

Preparing for school



Kindred
Inspiring Nurseries and Pre-Schools

Eating

- Can your child make healthy choices and put a meal together? If not they may end up with cucumber, sweetcorn and rice!
- Use a knife and fork independently, ideally being able to cut food into smaller portions.
- Can your child open packets, wrappers and push a straw in to a drinks container?
- Would your child be able to identify their own lunch box? What is the plan in case there are 3 the same?
- Water and milk will be available, can your child pour from a jug into a cup?
- If your child has an allergy, intolerance or dietary requirement are they are aware of foods to avoid?
- Feed themselves independently with little to no help.
- Your child will need to queue, self serve and select somewhere to sit in a dining room.....how will you prepare for this?

Social

- Use every opportunity to instil sharing and taking turns.
- Can your child makes friends without you helping them? Encourage them to go and ask another child if they can join in, play with them, share their toys, get involved.
- Respond to unfamiliar adults and feel safe with them.
- Use every opportunity for your child to play and interact with other children of all ages , this could be family members, through nursery or attending local groups in the community.

Routines

- Start to chat about starting school and what that means.
- Bedtime routine and enough sleep is key to a successful school day, this can take a long time to master so start work on it now.
- Could you start to have meal times at home at the same time they will be at school? Worth a try?

Listening & Attention

- Does your child listen to and follow simple instructions?
- Improve listening skills, real listening...when was the last time your child homed in on the sounds around them? A dripping tap, a fly buzzing, the blind flapping at the window.....how many sounds can you hear on a listening walk?
- Get your child to recall stories, events, a TV program, their day
- Play games like Simon said, memory games, spot the difference.
- Have time where there are no distractions, screen time, background noise like the TV.

Independence

- Is your child ready to cope all day without a comforter or their favourite toy? How will this be managed and how will they be weaned off using it?
- Start to give your child some responsibility at home – feed the dog, put shoes away, choose a meal for everybody.
- Is your child ready to separate from you for the full day? Start to plan and phase this so it is not a huge pull or change.
- Can your child recognise their written name so they can find their peg, drawer, work book etc.
- Start getting your child to carry their own back pack, book wallet, water bottle etc.
- Can your child open and close a drawstring bag? Usually PE kits are stored in these.
- Is your child well equipped to make decisions for themselves? What they play with, what they eat, when they need a drink.

Interest in the world

- Look at the school brochure or website together.
- Point the school out as you walk or drive past it, 'oh look there is your school'.
- Attend fetes, fairs and community events at the school.
- Explain the 'why' or ask them 'why do you think?'

Self Care

- Ensure your child can independently go to the toilet, including wiping, flushing, pulling up clothes and washing hands.
- Children need to be able to independently wash and dry their own hands and recognise when they are dirty / sticky etc...
- Use a tissue independently and dispose of it in the bin.
- Get dressed and undressed independently.
- Be able to turn a jumper, cardigan or T-shirt the right way.
- Take their own shoes and socks off and on – Velcro straps are the answer!
- Fasten a zip or ensure the coat does not have a zip and has a fattener they can use independently.
- Tidy away after themselves and know where to return things to where they belong.

Emotional

- Talk to your child about happy memories from you or other family members attending school.
- Do not show your own fear, anxiety or worries about your child going to school, keep it positive.
- Set boundaries and help them to understand the boundary set and why.
- Can your child vocabularies and label their emotions, needs, feelings and thoughts?
- Start to make your child responsible for their actions, you did this and then this happened...positive and negative examples.
- Do talk about school all the time as it might start to worry them.

Physical

- Get the football out and channel your inner Beckham – can your child kick a ball?
- Fine motor skills are key to early writing skills, just like any other muscles in the body children need to have strong muscles in their fingers, wrists and hands to be able to hold a pencil and write. Start with activities that get these muscles moving and strong such as play dough, picking things up with tweezers, popping bubble wrap
- Can your child walk upstairs safely and independently?
- Get your child hopping, standing on one leg and balancing – believe it or not these skills help them to be able to sit still.

Language & Literacy

- Read and look at books about starting school, check out our list of suggested books.
- Can your child vocalise that they need the toilet, are hungry, need a drink are too hot or cold?
- Does your child recognise themselves by their full an proper name, age or family members names if it is different?
- Get your child to start to understand words have a meaning and that there is a written language. They don't need to be able to read it though!
- The bigger vocabulary your child has the better they will learn, introduce new words every day through your daily routine.
- Model language and conversational skills, follow the rules yourself to help your child learn them.
- Question and encourage questions.
- Help your child to understand prepositions – on, in, next to and under so they can follow instructions and when asked to put their chair under the table they understand and do not put the chair 'under' the table.

Recommended Books

- 'I am absolutely too 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 and Adrian Reynolds
- 'Come to school too, Blue Kangaroo!' by Emma Chichester Clark

For free and useful advice the bbc.co.uk/startingprimaryschool website is a great resource.

For further advice and support about preparing for school contact: enquiries@kindrednurseries.co.uk or visit our website kindrednurseries.co.uk