

# Starting School

# Tips for Parents

## Helping Your Child Feel Ready for School

Starting school is a big milestone for both children and parents. One of the most important things you can do is talk positively and confidently about school. Children often pick up on adult emotions, so reassurance and excitement can really help build confidence for your little one.

Children do not need to know everything before starting school — they just need to feel safe, supported and excited to learn!

## Independence Skills

Children do not need to master everything before starting school, but practising little tasks can help them feel more confident.

### Dressing

Encourage children to:

- Put on their coat
- Attempt zips/buttons
- Change shoes independently
- Manage simple clothing fastenings
- Recognise their own belongings



### Toileting

Children can practise:

- Using the toilet independently
- Flushing the toilet
- Washing and drying hands properly
- Telling an adult if they need help



### Eating and Snack Time

Practise:

- Opening lunchboxes
- Peeling fruit
- Using cutlery
- Opening packets and yoghurt pots
- Drinking from a water bottle independently



## What Reception Really Looks Like...

- Children learn through exploration and play
- Learning happens indoors and outdoors
- Adults support children through interactions and experiences
- Communication, creativity and social skills are highly valued
- Play is purposeful and supports all learning areas

### Helpful Routines

- Regular bedtime
- Calm mornings
- Practising getting dressed
- Preparing bags the night before
- Healthy breakfast habits



### Working Together With School

- Speak to staff if you have concerns
- Celebrate achievements together
- Keep communication open
- Trust that settling can take time

## Supporting Early Learning At Home

Reading is one of the best ways to prepare children for school. It develops vocabulary, listening, imagination and communication skills. Children learn best through conversation and play. The more children hear language, the more confident they become using it!

### Reading Together

- Read daily, even for five-ten minutes
- Talk about pictures and characters
- Ask simple questions about stories
- Retell familiar stories together
- Visit the library regularly
- Enjoy rhymes, songs and repetition

### Communication and Language

- Have back-and-forth conversations
- Introduce new vocabulary naturally
- Encourage children to explain ideas
- Listen carefully to children's thoughts
- Model full sentences



## Emotional Wellbeing and Confidence

Starting school can trigger lots of new emotions - for both grown-ups and children! Some children will settle really quickly, whilst others may take a little longer. Both are completely normal!

### Separation Worries

- Keep goodbyes calm and positive
- Establish a consistent morning routine
- Reassure children that adults always return
- Avoid long goodbyes
- Praise bravery and resilience

### Managing Big Feelings

- Name emotions together
- Model calming strategies
- Talk openly about worries
- Celebrate small successes

Simple calming ideas include - deep breaths, cuddling a favourite toy, quiet story time or talking about feelings

