



Starting School

A Guide for Parents



Starting school can be an anxious time for children and their parents.

However, with good preparation your child can make a smooth transition from Pre-School to Primary school.

Learning to cope with change is a normal part of your child's development.



Getting your child ready: some tips

- Play with your child for 10 minutes each day; as far as possible allow them to select the activity. This will help your child develop important skills such as turn-taking, listening and sharing.
- Read to your child often. This will help to develop listening skills.
- Let your child become used to handling books, e.g. turning the pages and putting them away.
- Say/sing nursery rhymes and encourage your child to join in.
- Let your child get used to handling various materials such as paint, crayons and play-doh.
- Talk to your child about their new school over the summer months; share positive experiences about your time at school, or those of older brothers and sisters.
- Give your child opportunities to play with other children and to share their toys and space.
- Give your child opportunities to experience separation from you.
- Let them practise taking off their coat, putting on and taking off their shoes.
- Let them practise self-help skills such as going to the toilet, washing and drying hands and using a tissue.



Visit to the School

- The new school will usually arrange for your child to visit before they start. This is an important part of the transition process. Some children may need more than one visit so that they feel comfortable with the new school; arrange this with your child's new teacher if needed.
- Let your child see where they play, where the toilets are, where they hang up their coat, where they wash their hands, where they eat and where you will be waiting for them when school is over.
- Let him/her meet the teacher and any other adults who will be in their classroom.
- Tell the school about your child's likes and dislikes, e.g. what they like to play with, what they like to eat and what may cause them to become upset.
- It is important for you to make the school aware of any special learning, medical or dietary needs your child may have. If you have any concerns about your child starting school share these with your child's new teacher: good communication with the school is very important.



First Day

- Your child may only stay a short while for the first few days; this is to allow them time to settle into their new environment.
- Arrive in good time. Establish a routine when you arrive, e.g. he/she takes off coat, hangs it up, enters room, greets teacher and goes to play area.
- If your child appears a little anxious, ask the teacher if he or she can bring one favourite small toy from home for a few days: this may help them feel more relaxed in their new classroom.

Always make sure you are on time when you collect your child

And remember...

- Try not to ask your child too many questions about school; sometimes they are tired when they come home. They will share their experiences with you when they are more relaxed, e.g. when playing with you.
- Establish a regular relaxing bedtime routine so that your child has a good night's sleep, e.g. supper, bath, story, bed. Turn the television or computer games off one hour before bedtime; this will help relax them for sleep.

First Day of School

(Wendy Silva)

I wonder what you're doing right now
and if everyone is treating you kind.
I hope there is a special person,
a nice friend that you can find.

I wonder if the teacher knows just
how special you are to me.
And if the brightness of your heart
is something she can see.

I wonder if you are thinking about
me and if you need a hug.
I already miss the sound of your voice
and how you give my leg a tug.

I wonder if you could possibly understand
how hard it is for me to let you grow.
On this day now that my heart breaks,
for this is the first step in letting my baby go.



