

# Preparing Your Child for School.

## Promoting Independence:

Your child will really benefit from being as independent as possible when they start school. Of course, teaching staff will always be on hand to guide but the children feel a real sense of achievement when they can accomplish things by themselves! Examples include being able to take their shoes off and put them back on again, go to the toilet and wipe their own bottoms and wash their hands independently. (Please see *Intimate Care policy on our website*). Children in reception will also have access to an outdoor space throughout the day so being able to put their coat on and zip it up independently will really help them. It also means that they can get straight to their play and learning without having to stop and ask an adult to help.

Your child will also really benefit from having experienced spending some time away from you, such as going to a friend's house to play. This will develop their confidence and independence and stand them in good stead when it comes to saying goodbye on that first morning at school.

## Communication & Language

We know that parents can have a huge impact on their child's talking and listening development and the summer is the perfect time for trying out simple language boosting activities:

### Listening & Attention Skills

Your child will be given many spoken instructions throughout the school day and will need to be able to shift their attention from what they are doing to listen to what the teacher is saying.

A lovely activity to promote this is to go on a 'listening walk' where your child listens for all sounds around them in the park or town centre.

You could also jot down all the sounds your child notices and talk about these back at home to retell the journey based on sounds your heard.

### Understanding Spoken Instructions

Classroom instructions often contain several parts for children to remember. A simple game of 'Simon says' to while away long car journeys this summer could really help. You could give instructions containing three parts e.g 'Simon says touch your nose, then clap your hands and then put your hands on your head'. It's a good idea to start off with one step instructions and gradually build up to three.

### Vocabulary Development

Children will be expected to start extending their vocabulary. You could play sorting games when packing a suitcase as this is a great way to help word categorisation, which is important for learning vocabulary. Items can be sorted into different piles such as clothing, toys and things for washing ourselves. Outdoor 'treasure hunts' work well too.

Collecting objects found on walks in the park or on the beach help introduce new types of vocabulary, such as describing words. Treasure can also then be used to create feely bags where objects have to be described by the way they feel before revealing what the object is.

### Narrative Skills

Reception age children will be encouraged to use language to organise and sequence ideas and events. Summer days are perfect for creating a photo journal of activities, our child can then organise pictures into the correct sequence and retell the story in their own way.

You can model important concept words like 'first', 'last', 'next', 'before' and 'after' and the correct use of past, present and future tenses of verbs which typically will not yet be fully developed.

### Reading & Writing

Teachers do not expect children to know their alphabet or be able to write when they start school. A good foundation in sound awareness skills such as rhyming and identifying what sound a word begins with would be helpful. Sharing songs and books is a good way to support this too.

A good foundation to being able to write is to develop your child's fine motor skills. This enables a child to hold a pencil firmly as they are writing and develop strength when cutting. Threading is a great way to develop fine motor skills, whether with beads, buttons or pasta, pegging and popping bubble wrap is also a good activities to try. If your child does want to learn to write their name always write in lower case letters e.g. Justin - NOT JUSTIN.

## Mathematical Development

### Counting Verbally & One to One

Being able to count verbally to at least 20 will be of great benefit to a child starting school. Practise counting up to twenty, and backwards too. One to one counting can also be done incidentally throughout the day, for example counting the steps as your child climbs the stairs. You can count anything - How many lampposts are on the street? How many houses have red doors? How many pieces of fruit are in the bowl? Help your child to understand what numbers mean, ask them to find the same amount of different items. For example, find 3 spoons, 3 hats, or 3 socks. You can also sing counting songs.

### Shape, Size & Quantity

You could go on a shape hunt to see how many circles, squares, rectangles and triangles your child can find. Talk about the shape and size of objects, e.g. big car, little car, round ball, square table, rectangular book and ask them questions such as 'pass me the biggest box' or which one is the smallest shoe?' Play with blocks - encourage your child to think about size, colour and shape. Also play with containers - how many socks can you fit in the box? Which container holds the most or the least, sand/water/beads etc.

### Number Recognition

A number hunt is a fun way to look for numerals on doors, buses, car signs, at home, or at the shops. You can play 'I spy' but with numbers

These are a few things that you could try at home and are in no way a complete list of activities, just a few ideas. Most of all we intend to have fun whilst we are learning.

Have a great summer and we will see you in September.

