

Top Tips to prepare your child for starting school.

Talk about starting school with your child.

What do they think it will be like?

What are they most looking forward to?

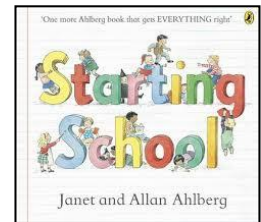
Is there anything they feel unsure about?

Talk about your own happy memories from school, do not let them pick up on any anxieties you may have.



Read books that are 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, Ian Reynolds
- 'Come to School too, Blue Kangaroo!' by Emma Chichester Clark
- 'Going to School' Sticker book and 'Starting School' sticker book - Usbourne



Become familiar with the school.

Look at the website and prospectus you have been given.

Walk past the school and talk about the journey.

Find out when the Summer Fair is and go along and visit.



Be prepared.

Your child will get tired and will need at least 12 hours sleep a night.

Children like routine so try to have regular times for going to bed and getting up, mealtimes and family time.



Manage their own self care needs.

Get your child confident about getting to the loo in time, wiping properly, flushing and washing their hands.

Blowing their nose into a tissue is another useful skill.

Develop a 'can do' attitude by giving them a few everyday responsibilities as they get closer to school age.

Perhaps they could lay the table, feed a pet or put their own clothes away.



Clothes to wear

Try and buy clothes they can manage themselves: velcro shoes, manageable fastenings on coats, elasticated waistbands.

Name everything - all of the sweatshirts will look the same!

Let your child practise putting on their uniform and folding it neatly for PE.

Teach them the tricks of getting dressed, like labels at the back, holding onto cuffs to stop sleeves rolling up.



School dinners

All Infant children will be entitled to a free school meal from September 2014.

They will need to be able to use a knife and fork and carry a small plate or tray.

If your child is bringing a packed lunch from home make sure it is healthy and that they can manage all containers and packaging independently.



Confident communicators

Encourage your child to express what they feel and ask for help when they need it.

Chat about everything – without distractions from TVs, computers and phones.

Get them used to talking to 'safe' adults too by talking to assistants in shops, greeting friend's parents.

Use manners– please, thank you, excuse me etc.



Developing friendships

Being friendly, learning to share, waiting your turn are important skills to develop friendships.

Play simple board, card, ball games to teach children about taking turns, following rules and losing graciously! Visit parks and friends houses to develop social skills by interacting with others.



Developing independence

Get your child into the habit of hanging their coat up, putting their toys away, clearing the table, and so on, to prepare them for doing these things at school.

Many schools use a piece of music to indicate tidy up time and motivate children to help.



Reading

The best thing you can do to support your child in becoming a reader is to read lots of good quality books to them.

Your child will soon have favourites and will want to hear them over and over again.

Teach each your child to recognise their own name.

Point out common shop names, signs and letters in the environment.

Let them see you reading. Have some time every day to share books.



Writing

Develop fine motor skills which will support them to hold a pencil when the time is right. Everyday tasks such as playdough, construction, threading, picking up tweezers, mark making with pencils and brushes all help.

You will notice that their mark making becomes more purposeful. Encourage a three fingered 'tripod' pencil grip and let them do lots of emergent writing.

Praise all of their efforts.



Developing number and counting skills

Play 'spot the number' and challenge your child to find them everywhere.

Get into the habit of counting everything with your child, from apples at the shops, to stairs up to bed.

Counting songs and rhymes teach children numbers and order, as well as rhythm and rhyme - 'Five Little Ducks', 'Ten in the Bed'...

Play counting-based games such as dominoes, card snap, snakes and ladders.



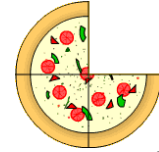
Maths is more than number

Introduce your child to the mathematical concepts they'll learn about at school.

Division and fractions

Can they share out grapes or raisins so everyone has the same amount?

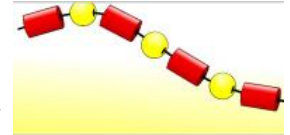
Can they cut their pizza into four pieces?



Pattern, sequence and shapes

Can they make a repeated pattern of building blocks, or beads on a string?

Have a look at patterns in brickwork, tiles and paving.



Find shapes in the environment and learn basic shape names.

Measuring

Find a tape measure or height chart and measure everyone in the family.

Talk about length - the longest car, the tallest tree, the shortest sausage

Comparisons

Can they tell you which is heavier: a kitchen roll or a tin of beans?

Can they find out which bucket holds the most water?

Time Play with a stopwatch or egg timer: Can your child stand on one leg for one minute? How long does it take to run to the lamppost and back?

A final message for parents

- 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.
- If your child seems exhausted at the end of the day, let them have some quiet time when they get home. If they're starving hungry, a healthy snack and drink can help restore energy levels.
- Let your child get used to school life before introducing afterschool activities.
- Keep talking to your child about their feelings about school, and put aside some special time to chat about their day. Congratulate yourself in getting them this far!