



Supporting the Transition to School



Starting school is an exciting time but it can also be a daunting time, both for young children as well as their parents. However, with a little preparation and encouragement, most children will settle in easily at school. We are very conscious of finding ways to make the process as stress-free and positive as possible for you and your child. Please find below some ideas of how you might consider preparing your child for the first day, as well as ways we will support them with settling in at school.

Things to try before the first day...

- 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're unsure or worried about?
- Find photos of you and other family members at school, and chat about happy memories from your own school days.
- Read books together 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.
- If your child seems anxious about school, try focusing on the things they'll like best – maybe the sandpit, 'big playground' or new friends. Perhaps they have some friends from preschool who will be starting reception at the same time.
- Practise the school morning routine, including getting dressed and eating breakfast in time to leave.
- Practise the school run so that you're prepared for the school morning journey.

Things to try at the drop off...

- If you have already built a ritual around saying goodbye at nursery then keep this up. This might be a hug, a kiss and the same positive phrase to set them off. Maybe you have a special handshake or you could whisper a new secret message to them each day.
- Consider allowing your child to bring a comforter or small toy from home. This may only be necessary for the first few days or weeks and may eventually be something that remains in their bag. You might consider giving them a small item (not valuable!) from home to 'look after' for you while they are at school- this can be enough of a reminder for some children that you WILL be back for them later and also gives them a sense of responsibility.
- Some parents find drawing a small symbol like a love heart on their child's wrist as well as their own can be a visual source of comfort for their child to reassure them throughout the day.
- Consider whether a reward chart could be a useful system for your child at home to encourage them and spur them on with coming into school.

Things we will be doing at school...

- We will use your child's summer scrap book regularly in the first few weeks to help build relationships and encourage the children to talk about themselves. In the past we have found that this can be a very useful way of calming any children who are sad after saying goodbye to their parents.

- We will ensure that those early weeks in September are focused on building positive trusting relationships with the young people in our care. For us, reaching a stage where each child feels safe, happy and calm when walking into the classroom is our ultimate goal in the first term.

Some things to avoid...

- It's natural to feel nervous about your child starting school, but remember that your child can easily pick up on your emotions. Try to be relaxed and positive, rather than showing your own nerves.
- Try not to make comments such as "I hated school" or "I was rubbish at school", which might give your child a negative attitude.
- Try not to bombard your child with endless talk about school – treating it in a matter-of-fact way rather than focusing on the "big step ahead" will help soothe an anxious child.
- Don't over-hype school, as your little one may feel let down or mistrustful if it doesn't live up to expectations!

Many children settle into school life easily, while others take longer. Don't worry if your child is tearful and clingy for the first few days – it's quite normal. Although you might feel terrible leaving them, they will most likely be playing quite happily within a few minutes. Please rest assured that we will do whatever we can to support each child so please do speak to any of the staff if you have a worry or a concern and we will work together to resolve it.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing you all soon!

The Foundation Stage Team