Be attuned to the needs of the child

FROM C2

One of the common challenges parents face in Primary 1 is that their child may be afraid about Primary 1, but do not want to express their fear directly. It is natural for your child to feel safe in the transition for you and your little one.

1. INTRODUCE THE CONCEPT OF "BIG SCHOOL"

You would have already attended the Primary 1 orientation, but continue to talk to your child about what to expect, such as making new friends and the schedule of a typical day. Suggest Ms Pamela See, an educational and development psychologist with private counseling practices from Thank Psychological Services and Thank Kids. You can also introduce age-appropriate books orStories of learning and growth, so our children" can be prepared for the transition to Primary 1 for you and your little one.

2. SET UP A SCHOOL ROUTINE

Start a daily routine a few weeks before school begins, including regular meals and going to bed and waking up as early as possible. "A structured routine helps children feel secure and prepared," says Ms See.

3. TEACH SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

When your child seems to be choosing food at the supermarket and you're there, do you or she know how to reason with the person in charge, or ask questions about his or her rules, and say that you agree or disagree with a course of action?

4. ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

A child who can dress himself or herself, use the toilet and pack and carry a school bag independently will get a boost in confidence for handling the school day. Ms See says. Create opportunities for your child to learn to pack her bag by herself or herself. Ms Thian says.

5. TEACH NEEDS VERSUS WANTS

When your child wants a chocolate, is it a want or a need? Ms See says. Do you have enough daily pocket money for your child to buy chocolates? If your child asks for more pocket money, try not to give it.

6. ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR FEARS (AND YOUR OWN)

It is normal for your child to feel afraid about Primary 1, but do not get off on such fears with a comment like "Don't worry, everything is fine. They will help!" says Dr Karuniah. Instead, ask your child how you can help him or her feel safe in the new school setting.

7. RECOGNISE THAT EACH CHILD IS DIFFERENT

Every child is different and the transition process may vary. There are studies on the difference in helping a child to adjust to a new school environment.