

Starting School with a Smile!

Top Tips for preparing your child for school!

Starting school is an exciting time for young children and their parents. It can be a daunting time too. But with a little preparation and encouragement, your child will settle in easily at school.

We do not expect your child to be able to read, write or do sums before they start school! Children start school with a wide range of abilities and our teachers are skilled at helping children progress at their own level.

Here are some top tips to help you and your child!

- Chat with your child about starting school, what do they think it will be like, what are they most looking forward to, is there anything they are unsure or worried about? Remember to chat about happy memories from your own school days.
- Try and stay relaxed and positive when talking about school, rather than sharing your own nerves with your child. Children are very sensitive to parents' emotions and can pick up, very easily, on overheard negative comments such as "I'm worried about what I am going to do when ___ starts school" or "They're so shy, I worry they won't make friends".
- Don't overdo it! Try not to bombard your child with endless talk about school and the "big step ahead". Treat it in a matter of fact way so your child does not become anxious.
- Helping your child to complete their "All about me" board is an ideal opportunity to talk to them about school. Bringing it in at the start of term will give them a personal focus to start building a relationship with both the class teacher and the class.
- Practise the school morning routine, including getting dressed and eating breakfast in time to leave. Practise the school run so that you are both prepared for the school morning journey.
- As the start of term approaches, try to get into the school routine so your child gets used to getting up, going to bed, having meals (11.45) and snacks (10.30) at the times they will on school days. Your child will be very tired when starting school (even if they have been to nursery!), please ensure an earlier bedtime with a well-established routine.
- If your child has a particular security toy/blanket, or an afternoon nap, try to get them used to being without it during the day.
- If you have arranged new childcare before or after school, talk this through with your child and ensure they know who is picking them up from school and when.

- Help to develop your child's independence and a "can do" attitude by giving them a few everyday responsibilities. Perhaps they could lay the table, feed a pet or help unload the shopping.
- Instruction following is an important skill for your child to develop. You can help by ensuring they are able to follow simple instructions such as "can you pass me the blue mug?" or "can you find 2 blue and 3 red pegs?"
- Help your child to make new friends at the start of school by practising useful phrases such as "What's your name?", "Can I join in?" or "Do you want to share?"
- Support your child to be confident about getting to the loo in time and wiping properly using toilet paper rather than wet wipes. Make sure they can wash their hands.
- It is quite common for children's behaviour at home to change when they first start school. Don't be surprised if your child becomes more clingy, argumentative, lethargic, excitable or prone to tantrums for a while. Let them have some quiet time when they get home. It is a good idea to keep the first few weekends quiet as they will need time to recharge.
- Keep talking to your child about their feelings about school but don't be surprised if when asked what they have done at school, your child says "nothing" or "played". This is perfectly normal!

Your First Week Checklist

- Do you know exactly where you need to take your child and at what time?
- Do you know where to collect your child and at what time?
- Do you know what equipment your child will need (PE kit, book bag, 2 snacks, water bottle, a hooded waterproof coat)?
- Does your child know who will be collecting them each day?
- Have you put name labels on ABSOLUTELY everything?! Make sure your child knows where the labels are and can recognise it as their name. Remember, if your child loses an item of clothing, they will only get it back if it is named!

For further resources on helping prepare your child for school go to www.pacey.org.uk