

# Before & After School Connection Starters

*You don't need the perfect words. You just need presence.*

## On the Way To School

These help set a calm, connected tone before the day begins.

- “What are you hoping to do or learn today?”
- “Is there anything you’re feeling nervous or excited about?”
- “Want to imagine what your favorite part of the day might be?”
- “What should we put in your invisible pocket—bravery, kindness, silliness?”
- “Would you rather... (e.g., have flying shoes or an invisible backpack)?”

✓ Tip: Keep the energy light and attuned. Even a few minutes of calm connection can ease separation.

## At Drop-Off

Simple, grounding phrases to soothe the nervous system and create predictability.

- “You’ve got this—and I’ve got you in my heart.”
- “I’ll be thinking about you and can’t wait to hear about your day.”
- “Even when I’m not with you, my love still is.”
- “Here’s your invisible hug—put it in your pocket if you need it.”
- “Want to do our special handshake before you go?”

✓ Tip: Use the same goodbye ritual each day if possible. Predictable connection = nervous system safety.

## On the Way Home

These help decompress after a long day without demanding too much.

- “What made you laugh today?”
- “What was the yummiest thing you ate?”
- “What was something that felt tricky?”
- “Who did you sit near today?”
- “Want to just listen to music together for a bit?”

✓ Tip: Some kids need quiet time before they’re ready to talk. Silence is connection too.

## After a Meltdown or Hard Day

Connection helps emotions move through. Don’t rush the calm—co-regulate instead.

- “You worked so hard to hold it together today. Now you don’t have to.”
- “You can let it all out. I’m here.”
- “I missed you. You’re safe with me.”
- “It’s okay to feel all the things. I’ll help you carry them.”

## Make It Your Own

Our favorite drop-off phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

One thing that helps us reconnect after school: \_\_\_\_\_

Our special goodbye ritual: \_\_\_\_\_



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[support@thefamilygateway.com](mailto:support@thefamilygateway.com)