

Back-to-School Advice for First-Year Teachers

Get information for important school and district **contacts** before you need them and store it in an easily accessible place: absences, tech issues, copy needs, certifications, payroll, benefits, and insurance.



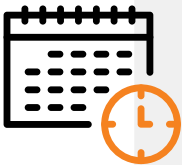
It doesn't matter if you teach second-grade math interventions or AP science to high schoolers, stock up on **stickers**. Kids love stickers for good work.



You'll use **timers** throughout the day for everything from silent reading to small group work. There are options online that you can display on interactive boards. You can even use your phone (if your district allows it) and kitchen timers.



If it's not provided for you, get copies of **meeting dates, locations, and times** for faculty meetings, PLC, content, and grade-level teams. Ask about your role at these meetings as well.



Establish a **quiet signal or call back**. Your building could use a consistent signal, so ask your fellow teachers.



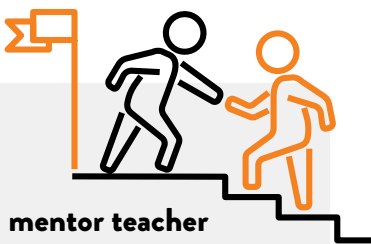
Read every **IEP and 504 plan** thoroughly to understand all modifications and accommodations. Touch base with your special education department for any questions or concerns.



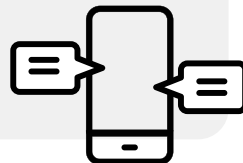
Discuss **procedures** for restroom breaks, hallway travel, homework policies, duties, lunch and recess times, student arrivals, and dismissals with your new teammates. Make sure your expectations are consistent.



Find a **mentor teacher** to help you adjust to your new career. Be honest with that person about your fears, questions, and successes.



Be smart with **tech use** and social media. Find out what is acceptable per district guidelines. Discuss policies for students and teachers concerning phones at school.



Ask for help. No one expects you to know it all. You want your students to know that there are no bad questions. The same goes for you.



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Arrive early. Give yourself ample time to settle in for the day, and ensure you have everything ready before students walk through the door.



Have a **plan for greeting your students** and introducing yourself. Just like you, they're nervous and hoping for a great year.



Copy any handouts ahead of time and have them ready for students. Some may go in their folders. Others may be sent home for parents to complete, such as contact information and allergy forms.



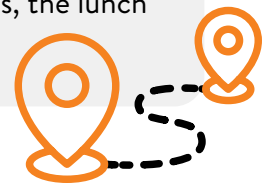
Give students a chance to organize and label their supplies. For students who were unable to bring their supplies, find out what they need and make a list. Your office may have a limited amount of supplies available for this purpose.



Choose **icebreaker activities** that get your students talking to one another. Observe their interactions and listen to their responses. There's a lot to learn during these lessons.



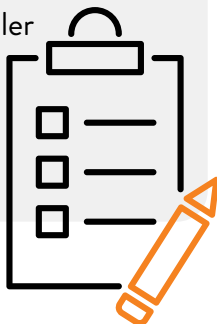
Give students a tour of the room. Show them where to find art supplies and to turn in homework assignments. Discuss posters that display information about emergencies, the bell schedule, special classes, the lunch menu, your grading scale, etc.



Make a list of transportation for your class. Who walks to school? Who rides with family members? Who takes the bus?



Discuss procedures. Everything is new to your students, so break it down into smaller chunks as you move through the first day.



Review your classroom rules and expectations. You may choose to have student input. Make sure they understand any consequences in place.



Know that you won't finish your lesson plans for the day. It's okay. The first day of school is busy! Just pick up where you left off the next day.

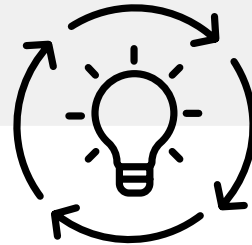


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Procedures, procedures, procedures. Your students are trying to learn so much information in the first days of school. It may feel repetitive, but it's necessary to review procedures repeatedly.



Practice! Allow students to practice transitioning from one activity to another or walking in the halls as a class. Don't be afraid to stop and start again to help them get it right.



Make your plans detailed. A lot is happening in the first week of school. You don't want to forget something important.



Plan a mix of activities that are content-specific and community-building. Taking the time to build a positive culture in your classroom is time well spent.



As you gather information, **make and maintain lists** for student transportation, health concerns or allergies, and parent contacts.



Remind students of the class schedule and rules daily. Be consistent with your disciplinary actions and discussions from the start so students know what to expect.



Plan some independent activities that allow you time to meet individually with your students and establish a positive relationship with each one.

