

First Day of School Checklist: Elementary

Before Students Arrive

- ☐ Review any available student data. Try the [Birthday Cluster Exercise](#).
- ☐ Learn and practice students' names.
- ☐ Display a morning message that includes a welcome and a question or prompt.
- ☐ Arrange the classroom furniture to support collaboration and accessibility.
- ☐ Post the steps for the morning routine.
- ☐ Prepare a visual daily schedule.
- ☐ Plan a Morning Meeting and a closing circle.

Notes:

Building a Positive Community

- ☐ Greet each student warmly at the door.
- ☐ Introduce yourself with a personal story or a visual "about me" activity.
- ☐ Lead a simple, low-risk Morning Meeting to model and teach this routine.
- ☐ Learn and begin using student names immediately.
- ☐ Play a name game or a cooperative activity for students to learn about each other.
- ☐ Begin building class agreements by discussing hopes and dreams for the year.

Notes:

Teaching Routines and Expectations

- ☐ Introduce and model the signal for attention.
- ☐ Teach, model, and practice key routines (lining up, sharpening pencils).
- ☐ Explain how to use specific materials and spaces.
- ☐ Introduce one or two classroom rules or expectations, with examples.
- ☐ Use Interactive Modeling for key routines and tools (e.g., how to sit on the rug).

Notes:

Learning Time

- ☐ Include at least one short academic activity to set the tone for learning.
- ☐ Keep activities simple, low-risk, engaging, and community-focused (read-alouds, math games, journal prompts).
- ☐ Begin to informally assess students' comfort, participation, and strengths.

Notes:

Middle of the Day

- ☐ Explain and preview the routines and guidelines for recess and lunch.
- ☐ Work with support staff to teach and model recess and lunch procedures by visiting the playground and cafeteria in the morning.
- ☐ Prepare for quiet time, read aloud, or use another structure to allow for a smooth transition back into the classroom.

Notes:

End-of-the-Day Routine

- ☐ Practice packing up and dismissal procedures.
- ☐ Hold a closing circle to reflect with students on the day (What did you enjoy? What surprised you?).
- ☐ Preview something exciting about tomorrow.

Notes: