
- Arrive early so you have time to settle your toddler into their new classroom.

- Ensure that you're not feeling too anxious. If you are, hide it as best you can as it is likely your child will pick up on your feelings, resulting in them feeling unsettled because of your behaviour.
- Help your child find an activity that they really like and spend a few minutes playing together with your child before you leave.
- When it's time to go, give your child a confident goodbye and let them know you'll be back later in the day to collect them.
- Don't sneak out of the classroom without your child knowing, this will make your child feel even more anxious at future drop-offs.
- If your departure from school is a little upsetting or troubled, please do resist the temptation to go back and check on your child. During the time you have left, your child may have already started to settle down and once they see you this may upset them again, ultimately prolonging the settling in process. If you're worried, please call our Receptionist, and they will be able to pass messages to teachers.
- It is also worth noting that sometimes a child may have settled in fine during the morning and been happy all day in school. However, children often dissolve into tears when the parent comes to collect them as the day ends. This is a normal reaction and does not indicate that your child has been unhappy all morning.

After The First Day

While your toddler is settling into their new class routine, please try to keep your home life as calm and consistent as possible. Changes in other routines, e.g. learning to sleep alone in a bedroom or toilet training, as your family begins school for the first time is not recommended.

Also, do try to keep your child's daily routines as consistent as possible; how and when you drop off your child to school, having the same familiar person to collect your child from school and keeping consistent sleep and eating patterns are important as this will give your child a sense of security.

If dropping off your child becomes and continues to be distressful, it is likely your child is showing signs of 'separation anxiety'. This is quite normal and to be expected in young children. However, there are a few steps that you can take to help reduce this anxiety:

- Asking your partner, a relative or a friend to drop your child off instead of you is often a strategy that works well as your child may be more upset about your departure than about being at school.
- Regular communication between parents and teachers is crucial. Your child's teachers may have some ideas and strategies to help your child to adjust into school that may ultimately help your child grow into a confident and secure student within the school environment.
- Talk to your child regularly about what is upsetting them, making sure you listen and reassure them, as you remain positive about their new experiences.

And Finally...

Starting school is something we all do. It is a special time for both, the child, and their family. The key to success is trust, positive communication and forming a partnership early on that your child recognises and responds to. We hope the above information is helpful in making this very special milestone for your child as enjoyable as possible and we very much look forward to your first day as a British School of Guangzhou family.