



Fall Transition “Soft Start” Calendar

For Instructors

The first weeks of school set the tone for everything that follows.

This calendar helps you pace that opening deliberately, giving yourself and your students time to settle in before the year hits full speed.

Why try a “Soft Start”?

Planning a gentle, slow-and-steady start to the school year, and purposefully easing into full-time school days can help set everyone up for success.

Do you find yourself wishing you could avoid the rush into the new school year after a fun and schedule-free summer? You can reduce your back-to-school stress by deliberate pacing and carefully thought-out steps. By continuing that calm pace for your students with a gradual introduction into the school year, you will all benefit from the “Soft Start” method. You can give everyone the gift of time to adjust to new classmates, curricula, and school-day routines.

Using the “Soft Start” Calendar

These dates and tips are general guides to help you customize your own “Soft Start” calendar to fit your school-year experience. Create a personalized calendar by adjusting the following schedule to your own needs.

Give yourself and your students time to ease into the school schedule and reduce back-to-school anxiety (theirs and yours!). Consider how to intentionally pace the weeks leading up to your planned school start.



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Fall Transition “Soft Start” Calendar: August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
First, mark your first day of school on the calendar, and then back up about 3 weeks. Begin organizing your physical learning spaces well in advance to make adjustments.						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	Looking ahead: Now that you have plans for easing into the school year, look at how to transition into full-time learning.				

“Soft Start” Tips

Ease into new morning routines by waking up a few minutes earlier every few days.

Go over your curriculum and adjust the pacing.

Introduce the new school-day schedule gradually by starting with some small learning activities as a warm-up.

Take longer breaks between subjects and plan more time for settling in, relationship building, and mindfulness moments.

Fall Transition “Soft Start” Calendar: September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Set yourself 2-week goals to help keep everyone on track.		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	Looking ahead: Now that you have transitioned into full-time learning, look at how to establish long-term habits for the school year.		

“Soft Start” Tips

Transition into full-time learning.

Set up a more structured daily schedule and a consistent pace.

Introduce regular check-ins with your students and prioritize connections and classroom culture.

Find ways to remain flexible with curriculum and pacing.

Fall Transition “Soft Start” Calendar: October 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Establish the instructional rhythm and prioritize a positive classroom culture and connection.				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 <small>Columbus Day</small>	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 <small>Halloween</small>
Looking ahead: Now that you have established long-term habits, how can you apply this “Soft Start” method to the week following vacations or holiday breaks?						

“Soft Start” Tips

Reinforce long-term habits to keep students engaged in learning.

Introduce regular opportunities for social-emotional learning and mindfulness moments.

Continue setting yourself 2-week goals to keep the rhythm going.

Check in regularly with your students to ensure continued connection and appropriate pacing.

Congratulations! You and your students have made a successful “Soft Start” and a calm introduction to full-time learning!
 Take a moment to note down what went well and what you would like to adjust next time, so you can continue this school year with confidence.