

Starting School - Tips for Parents

Although not all early years settings and schools are fully open, there are things you can do at home to help prepare your child for starting school:

- Walk past the new school as part of your daily exercise.
- Look at the school website, this may show some of the indoor and outdoor spaces as well as children in the school uniform.
- Talk about the type of things your child is likely to do at school (e.g. story times) and the types of toys and play areas in their classroom, many of which they are likely to be familiar with if they have attended a nursery setting (e.g. home corner, toys to build with, sand and water trays, mark making and painting, outdoor play, etc.) It can be helpful to think about the things that will be similar at school, not just the differences.
- Encourage your child to talk about their feelings about starting school (e.g. are they excited, what are they looking forward to the most, who are they looking forward to seeing or meeting, is there anything they are nervous or unsure about, or would like to know more about?)
- Role play new experiences such as dressing up in school uniforms (if you have been able to buy them), asking an adult to go to the toilet or asking for help for example at play times or meal times.
- Consider preparing for changes to sleeping patterns if your child has become used to waking later than they will need to for school. For example, by waking up 5 minutes earlier each day so it is not a big shock when school starts.
- Work on the self-help skills which will help your child to be independent in school, such as dressing, using cutlery and using the toilet. Provide your child with lots of praise for things they try to do by themselves. But remember, it is not essential that children can do all of these things when starting school and school staff will be able to help them.
- If you think your child may need some extra support starting school, then it may help to create a One Page Profile. This summarises your child's strengths, interests, things that they need help with and the strategies that work best.