

How can parents help young children adapt to primary school life both psychologically and physically?



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Source: Professor Chiu Wing Kai, Chair Professor of Sociology at the Education University of Hong Kong.

It's already been 3 months into 2023 and summer vacation will be coming soon, followed by the start of the new school year in September. For K3 students to start their primary school life. However, these students have spent most of their 3-year kindergarten education in online classes due to the pandemic, with little face-to-face interaction. How can parents help them adapt to their new academic and social life in terms of their psychological and physical well-being?

Students who are promoted to Primary 1 are at most at K2 level because they have not returned to school for at least one full year. There are many things they need to adapt to when transitioning from kindergarten to primary school. These include school schedules, daily routines, and learning styles that are vastly different from what they are used to. Kindergarten classes typically last for around 20 minutes, after which they move on to another subject, but in primary school, classes can be 35 minutes or longer, making it difficult for them to maintain their focus. All of these issues can create significant adaptation problems for young students.

So how can parents explain these changes to their children? Firstly, parents should not be too anxious, as many primary schools offer simulation courses and

adaptation weeks for new students, as well as school visits. Primary schools are usually much larger than kindergartens, and young students may be excited about the various facilities and opportunities available to them. However, it is best to start talking to them once they begin school, as too much information too soon may be overwhelming. Simply telling them, "Yes, this is what school is like" is often enough.



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Additionally, some things that young students may not be capable of now do not mean they cannot accomplish them, they just need time to grow and develop. Parents need to remember that every child has a different growth rate. After starting school, observe their emotional changes when they return home from school, and if you notice any issues, pay close attention to them

It takes time for young children to adapt, but sometimes parents also need to adapt. In kindergarten, we refer to it as the Homeroom(regular class location), where one teacher leads the class, and children usually only see one or two teachers. If parents need to participate or collaborate with the school, they can simply find that teacher. In primary school, each subject has different teachers, so if any issues arise, parents need to consider how to communicate with each teacher.