

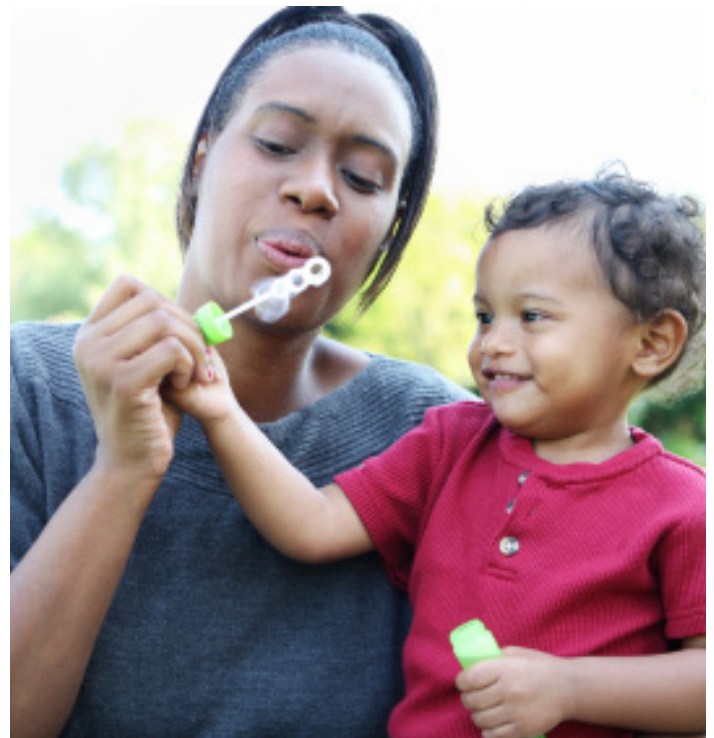
Helping younger siblings cope when big brother/sister goes to school

It can be a big adjustment for kids who have been home together for months or even their whole lives, to be apart when the older one goes off to school. Here are some ways to help:

Plan Ahead. As you make school plans with your older child, make sure to talk with the younger ones too. Let them know what to expect once school starts. You can talk about what their big brother/sister will be doing at school when they will be home again, and what the younger children will do during the time apart. Be sure to talk about all the time you will all still be home together – afternoons, evenings, weekends, etc.

Read books together about older siblings going to school. Try *Maple & Willow Apart* by Lori Nichols. Books like this can teach children that many people go through this situation and will help them handle feelings like sadness and jealousy.

Make a schedule at home. It may help to have a simple visual schedule so your younger children know what to expect each day and when their big brother/sister will be coming home. A schedule might show three to five pictures to represent the activities of the day like reading books, shopping, a playdate, nap time, and going to visit friends and then end with “sibling is home!” This might be a “My Day” chart that you help your child make with a few simple stick figures or something more elaborate you make or buy. Knowing what to expect and what to look forward to can help your child be less focused on when their sibling is coming back.



Plan a special activity. As your older child prepares for their first day at school, also plan a special activity for your younger children at home on that day. Spending time together in a park, or getting a treat can help your younger child feel special and be a gentle distraction from missing their big brother/sister.

Include your younger children in school activities whenever possible. Bring the whole family to the school open house so the younger ones can see what the school is like. If you pick your older child up, bring the younger ones along for the ride as often as possible. Feeling included in school activities can help them be excited for when they get to go to school too.

Offer lots of reassurance. This transition from always being together to being frequently apart is difficult. Talk with your child and help them understand and name their feelings. Let them know it’s ok to be sad, or jealous, or angry and that those feelings won’t last forever.

Play school at home. Now is a great time to start working on school readiness with some learning games. Create a daily routine for your younger child that includes reading together, puzzles, favorite games, some educational activities, and anything else that you think is a good idea. They'll be busy learning and having fun and not focusing on what their sibling is doing without them.



Create new family routines. Planning a family meal at the end of the day can be a good time for everyone to come back together and share about their day. Planning a family activity on the weekend can be a good way to keep everyone connected. Making time to be together and play together again as a family can reassure your children that even as schedules change, you're still having fun together as a family.

Looking for ideas to keep your little one busy? Join Vroom!

Everyone has what it takes to help nurture their child's mind. Vroom turns everyday moments with your child into brain building moments by helping parents boost their child's learning during the time they already spend together. Add learning to mealtime, bathtime, bedtime, or anytime with 1,000+ fun, free activities. [Sign up today](#) to have a fun, easy-to-use, customized early learning activity sent right to your phone every day.

find out more
[joinvroom.org](https://www.joinvroom.org)

Take a Parent/Child Class!

Keep your younger children busy with a class of their own. LBCC has virtual classes for parents and caregivers and their children from birth to age 5. Check out the complete [Parenting Education Schedule of Classes](#). These classes allow you to build a circle of support around yourself and your child while adding structure to your week. Get new activity ideas that are age-appropriate for your child.

Registration is easy! To register just open the document link above, find your class, and click the "click here for registration form" link. Fill out the registration form and click submit. If you have questions, send an email to connect@linnbenton.edu or call Pollywog at 541-917-4884.

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