



A Guide To Starting School

This is a very important and special time and we really want this to be an exciting and happy experience for your child, as well as for you.

Talking about starting school in a fun and enthusiastic way will help your child feel more confident in making this next step.

We will provide a booklet all about our school during the pre-school visits and sharing this with your child will help support you with this.

Many parents ask us how they can help prepare their child for school. Every child will be at different stages in their development and have different experiences, strengths, interests and abilities. However we have listed some activities that will help support your child's development at home and support them in making their transition into school. If you have any worries about your child starting school, please come in and talk to us.

Communication and Language

- Talk, talk, talk. Talking with your child is probably the most important way that you can support your child's development. A lot of the Early Years curriculum is based on children's talk.
- Listen to your child and give them opportunities to talk to you. Children who ask questions constantly are the children who want to learn.
- Encourage your child to listen to you or other people without interrupting and help them understand simple conversation and instructions.
- Practise with your child if needed so they can confidently ask for help or express their feelings using appropriate words and sentences.
- Can other people understand what your child is saying? Please let us know if you are aware of any difficulties so that we can support your child together.



Personal, Social, Emotional Development



- Praise your child for following simple rules and instructions. At school we 'listen and do.' Children who are used to following rules and instructions at home find it easier to adjust to the expectations at school.
- Give your child plenty of practice with playing with others, taking turns and sharing. Limiting the number of toys that they have out when playing with other children will help them develop their social skills and sharing skills. Playing games with your child where you take turns, share and don't always win will help them learn to take turns and know that it is still fun even when we don't win.
- Help your child learn words to describe their feelings (e.g. happy, sad, excited, cross, shy, worried). Stories give lots of opportunities to talk about different feelings and consequences of actions.
- Praise your child for saying 'please' and 'thank you'.
- Encourage regular bedtimes well before starting school if you have not already done so; you may be surprised at just how tired your child can be when they start school.

Physical Development

- Help your child to become independent when getting dressed/ undressed so they will be able to get changed for P.E and be able to put on their jumpers or coats. We can help with tricky fastenings.
- Practise if needed so that your child can use the toilet, wipe themselves, flush the toilet and wash their hands by themselves without being reminded. If your child has any toileting issues please let us know.
- Praise them for trying new foods and help them to use a knife and fork.
- Allow your child plenty of experience with running, climbing, jumping and playing with a ball. Visits to the park or time to be outside in the garden playing with outdoor toys or digging in sand or soil will help develop your child's gross motor skills.
- Encourage your child to develop their fine motor skills by using paintbrushes, pegs, scissors, play dough and play dough tools. Drawing in sand and or 'painting' with water is fun too!
- Encourage your child to use pencils or crayons- chunky ones are best to start with- and give your child lots of opportunities to make marks.





Literacy



- There are lots of stories about starting school. A visit to your local library can provide a wide range of stories about this next step. E.g. Harry and the dinosaurs go to school. Topsy and Tim start school.
- Share books every day. Look at books together. Talk about the pictures, the characters, the setting. Ask questions about what is happening and what might happen next. Children who listen to bedtime stories have a head start when learning to read.
- Tell stories together. Playing with small world toys such as animals, cars, dolls or teddies and using them to make up simple stories. Children love to make up stories as they play and you can help encourage, support and develop their stories by playing with them and talking about the stories you are making together.
- Encourage your child to recognise their first name so they will be able to find their tray, peg and named belongings. Write your child's name in lots of places so they get to recognise it. Making your child's name with magnetic letters will help your child recognise and order the letters of their name. It is not expected that your child will be able to write their name, however if you are practising at home please use one capital letter at the beginning and then lower case letters. e.g. Ben not BEN. Make it fun by writing in sand or with paint or different mark making tools.
- Share nursery rhymes and rhyming stories with your child. Make up nonsense rhymes.
- Collect objects that begin with different sounds. For example you can make a pretend silly soup by collecting objects such as a sock, stone and s...? Emphasise the first sound in the words as you say them- c-up, d-og etc.

Mathematics



- Count everything, all the time! You can count toys as you play, the number of jumps along a path, blue cars when out for a walk, apples in a bag, steps up to bed and so on.
- Look out for different numbers around you- door numbers, car registrations, prices in shops etc.
- Find different shapes around you- look out for circles, triangles, squares and rectangles.
- Help develop your child's mathematical language by using words such as tall, long, short, heavy, light, full, empty. Develop positional language by using words such as in front, behind, on top, under, beside, next to etc.
- Baking offers lots of opportunities for counting and weighing.
- Playing dice games give opportunities for counting and counting on.
- A teddy bears picnic gives opportunities for counting, sharing and shopping.



Understanding the World



- Look at different animals and plants. Encourage your child to talk about their observations and make simple comparisons by talking about similarities and differences. Support their understanding and language development by naming different animals, plants, body parts etc. and finding out about new living things or objects.
- Play with sand, water, messy stuff?
- Experience as many different places and cultures as possible, ensuring that you and your child feel comfortable with this.
- Talk about past events. Look at baby photos together to see how your child has changed. Talk about family celebrations, holidays and visits you have experienced encouraging your child to recall events and talk about them.
- Use age appropriate technology e.g. I-pads, cameras, electronic toys.



Expressive Arts and Design

- Build models out of construction toys, bricks or recycled materials e.g. boxes, yogurt pots.
- Listen to different sorts of music and dance/ move with it. Sing songs together. Make up silly songs and sounds.
- Encourage your child to explore different materials such as paint, glue, collage, crayons. Try making small and large pictures.
- Join in with your child to play make believe games- pretend to go shopping or have a teddy bears picnic or party. Children love dressing up; some old clothes are fine for this.

There are lots of ideas here for you to explore to help prepare your child for school. Please don't worry if there are some things that your child is finding difficult. Children start school at many different stages of development and some are quite a bit younger than others. Explore the activities you feel your child is ready for. Come in and talk to us about any concerns and ask questions- that way we can work together to help the transition to school run as smoothly as possible for your child.

