

Getting ready for school

There is always media coverage about 'school readiness' and particularly recently with some headlines suggesting children will be less 'school ready' because of the pandemic. But what does this mean? How can you help your child be as ready as possible for their big step to school? With years of experience between us at Nursery school, and school experience too, we're sharing our top tips here...



There are some academic things that will come in time and be covered in Reception, if your child isn't ready for them yet, don't worry! They are on a developmental journey and what they need now are the right foundations. The most important things are having their social and emotional needs met so that they are ready for the change. Schools carefully plan for children starting so that the transition into school is as smooth as possible. Teachers will always help and support the children, but there are some practical things your child could have a go at which will really help, especially if they are in a big class with fewer adults available than we have at Nursery.

Can they dress and undress by themselves? Jumpers can be tricky! At Nursery all of our 'Wise Owls' are adept at changing into their shoes/slippers/wellies themselves as they go between inside and outside several times during the day. We're now starting to work on changing clothes by having the children bring in a little 'PE kit' with shorts and tee shirt and having a go at changing, but you can help at home by encouraging undressing independently at bedtime and dressing in the mornings. When you're buying school shoes, it's best to avoid laces until you think your child is ready to master doing them themselves. If you choose buckles over velcro, you could practice these at home too.



Can your child go to the toilet by themselves? Sometimes school toilets aren't right next to the classroom, or they may have to use different ones at playtime, so it's a good idea to work on this skill at

home first. We help children with this at Nursery too, talking them through each stage of what they need to do!

Spot your name! Before even thinking about writing their own name, can your child recognise it? It will be used on coat pegs, trays etc. We're encouraging the children to have a go at writing their names, even if at this stage it's just the first letter; it makes a painting they have done or a list they have written identifiable.



Does your child use a knife and fork? At school, many children have hot school dinners in their first year and will be given a knife and fork, so practising cutting food at home with a knife and fork is a good idea. The children will probably have to carry their own tray with their plate of food on it, so you could encourage them to help with carrying plates at dinner time. Making sure they have a water bottle that they can open and close themselves (non-spill!) is also a good idea.

Games

Your child may know some children they are going to school with, but may not. The social world of the Reception class means that there is likely to be a bigger group of children to get to know and play with. Playing games at home which require turn taking and sharing will help enormously! Loosing in a game can be crushingly disappointing at this age but it is really important for social development, and understanding that we can't always be first, either in a game or when lining up, is something we work on at Nursery too.



Now it's June...

It's important to remember that September can still feel a long way off! Especially if you are only 4, or perhaps still 3! It can be really hard to comprehend exactly when this will be if you're only 4 and also hard to truly imagine what it will be like. Coupled with the thought of leaving nursery, this feeling of the unknown can cause some anxieties, which is why we're only just starting to talk more about school now. We've started inviting Reception teachers to visit us (or to phone us) and talk to each of the children's key workers. Your child may be invited for some settling in sessions at their school, depending on the school's current restrictions. With this happening, we start to do more talking about school, seeing it as a positive and exciting move. We also make sure the children know it's ok to be a little nervous and encourage them to ask questions and talk about the things they aren't sure

about with us at Nursery and you at home. We encourage the children to bring in photos or packs that their school give to them so that they can show their friends and they can bring their new uniform too! We talk about the differences in the colours of the uniforms, and set up our own little role play school (which also looks just like nursery!) so that the children can act out some of their experiences. You could do some walks past your child's school so that you can have a look at it and talk about where they will go in etc. Some children feel more secure and relaxed when they know exactly when something is going to happen, so towards the end of the summer holiday you might like to have a countdown to school where you can tick off the days of the week.

We'll share more in a future blog post about navigating those first few days and weeks at school, but in the meantime, if you've got other tips for getting ready for school do share them with us!