

# CHINTAN

## **A Letter To My Children On Their First Day of School**

Dear Olivia and Evan,

As I opened my eyes this morning, the realization that you will be starting a new school year at a new school today held me hostage for a moment. Today, you embark on yet another new chapter in your young lives, and as we went about our morning routine, I thought of so many things I wanted to say to you. Things I've already covered in the many conversations we've had leading up to this day, but as a mom can't help but feel the urge to repeat in case you didn't hear me the first time.

As I quietly entered your room and softly kissed you awake – I wanted to tell you that I know what it's like to be the new kid. I understand the butterflies in your stomach and wondering if you'll make friends. Believe in yourself. I do.

As you rubbed your eyes and stretched your tiny body – I wanted to tell you I understand worrying about finding your way both physically and socially. You'll spend a lifetime finding your way. Never give up.

As I stood at the bathroom door while you brushed your teeth – I wanted to tell you that sometimes the new kid is at a disadvantage simply because you are new, but the very fact that you are the new kid is sometimes an advantage in and of itself. Embrace the adventure.

As I laid out your clothes – I wanted to tell you that as the new kid other kids will be drawn to you. Some won't accept you. That's okay as it will be their loss.

As I prepared your lunch at the kitchen counter – I wanted to tell you to embrace this new experience with a positive outlook because while it is all strange and a bit scary today, very soon it will all be routine and familiar. It's the circle of life.

As I included a note in your lunchbox, something that has become tradition in our family – I wanted to tell you to try not to look so nervous. Sometimes the simple act of smiling can be the beginning of a beautiful friendship. It is said a picture is worth a thousand words. I believe a smile is worth at least that much.

As you sat at the counter eating your breakfast – I wanted to tell you if at any moment today you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, just breathe. You'll be amazed how a couple of deep breaths can help you see things in a whole new light.

As I helped you tie your shoes – I wanted to tell you to remember you only need one good friend. Quality trumps quantity.

As I placed your backpack on your small shoulders – I wanted to tell you how my heart is torn between wanting to keep you home with me all day where I can love you and protect you and wanting you to go out there and have experiences I can't provide for you. Don't grow up too fast okay?

As we got in the car – I wanted to tell you how I prayed last night that those you cross paths with today will see you as I do...smart, kind, caring, funny, creative. More importantly, I hope you always see yourself as I do.

As I buckled your seat belt – I wanted to tell you not everyone will have things in common with you. Embrace the differences. They may pleasantly surprise you.

As I adjusted my mirrors and caught a glimpse of you in the backseat – I wanted to tell you to be patient with yourself and others. Time has a way of charting our course from the trivial to the really big stuff.

As I backed out of the driveway – I wanted to tell you to not be afraid to try something new. That's the beauty of a clean slate.

As I drove the few blocks to school – I wanted to tell you to listen when the teacher speaks, when someone new talks about themselves, etc. Listening is one of those skills that will come in handy later in life.

As I pulled into the drop off lane – I wanted to tell you to follow instructions when necessary, but also to make sure you always express yourself. It's okay to speak up.

As you exited the vehicle I gave you each a kiss and a hug and said – “Just be yourself, and remember how much I love you. I'll be waiting to hear all about your experiences this afternoon.”

I realized that's really all you needed to hear.

Love, Mom

**Leah Vidal**