

EVERYTHING

happens at school

AND NOTHING CAN STOP IT



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How to prepare your child for everyday school life
– a guide for parents

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

	Introduction	3
	EVERYTHING happens in class	4
	Lessons through a psychologist's eyes	6
	EVERYTHING you need for class	7
	EVERYTHING happens at break time	8
	Break time through a psychologist's eyes	10
	EVERYTHING you need for break time	11
	EVERYTHING happens in PE	12
	PE through a psychologist's eyes	14
	EVERYTHING You Need for PE	15
	EVERYTHING keeps happening long after the bell	16
	After the bell through a psychologist's eyes	17
	EVERYTHING that helps after school	18
	EVERYTHING happens at preschool too	19
	Preschool through a psychologist's eyes	21
	There's room in the budget for EVERYTHING	22

Introduction

From an adult's perspective, a child going back to school is mostly a to-do list. But from a child's perspective, school isn't just lessons and learning — it's a whole new world full of small and big events that can mean an enormous amount to them, shaping experiences, memories, and a sense of self-worth.

It's during a lesson that a child might feel proud for daring to answer in front of the whole class for the first time, or frustrated after getting something wrong. Social life plays out at break time, competition shows up in PE, and once the bell rings, none of it really ends — thoughts and impressions from the whole day keep swirling around in the child's head.

A parent can't control what happens during a lesson or in the school corridor. But they can help their child step into that world with more calm and confidence. In this ebook, together with a psychologist, we share advices on how to thoughtfully prepare your child for school situations.



Because

EVERYTHING

happens at school

AND NOTHING CAN STOP IT

EVERYTHING

happens IN CLASS

Lessons are moments when a child gets to know the world, trains their memory, attention, and thinking, and builds new connections in the brain along the way. For some children, this is the first time they face being evaluated and confronting their own limits when a topic turns out to be difficult.



A child learns to write, count, and read, but also to try, ask questions, correct themselves, and cope with difficulties.



What a child really experiences at their school desk:



★ **Figures out who they are in the classroom puzzle.** Are they great at maths, or a brilliant drawer? Are they the know-it-all who always has the answer, or more of a troublemaker at the back of the class?

★ **Practises courage and confidence.** Should they raise their hand when they're not 100% sure? Ask a question when they don't understand something? Read something out loud? These are small situations, but for a child they can feel like a real test of confidence.

★ **Goes through a whole range of emotions, sometimes within a single lesson.** That can mean pride after praise from a teacher, embarrassment after a mistake, anger over what feels like an unfair grade, boredom with a task that's too easy, and a big 'aha!' moment when something finally clicks.



LESSONS THROUGH A PSYCHOLOGIST'S EYES



When it comes to learning, it matters enormously whether a child feels they're allowed to make mistakes. If every slip-up is treated like a failure, they may stop trying altogether — no longer raising their hand, asking questions, or taking on new or harder tasks. That's why it's worth reinforcing effort above all, not grades. A good grade is something to celebrate together, but a weaker one shouldn't be a reason for punishment. It's really just information that a particular topic needs more attention, time, or help.

Helpful things to say include:

,the important thing is that you tried,'

,it's okay that you don't know this yet,'

,everyone needs help sometimes.'

This helps a child learn that learning is a process, not a test of their worth.



CHEAT SHEET FOR PARENTS:



don't open the conversation with grades



show that mistakes are a natural part of learning



expect effort, not perfection



EVERYTHING

you need **FOR CLASS**

For lessons, a child mostly needs the basic elements of a school kit. It's worth choosing [accessories](#) together, because a favourite colour, pattern, or design on a notebook, small as it may seem, can bring a child a lot of joy.

FOR WRITING AND COUNTING:

- ★ [notebooks](#)
- ★ pens and pencils
- ★ an eraser and a pencil sharpener

FOR STAYING ORGANISED:

- ★ a pencil case
- ★ a folder
- ★ notebook covers and stickers

FOR CREATING:

- ★ crayons and felt-tip pens
- ★ modelling clay
- ★ scissors and glue



EVERYTHING

happens AT BREAK TIME

From a child's perspective, break time is often the most important part of the school day, because that's when the class's social life really comes alive. A child works out who they want to spend time with, who invites them to play and who leaves them out, who can be trusted and who's better kept at arm's length.



They learn to negotiate, to say no, to make up after an argument, to wait for their turn, and to find their place in a group that has its own rules.



What a child really experiences at break time:



★ **Builds their first social empire.** Who walks the corridors with whom? Who lent what to whom, and who's mortally offended? To adults these are trivial details; to a child, they're a serious map of relationships on which they have to find their place every single day.

★ **Discovers that friendship isn't always forever.** An argument over a desk seat, a shared game, or a secret told to the wrong person? A child learns how to talk things through, apologise, set boundaries, and cope with feeling rejected.

★ **Shows the world what they like and who they want to be.** A hoodie with a favourite character, a backpack in a particular colour, a pencil case, a keyring, or a lunchbox are often one of a child's first ways of expressing themselves.



BREAK TIME THROUGH A PSYCHOLOGIST'S EYES



Break time is really another lesson for a child — perhaps the most important one. They learn to function within a group, to read other people's intentions, to voice their own needs, and to accept being told no. External things, like a character print on a T-shirt or a pencil case with a popular design, can play an important role in building their identity and place within the group. A child doesn't need to have everything that's trendy, but it's worth taking their opinion into account when something matters to them.



CHEAT SHEET FOR PARENTS:

- ★ don't dismiss school friendships and conflicts as unimportant
- ★ after a difficult situation, help your child name what they're feeling
- ★ sometimes let them choose what they like and identify with

EVERYTHING

you need **FOR BREAK TIME**

At break time, it helps to have accessories that let a child rest, grab a bite between lessons, quench their thirst, and feel a little more at ease in the school space.

TO EAT AND DRINK:

- ★ a water bottle
- ★ a small wallet
- ★ a lunchbox

TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS:

- ★ card games or dexterity games
- ★ a ball or a skipping rope
- ★ stickers and colourful notes

TO FEEL MORE CONFIDENT:

- ★ a puzzle, e.g. a Rubik's Cube
- ★ a stress ball or squishy toy
- ★ a favourite plush toy



EVERYTHING

happens IN PE

PE is more than just another lesson. It's a moment when a child feels their body very clearly — whether they're fast, strong, agile, and bold, or more unsure, tense, and a little lost.



**On the pitch or in the gym,
everything happens in full view.
Success is visible right away.
So is a mistake.**



What a child really experiences in PE:



★ **Lays the groundwork for their relationship with their own body.** Are they fit? Do they run fast? Can they catch a ball well? PE can hit self-esteem hard.

★ **Practises winning and losing.** A goal, a point, a personal best — great. But there can also be a missed shot, a fall, a lost match, or being picked last for a team. These are hard lessons, but very necessary ones.

★ **Gets used to teamwork.** A child has to act for the good of the team, put up with comments, ask for support, and get back into the game even after a play that didn't work out.



PE THROUGH A PSYCHOLOGIST'S EYES



PE can be a particularly sensitive moment for a child, because it combines working with the body, being evaluated, group pressure, and comparing themselves to others. For some children it's a space of freedom and joy; for others, a source of tension, embarrassment, or fear of being laughed at.

It's worth reinforcing effort, courage, and regularly giving things a try, rather than the result itself. A child doesn't need to be the best at sports to have good experiences with movement. What matters much more is that they know they can practise at their own pace, improve their own results, and treat their body kindly — just as it is.



CHEAT SHEET FOR PARENTS:

- ★ appreciate effort, courage, and trying to despite difficulties
- ★ try to set an example by treating movement as a normal part of everyday life
- ★ treat 'I don't like PE' as a cue for a conversation, not a whim

EVERYTHING

you need NA FOR PE

Comfort matters most in PE. Sports kit on its own won't make a child fall in love with timed runs or start landing every basket, but it can take some of the pressure off and help them concentrate better. Nothing should chafe, slip, or restrict movement.

FOR EXERCISE:

- ★ a t-shirt or sports top
- ★ sports shorts
- ★ sports shoes (ideally with a white sole)

EXTRA ACCESSORIES:

- ★ a PE kit bag
- ★ a water bottle
- ★ a spare pair of socks

FOR COOLER DAYS:

- ★ a gilet
- ★ a warm hoodie
- ★ tracksuit bottoms



EVERYTHING

keeps happening **LONG AFTER THE BELL**

The bell ends the lessons, but it doesn't end what a child has been through at school — the events of the whole day can keep processing in their mind for a long time afterwards.



AFTER THE BELL THROUGH A PSYCHOLOGIST'S EYES



After an intense day, a child often needs to regulate their emotions first, and only then talk about it.

Questions asked right at the door may go unanswered — not because the child doesn't want to connect, but because they're still sorting the whole day out in their head.

It's worth giving a child a moment to switch gears and rest before moving on to conversations and tasks. Some children find it easier to talk while drawing, moulding clay, packing their backpack, or falling asleep.



CHEAT SHEET FOR PARENTS:

- ★ don't expect a full account the moment they walk through the door
- ★ instead of ,how was it?', ask ,what was the best part of today?'
- ★ give your child time to rest before moving on to homework



EVERYTHING

that helps AFTER SCHOOL

After school, what matters most is having a space where a child can do their homework, pack their backpack, put away their school things, and unwind after the whole day. A child's room doesn't need to look like it's straight out of a catalogue. It's worth making sure it's easy to tidy up, though, and that the child feels they have some say in how it looks.

FOR A COSY ATMOSPHERE:

- ★ containers for crayons, pencils, and pens
- ★ warm lighting or a projector
- ★ bedding with the child's favourite design

FOR HOMEWORK AND STUDYING:

- ★ highlighters
- ★ sticky notes
- ★ a school planner

FOR DEVELOPING CREATIVITY:

- ★ a canvas and easel
- ★ paints and brushes
- ★ a journal



EVERYTHING

happens AT PRESCHOOL TOO

Preschool is a slightly smaller world than school, but the emotions can be just as big. The first day without a parent, the first meal eaten independently, the first time playing with the group, the first friendship. For a child, it's a huge expedition into the unknown, and adjusting to preschool isn't a straight line. A little one might walk into the room with a smile one day and cling tightly to their parent the next. That's completely normal.





At preschool, a small object that reminds a child of home can be an emotional support. It won't replace a parent, but it can give a child the feeling that they have something familiar close by. **Pepco's teddy bear keyrings can offer just that kind of support, and they have one more important role too** — they're part of a charity campaign in which 100% of the profit from sales goes towards projects supporting children's development and education. That makes the teddy bear keyring not just a backpack accessory, but also a way to selflessly support others while doing your back-to-school shopping.



PRESCHOOL THROUGH A PSYCHOLOGIST'S EYES



Predictability helps a little one. It's worth clearly announcing who will pick them up and when — for example, after afternoon snack time. A short goodbye ritual can help too, such as a hug, a high five, or waving through the window — the same thing every day.

A small item brought from home can also matter a lot — a plush toy, a keyring, or another little thing the child knows well. Such a 'talisman' can act as a link between home and preschool. It reminds the child of their parent's closeness, helps them get through the moment of separation, and gives them something familiar in a place that isn't fully familiar yet.



CHEAT SHEET FOR PARENTS:

- ★ don't drag out the goodbye if your child is struggling
- ★ be specific about when you'll be back
- ★ let your child bring something familiar from home

EVERYTHING

Back-to-school season can really strain the household budget once the shopping list starts growing fast: a backpack and pencil case, [supplies for lessons](#), a PE kit, clothes and accessories with favourite designs, something for the bedroom, something to store food and drinks in, something for a younger child heading to preschool... On top of that, there's the pressure for a child to have 'everything' — ideally right away.



The good news?

You can put it all together in one shop, at good prices. At Pepco, you'll find everything for a school or preschool kit in the colours kids love and featuring their favourite cartoon characters. It's easy to find things that are both practical and things your child will genuinely like.



EVERYTHING

happens at school, and with Pepco, you can get ready for it sensibly — calmly, comfortably, and on a reasonable budget





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