

# Starting School



## Help your child get ready for school

Starting school can be a big change in a child's life but there are some things you can do as a parent/carer to help them get ready for starting in a school Nursery or Reception class.

- Chat with your child about school – What will it be like? What are they excited about? What are they worried about? Let them know that it is ok to feel worried. If possible - remind them of a time they went somewhere new and how they learned to become more confident, maybe when they started nursery. Remember, children are experts at picking up on how their parents are feeling so try to be calm and positive when talking about school.
- Share books about starting school with your child. You can borrow them from your local library for free. Some suggestions include:
  - I am too Absolutely Small for School (Charlie and Lola) by Lauren Child.
  - Starting School by Janet and Allen Ahlberg.
  - Topsy and Tim Start School by Jean and Gareth Adamson.
  - Harry and the Dinosaurs go to School by Ian Whybrow and Adrian Reynolds.
  - Come to School too, Blue Kangaroo by Emma Chichester Clark.
- Give your child lots of praise and help them feel proud about themselves. This will help them to feel ready for school. Be genuine - tell them about what you like about them and why they are so special.
- Visit your school's website, there will be lots of information and photos on there to talk about including photos of staff, classrooms, the outdoor areas and children taking part in activities.
- Look at your school's website for important information about starting school such as drop off and pick up times, PE kits, timetables and sample lunch menus.
- If your child will be staying at school all day but currently has an afternoon nap, it might be wise to try to phase this out.
- Practice getting ready for school before your child starts. Try out the school run. A calm and happy morning routine will help set the scene for a fun relaxed day at school.

- You may hear lots about 'school readiness' this does not mean your child needs to be able to read or write lots of numbers. Starting school is easier for your child if they can:
  - Learn their new teacher's name, know what they look like and who they can they go to if they feel sad or worried.
  - Go to the toilet on their own and wipe properly using toilet paper rather than wipes. Wash and dry their hands without help. Not all nursery children will be ready for this but talk to your child's teacher about how they can support you with toilet training.
  - Dress and undress themselves. Make it easy for them; have clothes with elastic waists rather than zips and buttons. Velcro fastening on shoes rather than laces. Help them practice taking their coat on and off and fastening it.
  - Recognise their written name.
  - Find their own bag and PE bag - customise it so they know which are theirs.
  - Find their clothes and belongings, put their names on everything.
  - If staying for lunch, use cutlery correctly. In Reception they should be able to use a knife to cut up their food and may have to carry their food on a tray, so you could practice this too. They should be able to drink from a normal cup.
  - Use a tissue to wipe their nose. Practice "catch it, bin it, kill it" and then encourage them to wash their hands.
  - Tidy up; practice at home by making it a game. They will need to be able to hang their coat up, tidy toys and games away and help clear tables.
- Make a scrap book together with pictures and drawing of your child's favourite things, what they enjoy and who is important to them. They could take this into school to share with their new teacher and school friends.
- For more ideas and tips visit the BBC Bitesize pages on "Starting Primary School"  
[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1)

