

## Starting School Guide

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, most children will settle in easily at school. To help our most experienced members, we have prepared some tips to help you and your child begin your learning journey with a smile.

### The Most Important Thing

is that you Don't worry. Your child does not need to be able to read, write or do sums before they start school. Children start school with a wide range of abilities and their teacher will be skilled at helping children progress at their own level. What's most important is that you and your child have fun together in those preschool months and years – sharing stories, singing songs, playing games and talking about their journey.

### Star Tip

Play some fun listening and doing games to help with following instructions. 'Simon says' or 'Can you find?'

### Things to Try

- 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?
- If possible, visit the school with your child before they start – either on formal open days, fêtes, or other events.
- Read books together about starting school.
- If your child seems anxious about school, focus on the things they'll like – maybe the sandpit or new friends.
- Practise the school morning run, including getting dressed and eating breakfast in time to leave.
- If your child has a particular worry – perhaps about wetting themselves, not liking the food – talk about these concerns with your child. Provide reassurance by discussing what to do and who to tell in these situations.

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### Self Care

It will make life easier for your child if they can master these self-care skills before they start school:

- Going to the toilet - Support your child to be confident going to the toilet in time and wiping properly. Do you have a different phrase for going to the toilet at home? Letting the teacher know what this is will ensure they understand what your child is trying to ask.
- Washing their hands - Chat about the importance of good hand washing with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet or handling animals.
- Dressing and undressing - practise putting on school clothes, taking them off and folding them neatly in preparation for PE lessons. Teach your child tricks such as putting labels at the back.
- Feeding themselves - Children having school dinners need to be able to use a full-sized knife and fork. If your child is taking a lunch-box, make sure they can open it as well as any containers and packets inside.
- Get your child into the habit of hanging their coat up, putting their toys away, to prepare them for doing things at school.

### First Week Check-List

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 they'll need for the first few days? (PE kit, book bag, spare clothes and so on)
- Do you and your child know where to hang coats and PE kits?
- Does your child know who'll be collecting them each day?
- Do you know if you take your child into the classroom and settle them, or are they expected to go in on their own?
- Have you put name labels on absolutely everything?!

Show your child where the labels are and make sure they are sewn or stuck somewhere that's easy for them to find.

### Star Tip

Teach your child some useful phrases such as "can I join in"? or "do you want to share"?