



# Preparing YOUR CHILDREN FOR BACK TO SCHOOL

Starting school is a very exciting time for children, but can also make them feel nervous, anxious and scared.

Children need to feel settled, calm and safe, and a little preparation from home can really help with the transition.

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Children being aware of themselves is really important when they start school. Does your child know how old they are? Could they tell a teacher if they have hurt themselves? Help your child memorise parts of their body; it will boost their confidence when they are asked questions they know they can answer.

Do not worry if your child has not been in a childcare or preschool setting;

playing with other children is all good practice for establishing friendships with classmates at school. Children who do not know each other will often make friends very easily, but if your child struggles, teach them some useful phrases such as "can I join in?" or "would you like to share?"

As the start of school season approaches, try to get your child used to getting up, going to bed and having meals and snacks as they would on school days.

Bath time and stories instead of TV and tablet games can all help children wind down before bedtime.

Making time in the evening to chat about your day for ten minutes can be a lovely routine for sharing fun times and any concerns. Nutritious meals and plenty of sleep will help them concentrate, learn and thrive at school. If your child takes naps, it would be helpful to try to gradually reduce these.

## Together

- 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 are unsure of or worried about?
- Look at the school prospectus and website together and talk about the photos.
- Find photos of you and other family members at school, and chat about happy memories from your own school days.
- Visit the school with your child before they start.
- Practice the school morning routine, including getting

dressed and eating breakfast on time to leave.

- Read books together about starting school.
- Books:
  - » *I am too Absolutely Small for School* (Charlie and Lola) by Lauren Child
  - » *Starting School* by Janet and Allen Ahlberg
  - » *Harry and the Dinosaurs Go to School* by Ian Whybrow
  - » *Come to School too, Blue Kangaroo!* by Emma Chichester Clark
  - » *Going to School and Starting School Sticker Books* by Usborne Children's Books

## Self-care

- It will make life easier for your child if your child can master these self-care skills before they start school:
- Support them to be confident about getting to the toilet on time and wiping properly, using toilet paper or moist wipes.
- Do you have a different phrase for going to the toilet at home? Letting the class teacher know what it is will ensure they understand.



## 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

- Let your child practise putting on their school clothes, taking them off and folding them neatly in preparation for PE lessons.



## Keeping tidy

- 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.



## First-week checklist

- ✓ 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 will need for the first few days (PE kit, book bag, spare clothes and so on)?
- ✓ Does your child know who will be picking them up each day?
- ✓ Have you stuck name labels on absolutely everything?



## Goodbye without tears

- Hold back your tears and keep smiling while saying goodbye; give your child a hug and let them know when you will be back.