



# Ready for the first bell

## The start of a kindergartner's journey

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Thomas Halbrook, 5, has been preparing for this moment for months.

"He's been ready since the start of summer vacation," said his dad, Michael Halbrook.

Thomas is one of 18 students in the kindergarten class of Holy Family School in Granite City. His first day is Friday.

He can hardly wait.

"I want to learn new stuff," said Thomas, who lives in Granite City. "It's going to be big kid stuff — like reading books."

He's especially eager to learn science. "Because I like dinosaurs. They're cool," he explained.

When asked his favorite, Thomas demonstrated by prowling and growling. Brothers Matthew, 3, and Joseph, 1, joined in. Thomas said he was a Dromaeosaurus — a small carnivore that lived about 70 million years ago.

His parents said Thomas knows his letters and many words, but he's still having trouble with telling time and coins.

Suzanne Halbrook said attending the Holy Family Learning Center last year is helping with the transition.

"I think there are areas he's going to do well. There are a few things we still need to work on before school starts, like tying shoes," Suzanne said. "I think he's going to be OK. I worry about the little things."

There's also practical issues, like lunch.

"We looked at the hot lunch menu today," Michael Halbrook said. "He's a very slow eater. He's going to have a hard time with a half-hour for lunch."

Thomas expects his biggest challenges with drawing the numeral nine and gluing in the right place. He already has his uniforms and a backpack stuffed with supplies — paper towels, crayons, markers,

See **SCHOOL** on Page A2



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Thomas Halbrook, 5, of Granite City, gets his backpack ready for school. His first day of class at Holy Family School is Friday.

### SCHOOL | Page A1

pencils, scissors, glue and folders — ready to go.

"This one's my favorite color," Thomas said, as he pulled out a red folder, then questioned his mom. "Should I have got one in pink? Do they let people have pink? I took the red folders."

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113



### YEAR ONE THE KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE

This is one in a series of stories in which Journal reporters are following the same kindergarten student throughout the school year. We'll be printing occasional articles about their experiences, from the first day to the last. Visit [suburbanjournals.stltoday.com](http://suburbanjournals.stltoday.com) to read more stories about our kindergarten class.



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