



MY CHILD STARTS SCHOOL THIS SEPTEMBER WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

We know how daunting it can be when your child is starting school for the first time so we have put together this useful guide to support families in the School Readiness Transition. It can seem overwhelming knowing where to start but please remember your child has already learnt most of the skills needed to be 'school ready' and the most important skills you can teach your child are those you do everyday. Good sleep routines, healthy eating, positive relationships, communication - listening to children is key in supporting their emotions, helping them develop independence and the ability to carry out everyday tasks such as wiping their bottoms after the toilet and getting dressed. If a child is able to do these little steps they will use less energy focussing on these daily tasks and have more energy for the academic side of their learning.

Children do not need to be writing their names before school, but it is helpful if a child can draw simple shapes such as circles and straight lines to support their fine motor skills. Along with recognising their name for coat pegs, lunchboxes, book bags etc

The most valuable thing you can give your child is a consistent routine, a safe environment, healthy choices, love, a listening ear within a supportive home and your child will have the tools they need to thrive in school.

Here is a quick guide as to the sorts of things this means everyday.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Teach children to concentrate and learn resilience:-

Children have to be able to concentrate on a task and stick with something even if there are setbacks.

Being able to concentrate and not give up makes a significant difference to children's achievement. In order to learn to read, children have to put in significant amounts of effort and cope when they are not always getting words right. Children also need to be able to concentrate without always having adults sitting prompting them. In the weeks before school, see if your child can play or manage tasks such as tidying up and give praise afterwards for having concentrated and persevered.

Help children to develop social skills:-

Look out for opportunities for your child to play with other children, particularly if you know anyone who has a child in the same class. Teach your child to say 'please' and 'thank you' as ways of recognising other people's kindness. The best way is to model this yourself and to prompt if your child forgets. Encourage your child to share things, even if this is just with you and explain when you share, the other person feels included, this supports children in recognising feelings of others around them and teaches kindness. Play small games with your child and see if your child can manage if he/she does not win. If they did not win and appear sad help them find a positive, they tried, they took part and had fun, they learnt to take turns and to share and that is a win in itself!

Physical Development

- * **Moving and Handling** - skillfully move around in a variety of ways, catch a ball, hold a pencil correctly (tripod grip), draw lines and circles to help begin to form recognisable letters, lots of mark making opportunities inside and outside and using other tools if not into 'writing'. Makes snips with scissors - help your child to open, close and control.
- * **Health and Self-care** - can tell adult when hungry or tired, understands tools have to be used safely, can go to the toilet independently and wipe bottom, can wash and dry hands, wipe their nose, dresses self and can do zips for play time and PE, knows importance of coats on and off when hot, cold, opening lunch boxes and packets in readiness for lunch.

Encourage your child to perform practical tasks:-

Being able to put on own coat, manage lunchbox and get dressed for PE is important because children are in busy classroom environments. These practical skills also give children huge amounts of confidence.

Children need to be able to take themselves off to the toilet, wash their hands and get their coats on and off. At lunchtime, they need to manage their packed lunch or carry a tray. They also need to be able to blow their noses.

Allow a couple of months to practise these skills and if you have over the years become your child's personal dresser and general assistant (we've all been there!), expect that there may be a little resistance. Time, patience and a little praise are needed, but it is worth it. Competent children tend to gain in confidence and there are other spin offs too - these self-help skills are great for getting children's hands ready for writing.

Communication and Language Development

- * Listening and Attention - listen to others, listens to stories well and recall - ask questions at end of story to check listening.
- * Understanding - understands use of objects - what do we use to cut things?, shows understanding of prepositions such as 'under', 'on top', 'behind'. Understands simple instructions e.g get out or put away an object, beginning to understand how and why questions. Beginning to understand instructions with a two part sequence, understands humour nonsense jokes and rhymes, listens and responds to ideas expressed by others in conversation or discussion.
- * Speaking - Beginning to use more complex sentences to link feelings and thoughts (e.g using and, because), can retell a simple past event in the correct order (e.g went down the slide and hurt finger), uses talk to connect ideas explains what is happening and anticipates what might happen next, questions why things happen and gives explanations, uses a range of tenses (e.g playing, played, play, will), uses intonation, rhythm and phrasing to make the meaning clear to others, uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them, builds up vocabulary that reflects the breath of their experiences, uses talk in play to pretend that objects represent something else (e.g this box is my play castle).

Encourage language development:-

Being able to talk, listen and communicate is essential. It means that your child can express themselves and make friends but it is also vital for learning, so prioritise use of language.

Your child needs to be able to respond not just to their teacher, but also to teaching assistants and other staff. To help your child learn to talk to new people try letting them pay for things in shops or order items in restaurants so that they can gain these skills with you for support. As language is linked with learning to read, prioritise meal times as opportunities to talk with your child and build into your routine the sharing of books.

Use descriptive words and try not limit your child's vocabulary to baby language. Books can really support children to explore a wider range of vocabulary, so mix up their bedtime reading with some exciting stories filled with adventure!

Literacy Development

- * Reading - enjoys rhyming - use books and songs, ask what rhymes with...?, suggest ways stories might end, can look at books independently and turn pages correctly and read from left to right, top to bottom, shows interest in print, recognises familiar words such as name - point out text on cereal packets, road signs, links sounds to letters, naming letters of alphabet, knows information in books and computers.

- * Writing - give meaning to marks - give range of mark making opportunities such as paint brushes, pencils, painting with cotton buds (these smaller objects help children to develop their fine motor skills).

Mathematics Development

- * Numbers - recites numbers up to 10, recognises numerals 1 to 5, counts to 10, shows curiosity about numbers, compares objects of same amount or bigger, smaller, groups objects into numbers - clap or jump as you count, sort toys into groups and count them, point out numerals around the shops and at home.
- * Shape, Space and Measure - shows interest in shapes and pattern - point out shapes when out and about, uses positional language - talk about under, over, next to when playing, use descriptive language 'round', 'tall', introduce 3D shapes, order things by height, weight, capacity, beginning to use language related to money - play shops, price toys and solve problems.

Understanding The World Development

- * People and Communities - shows interest in other people and occupations, remembers and talks about significant events in their life, enjoys family customs and routines, celebrate and talk about events past and present.
- * The World - talk about plants, animals, nature and how things work, look at similarities, differences, patterns and change - collect items and display them, care for pets.
- * Technology - can use simple equipment such as remote control, cd player, uses knobs, pulleys, real objects such as cameras or mobile phones, computers - support children to explore safely.

Expressive Arts and Design Development

- * Exploring and using media and materials - enjoys dancing and singing, taps out rhythms, uses construction sets to build and balance, explores instruments, mixes colours, uses tools.
- * Being Imaginative - makes up songs, rhythms, imitates adults, role play in home corner and in using farm animals etc, build up stories such as rescuing farm animal from 'cliff' which is arm chair - ideas, dressing up clothes to be someone else, music and movement, stories.

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IMPORTANT POINTS FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION

1.) Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep:-

Children's brains need sleep in order that they can process information. It also helps them to concentrate, regulate their emotions and prevent illness. Children who aren't getting enough sleep are less likely to cope with the demands of school.

It's worth looking at your child's sleep patterns as children do find the first weeks very tiring. Children who are not sleeping enough are more likely to pick up a cold or infection. They will also find it harder to concentrate and learn.

Aim in the next couple of months to build up a good bedtime routine and just before term begins, get your child in the habit of being up and dressed early. With a bit of luck, this will help you both to glide through the school gates on their first day.

2.) Celebrate transition but try to avoid talking about school too early this can make children anxious and make them expect great things - school isn't going to be a walk in the park for any child so selling it to them as the greatest thing happening could have a negative impact on your child's self confidence once they reach school and are faced with lots of new challenges.

3.) Attend visits to school, look at website together - check your child's school transition policy so you are well prepared and are able to benefit from every opportunity provided.

4.) Your child's School teacher will be invited to visit us at Little Explorers - some Schools don't always have the opportunity to do visits but we do our best to encourage them. If your child's teacher is planning to come out and see your child we will let you know but won't make a big thing to your child about it so that they continue to feel at ease and relaxed in their environment at Little Explorers.

Key persons will conduct a transition report for those children with Individual Learning Plans and / or additional needs and with parental consent this will be shared with your child's reception teacher and necessary professionals to help with the transition, we may also arrange a meeting with the school to ensure the right support is in place before they begin, parents and carers will of course always be invited to join us.

5.) When your child starts School make sure they have a good breakfast (not sugary/chocolaty as they give a quick high and then a low) something which has slow releasing energy such as - porridge, bananas, weetabix etc.

Lastly, please remember we are always here for you and your family even after your child has left Little Explorers, if we can ever offer any help or support do not hesitate to ask.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM LITTLE EXPLORERS IN THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO MY CHILD STARTING SCHOOL

During the months leading up to your child starting school all of our Pre School Children will have the opportunity to draw their own portraits and add this to our 'School Board' this is a great way for children to identify other children in Little Explorers who may also be going to the same school as them. Children will also meet 'Alfred the Mouse' Alfred has been created by the Schools in Somerset to support children's transitions to school. The children will go on an online tour with Alfred and explore his adventures in the classrooms and playground at their school!

Little Explorers will invite all of our school leavers teachers to visit and meet the children, this can really support the transition stage, not all schools offer this however we work very hard with local schools to encourage visits to happen and will keep you informed of the date your child's school teacher is due to visit us. During these visits teachers often spend time playing one to one with your child, getting to know them with the support of your child's key person; during this time we will share your child's learning journey and hand over your child's transition report which will have been prepared by your child's key person based on the child's current stage of learning and development tracked during their time with us at Little Explorers. We will also send out an email with a School Readiness Chart with ways you can support your child at home and ask parents to return these to us as soon as possible so we can add this to our transition report so each school has a really good understanding of each individual child's needs, interests and abilities.

P:E SESSIONS

As part of 'getting ready for school' we provide PE lessons giving children the support they may need in the early days of starting school such as getting dressed and undressed for P:E. Children will take part in a variety of physical development activities and be fully supported through the changing process gradually reducing this support to encourage their own independence, ready for September.

STORY TIME AND THEMES

We place great emphasis on making sure school isn't made 'too scary or a big deal' therefore we gently incorporate school themes early into the Curriculum we provide at Little Explorers which begins from the moment a child joins our Cocoons baby room. This helps children relax during the lead up to school as we have already spent lots of time practising many self help skills, building friendships and developing our communication and

language. We have a wide range of 'getting ready for school' books which we regularly read and will continue to do so in the lead up to school, alongside this our themes nearer the term will be based around supporting children with this new transition in their lives. Our selection of books are always open for families to use so please if you wish to borrow any books just ask you are always very welcome!

LITTLE EXPLORERS GRADUATION CELEBRATION

During the final weeks of your child's time at Little Explorers you will be welcomed to join our 'Graduation Celebration' this is where children will receive their graduation certificates, gifts from us and wear their Graduation Gown (supplied by us on loan during the celebration). This day is a special moment to celebrate all our Little Explorers have achieved and to wish them well on their next milestone in life! We welcome all Parents and Grandparents to join this special occasion and you are more than welcome to take photos of your child on the day. All we kindly ask is that if you wish to take group photos you ask for permission from other parents/carers first.

WHEN WILL MY LAST CHILD'S DAY AT LITTLE EXPLORERS BE?

The final day of Little Explorers for all children leaving September is 31st August. However if your child does not start school immediately and you still require childcare please pop us a message and we will be more than happy to support this where possible. If we do not hear from families we will assume your child's last day with us is 31st August.

Please see below a copy of our Road to School Map to support your child's transition to school.

As always we are never far and if you ever have any questions no matter how big or small please do not hesitate to ask.

The Road To School

This tracker helps you and your child prepare for school.

Speaking & literacy

- I like to read stories & look at picture books
- I am able to talk about myself, my needs & feelings
- I am practising recognising my name when it's written down

Listening & understanding

- I am able to sit still and listen for a short while
- I can follow instructions
- I understand the need to follow rules

Writing skills

- I like tracing patterns & colouring in
- I enjoy making marks
- I am practising holding a pencil

Sharing & turn taking

- I can share toys & take turns
- I like playing games with others
- I like interacting with other children

Everyone starts school with different abilities - your teacher will help you progress at your own level.

Counting skills

- I enjoy practising counting objects
- I like saying number rhymes & playing counting games
- I can recognise some numbers when they are written down

Going to the toilet

- I can go to the toilet on my own, wipe myself properly & flush
- I can wash and dry my hands without any help

Routines

- I have practised putting on my uniform & getting ready to leave on time
- I have a good bedtime routine so I'm not feeling tired for school
- I'm learning to eat at the times I will on school days

**What are you looking forward to the most?
Is there anything you're unsure of?**

Interest in the world & new activities

- I enjoy learning about the world around me
- I am interested in exploring new activities or environments
- I like asking questions

Eating

- I can use a knife & fork
- I can open my packed lunch on my own
- I am confident at opening wrappers & packaging

Self-care

- I know when to wash my hands
- I can wipe my nose
- I can ask for help if I don't feel well

Getting dressed & undressed on my own

- I can button & unbutton my shirt & use a zip
- I can put my own shoes & socks on
- I can change into my PE kit & put my coat on

Independence

- I am happy to be away from my mummy, daddy or my main carer
- I am happy to tidy my belongings & look after my things
- I am feeling confident about starting school

School bus

School

Nursery Resources
www.nurseryresources.org

Remember - learning is not a competition, children learn at different rates. For more ideas to help prepare your child for school, talk to your childcare practitioner.

This policy was created on 10th January 2019 by Gemma Roberts
This policy was revised on: 15/02/2024 by Gemma Roberts