



Starting School

Starting primary school should be an exciting time for children but with the unsettling times we have recently been experiencing the school year ahead will be different for everyone. This transition is a time of change and each child or family will have an individual response to that, even more so during these unusual times. The separation or adjustment period may take longer or be experienced as more difficult after this period of lockdown.

Focus on well being

Your child does not need to be able to read and write before they enter school. It is much more important that they are looking forward to school and enjoy talking about it with you. It is key to speak positively about school with your child and try not to share or show any negative feelings or concerns you may have. They may need reassurance about facing new places, new relationships and new challenges.



Some helpful preparations

To help your child prepare for school there are some independent skills that you could help them to develop.

- Using the toilet – Does your child recognise when they need to use the toilet? Can they express this clearly to an adult? Can they use the toilet independently?
- Getting dressed – Can they dress/undress independently? Can they take their shoes on and off?
- Washing their hands – Can they pull their sleeves up, turn on the tap and wash their hands? This will be particularly important this year.
- Feeding themselves – Can they carry a small tray of food? Can they feed themselves with a spoon and/or fork? Can they use a knife?
- Tidying up – Can they put away toys when asked by an adult?
- Completing table top activities – It would be useful to practice sitting at a table completing jigsaws, drawings, using playdoh etc.



Things to consider

- Check with your child's new school about starting arrangements as these could be different this year.
- If your child has sadly suffered any losses, bereavements or trauma during the lockdown period it would be important to discuss this with school staff.
- Children of this age find it hard to identify and express emotions clearly. Although they may not say it they are likely to be worried about who will be there, will they make friends, will they like it etc.
- If your child's behaviour becomes more difficult as they get closer to starting school try to work out what they are concerned about. Offer additional reassurance and comfort rather than punishments. Try to see beyond the behaviour.
- If your child has any additional needs or currently receives input from outside professionals please inform school staff.



Books to share with your child about starting school

- 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
- Going to School Sticker Book and Starting School Sticker Book – Usborne

These books are all either available as ebooks or on youtube (except for the Osborne sticker book).

Parental worries

It is very normal to be experiencing concerns as a parent during this time. You may be thinking will they be safe? Are they ready? Have I done enough? Every family/child's situation is different but try to remember that 1000s of children successfully make this transition every year and your child is very likely to be one of them. This has been a strange period of time with many ups and downs and as lockdown starts to lift schools will be ready to welcome you and your child!



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