

Helping your child get ready for primary school: some help for parents during COVID 19.

The closure of crèches and preschools due to COVID 19 happened suddenly on the 12th March and we have since learned that children won't be able to return to their preschools before the end of this ECCE year.

Preschool services usually put in a lot of work to help prepare children starting primary school. We know children will not be in preschool before the end of term, however, there are many simple and practical things that parents can do at home to help children with this transition.

Build your Child's Independence by Encouraging and Practising:

- Putting on and taking off their coat and shoes.
- Using the toilet and washing their hands properly by themselves.
- Helping around the house with simple jobs such as putting away their toys, setting the table, folding the washing, feeding their pet and bringing their dinner dishes to the sink after meals.
- Opening and closing their lunch box, water bottle and school bag (in August).
- Recognising their name on labels such as their coat, school bag and lunch bag.



Develop their Communication Skills:

- Talk to your child and encourage them to both listen and talk.
- Read books regularly including fairy tales and books about starting primary school.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes regularly and often.
- Count everyday objects, for example, counting steps when climbing the stairs or counting flowers in a row or birds in the sky when you are out walking.

Support your Child's Emotional Wellbeing by:

- Encouraging your child to play as much as possible (more play, fewer screens).
- If your child is stuck when doing something, allow them to keep trying rather than helping them straight away, as this builds their perseverance and confidence.
- Discuss and label your child's feelings to help them regulate their emotions and deal with different feelings.
- When you receive your child's learning portfolio's from the preschool, look at it with your child and talk about all the different things they learned and experienced.
- Read your child's transition statement prepared by your child's preschool key person to see how they viewed your child as a learner. This could also enable you to see if there are any areas of learning you can practise with your child at home.
- Arrange to talk with your child's preschool key person to discuss your child's time in the preschool and if they have any advice specific to your child for transitioning to primary school.
- Discuss what your child knows about primary school, what are they expecting it to be like, what are they looking forward to, or, what might they be nervous of? Reassure them of any fears.
- Drive to the primary school if it's nearby to have a look at the building/playground and talk about how your child will get to school each day (in August).
- Show your child some photos of the school uniform and tell them about other children they may know that already attend the school, maybe you know some of their preschool friends also going to the same primary school.
- Set up a primary school play space over the Summer including their lunch box, school bag, paper and crayons/pencils, books etc.



Develop their Physical Skills:

- Gross motor or bigger body skills are especially important as they help children to be able to sit and further develop their fine motor or hand skills: loads of running, jumping, climbing, cycling, scooting and hopping.
- Fine motor skills: have paper available with crayons, pencils, markers and scissors to encourage them to draw and cut. Also provide playdoh, painting, jigsaws and pegboards as often as possible.