

Canyon Views

Preparing for that first, first day of school



JASON WEBBER

Remember your first day of kindergarten? The only thing I

remember about my first day was being afraid and my mom giving me a big hug making it all better.

Seems pretty easy thinking back now, but it wasn't for my mom at the time.

In a couple of weeks, nearly 42,000 kindergarten students across Oregon will start their first, first day of "big-kids school," often with mixed emotions of excitement and anxiety.

Starting kindergarten is a major milestone not only for children, but also for parents. Anticipating new faces and new surroundings can be exciting but also scary for little guys and gals. However, there are ways parents can help physically and mentally prepare students to minimize those first-day jitters.

Arrange a "pre-school" visit:

Schools encourage students and parents to visit the kindergarten classroom before the fall term starts. Children often get upset because they don't know what's going to happen on that first day, so it's helpful for both you and

your student to get familiar with the layout of the school beforehand, especially looking for things like the bathroom and cafeteria.

It's also important to meet the teacher in advance, if possible, so your child can recognize a familiar face come school's first day. You'll have an opportunity to form a partnership with the teacher early on and your child will feel more comfortable knowing the teacher before class begins.

Get ready and get a routine:

Getting organized and into a routine helps you and your kindergarten student make the transition from summer to school easier. If a bus ride is part of the equation, your school may offer a program for first time riders. When shopping for school supplies, let your child pick out a favorite item, like stickers, to demonstrate that school can be fun.

A week before class begins, practice the school day routine. Shift your child's sleep schedule to wake up in time to get ready for school. Do things together like packing the backpack with school items, laying out the next day's outfit, and making healthy lunches in the morning. Make these activities a shared experi-

ence and down the road your child will continue these good habits.

First day feelings:

Good planning is helpful but the stress of that first day of kindergarten can still become overwhelming for you and your student. Communication is key — become a good listener. Be honest with your child and let them know it's okay to be scared. Share a story about your first day of school and how you survived. Tell them how proud you are of him or her and talk about the positive experiences they'll have at school.

Parents also get nervous about this big first step, but try to keep your emotions in check because your child will sense your anxiety. Be supportive on the first day, give lots of hugs, and remind them you'll be there when class is over.

First day fanfare:

Making a big production out of the big first day can help ease the tension. I've heard great stories about parents hiding a favorite treat, small toy, or a supportive note from mom in the kindergarten's lunch box. Make sure to take lots of photos, you only get one chance to capture this memorable experience.

Some families plan a special activity after school that first day, like

an adventure to the ice cream shop. In the evening tell your student how well they did that day, which will help them look forward to kindergarten every day.

Virtual kindergarten:

Many times, traditional brick and mortar school is a great option for young learners, but more and more parents are turning to virtual public school as the choice for their kindergarten students. According to this year's third-party survey of enrolled families at Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA), 97 percent of parents with students in grades K-2 gave the school an "A" or a "B" grade.

Online schools such as Oregon Connections Academy recommend that young learners have an involved Learning Coach alongside students, to help them succeed in this education environment. Usually a parent, Learning Coaches work with the teacher to help create a supportive learning environment in the home, and ensure each child gets a personalized education.

As an online school teacher, I love working with my ORCA kindergarten students and their Learning Coaches — it is truly a rewarding experience.

While online learning

may be the right fit for any age, it may not be the right choice for every student.

I encourage parents to look at the options available to them, to see what's involved in online education before determining if it's the best match for their kindergarten student.

I hope these suggestions for the first day of kindergarten are helpful for you and your child. Even with all the preparation, once the day arrives,

it can be one of the hardest moments for parents and students alike. However, before you know it your child will be showing you all the great things they did in school and that first day will be a distant but pleasant memory.

Jason Webber of Portland is a kindergarten and first-grade teacher with Oregon Connections Academy. He can be contacted at www.OregonConnectionsAcademy.com or by calling (800) 382-6010.

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OBITUARIES

Bradley James Goode

Aug. 10, 2016—Aug. 11, 2016
Bradley went home to be with Jesus peacefully after just 32 hours of life. He died from the fatal condition called Potter's Syndrome.

Bradley's family loved every minute they had with him and will cherish each one forever in their hearts. He was the sweetest little four-pound bundle, with many features of each of his siblings.

He will be greatly missed. Bradley is survived by his parents Kraig and Kristy Goode; siblings

Garrett, Nolan, Connor and Tiana Goode; grandparents Ken and Kandie Goode and Howard and Rose Shetler; great grandparents Wayne and Bonnie Goode, John and Judy Kerr, and Margaret Shetler; and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

A private family graveside service was held. Arrangements by Unger Funeral Chapel, Silverton.

Donald Eugene Gregonis

Oct. 7, 1943—Aug. 10, 2016
Don died Aug. 10, 2016, in Salt Lake City, Utah, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He was born in Geneva, Illinois, on Oct. 7, 1943 to Jo-

seph and Rose Gregonis. He lived in Downers Grove, Illinois, until the start of his freshman year of high school, when the family moved to a farm in Silverton.

After graduating from Silverton High School in 1961, he followed his interests and obtained a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1967 at Portland State University.

He came to Utah for his advanced degree and obtained a doctorate in organic chemistry in 1972. Following a year of postdoctoral training at University of British Columbia, he returned to Salt Lake City and worked in research in materials science and engineering, bio-

pharmaceuticals. During the early 1980s, he and other researchers from the University of Utah co-founded a successful medical company, Albion Instruments, which was later sold during the early '90s. Don loved the outdoors, enjoying hiking and skiing, and was an avid golfer.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Joe and Rose Gregonis, of Silverton. He is survived by his wife, Bonnie; brothers Mel (Sharon) and Robert (Janet); sister Georgiana Terlecki (Bill); six nephews; two nieces; and numerous cousins.

He will be buried in Silverton. A celebration of life will be scheduled at a later date.

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