



# Helping your child to settle into school



# Overcoming first day fears at Nursery or school



Your child's first day at Nursery or school is a big step. However, there are plenty of practical things that you can do to prepare them, such as talking to your child about nursery or school and helping to develop their practical skills.

## Talking to your child

Your child may be anxious about what to expect on the first day at Nursery or school.

If so, one way of helping them is to talk through their fears:

- explain where they'll be going, what they'll be doing, and for how long
- answer questions, and iron out any fears by asking what they think the Nursery or school might be like
- emphasise the things they may enjoy doing

Don't dismiss your child's fears - things that seem obvious or silly to an adult can seem like terrible obstacles to a three or four year old.

## Building on practical skills

If children have a good idea of what Nursery or school is going to be like and have already experienced learning activities at home and in other settings, they're less likely to find the experience stressful.

Games, role-plays and reading at home can help your child get into the right frame of mind and boost their confidence.

Activities for your child could include:

- playing games that involve taking turns or speaking in front of a group
- playing with children of a similar age to develop social skills
- reading books about starting school
- using your child's favourite toys to role-play going to school
- painting and drawing, which involve sitting down for short periods of time

## In the weeks before school starts

In the run-up to the first day of term you could:

- involve your child in choosing things they need for school such as school bags or uniforms
- practice the walk to school with your child so they become familiar with the building and the local area
- establish a routine and discuss what might be happening at school at different times of the day

# How to help your child at home...



- ✓ Make time to talk about what your child has done each day.
- ✓ Share books, songs and games with your child.
- ✓ Encourage your child to use pens, pencils, chalk, paint and simple tools such as scissors.
- ✓ Talk to your child, introducing new words whenever you can. Children learning English as an additional language need to be confident in their home language first.
- ✓ Help your child to recognise shapes, colours, numbers and words in familiar places such as food packets, street signs and advertisements.
- ✓ Stress letter **sounds** rather than their **names**. Say that bus starts with "b" not "bee"- which is the capital letter sound.
- ✓ Write your child's name and help him/her to recognise it. Only use a capital letter for the first letter of the name.

## From home to school...

We try, at Pinner Wood, to make the transition from home to school as easy as possible. To help us achieve this, we ask you to encourage your child to be as independent as possible. Please encourage your child to:

- ✓ Go to the toilet on their own, flush the toilet and wash and dry their hands.
- ✓ Blow their own nose using a tissue.
- ✓ Put on their own coat and do up the zip or buttons.
- ✓ Put on their own shoes. Velcro is so much easier to do up than laces.
- ✓ Dress and undress themselves.
- ✓ Sit still and listen to a story for a few minutes without interrupting.

Children should be toilet trained when they come to Nursery. No nappies, pull-ups or trainer pants please. We realise there will be the occasional accident!

# Reading is fun because...

- ✓ It introduces new words into your child's vocabulary and helps their spoken language.
- ✓ It helps your child to learn to listen and concentrate on the spoken voice, which they will need to do in school.
- ✓ It is a happy and enjoyable activity.
- ✓ It gives your child undivided attention.
- ✓ It shows your child how books work, with a title and a picture on the front and with words which we read from left to right.
- ✓ It shows your child what a story is. Perhaps soon your child will be writing stories of their own!
- ✓ It also helps if children can hear and learn rhymes, nursery rhymes, songs and poems. They will be listening to and learning sounds and new words.

