

Preparing your child for Kindergarten



Encourage your child to have a go!

- ✓ Develop self-help skills by encouraging your child to take off and put on their own jumper and coat. Support your child in doing up zips, buttons and poppers; we understand that these can be tricky so make it fun by dressing up toys in old clothes.
- ✓ Support your child in getting to the toilet on time, wiping themselves, flushing the toilet and washing their hands. If your child is wearing nappies we will work with you and your child to support them during toilet training. Sometimes children are so involved in play that accidents happen. Please do talk to your child and what to do if they have an accident, offer reassurance and that they should tell an adult.
- ✓ Encourage your child to blow their nose themselves, bin the tissue and wash their hands. If reinforced at home and Kindergarten this will become the norm and your child will develop a healthy routine.
- ✓ Encourage your child to eat with a knife and fork or a spoon. Support your child to be independent with eating.

Teach your child to communicate their needs

- ✓ Talk to your child without distractions from the TV, radio or tablet. Talk about shared experiences you have enjoyed together.
- ✓ Sing songs and rhymes together to develop their vocabulary.
- ✓ Recognise and talk through feelings and different emotions, this will help them to understand and communicate their needs and how they are feeling.
- ✓ It is important for children to listen and follow instructions, this skill can be enhanced at home by playing games such as snap and giving simple instructions e.g. hang your coat up and wash your hands.

- ✓ On our website you'll find 'Top Tips' for encouraging communication. One of the most important tips we can offer is where children mis-pronounce words correctly, it's important not to correct but to model back the word—e.g. child says "my favourite colour is 'yeyyow' you could respond "yes, your favourite colour is 'yellow'", child says "I like bisgetti", you could say "yes, you like spaghetti", and leave it at that. Often it's just an immaturity and corrects itself naturally however, this approach will give your child a head start and help address where there could be speech & language difficulties. We all recognise how endearing these 'cutisms' of speech are however it is important not to encourage. Likewise with the use of "I"/"my" - where a child might say "my likes milk", you could model back "I like milk".

Feeling safe and secure in the new environment

- ✓ Talk to your child about the routine and staff in Kindergarten
- ✓ Your child will have a peg with their name on for their coat, it will be helpful for your child to begin to recognise their own name. To reinforce this you could put a name card on the fridge or play a treasure hunt game; finding the name cards around the house.

Be healthy, active, friendly and helpful

- ✓ Establish a good sleep routine.
- ✓ Talk about the importance of healthy eating.
- ✓ Go on outings and talk about what you see, hear, smell, touch and taste.
- ✓ Find books/links that relate to places you have been or things you have been talking about.
- ✓ Give your child responsibilities around the house and special jobs to do. Eg emptying the washing machine and talking about how the clothes are wet and heavy before hanging them out to dry together, laying the table for dinner; counting out cutlery and plates, making beds together and even washing up! However tedious these jobs are to us, your child will enjoy joining in and being involved!

- ✓ Arrange play dates with other parents and their children. Encourage sharing, socialising and turn taking.
- ✓ Encourage your child to talk to different people you know to develop their confidence and vocabulary.

Holiday activities

- ✓ Gardening; allow your children to get messy, dig and explore outdoors, plant seeds and observe growth over time.
- ✓ Keep a diary/scrap book over the holidays to show everyone what you have been doing; adding photos and anecdotes.
- ✓ Save boxes and plastic cartons to make models, encourage your child to use tools independently such as scissors, masking tape or a hole punch.
- ✓ Make play dough; this is a fantastic activity that can help strengthen your child's small hand muscles that are used for writing.
- ✓ Share books and encourage your child to describe what is happening from looking at the illustrations.
- ✓ Sing songs, including those which involve counting and rhyme, nursery rhymes or simply make up your own funny songs!
- ✓ Dance to music and make up your own moves!
- ✓ Pointing out shapes, numbers, signs, letters in the environment is an easy way to reinforce how they are used in everyday life. Highlighting signs all around us will enhance your child's understanding of how they are used in everyday life.
- ✓ Play simple games, indoors and outside to encourage sharing and turn taking.

Most importantly...

Play, play, play, play, play, play,
and have fun together!