

Set the Scene

Welcome parents/carers as they enter (they may feel worried about coming along and overwhelmed by the thought of their child starting school).

Having some parent champions around to break the ice and talk about their own experiences would really help.

Talk to parents/carers about the challenges of daily routines e.g. what it is like for a child managing their packed lunch, getting changed for PE and accessing the toilet without adult support. Explain that your displays and activities are there to help parents/carers to think about ways to prepare children for starting school.

Provide each parent/carer with a START leaflet (available from the Early Years Team) and talk about the aims of START.

If parents have questions that you are unable to answer, please contact The Early Years Team or the School Improvement Team (if the query is directly school related).



During your event you want parents/carers to understand how challenging it can be for a child to put on and take off their coat and shoes or PE kit at school without adult support; how tricky bags can be to open and close and how easy it can be to lose items of clothing.

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- Provide some dolls/teddies and simple clothing for children to practise dressing and undressing.
- Have a Velcro shoe and a lace up one for parents/carers to see how much easier it will be if their child has Velcro shoes for school.
- Provide a selection of bags (zip up, draw string, Velcro book bags) and ask parents/carers to encourage their child to practise opening and closing these.
- Have a few school jumpers or t-shirts in a pile and ask parents/carers how they think their child will be able to pick out their own (emphasising labelling and name recognition).



Talk about ways parents/carers can develop their child's skills in talking, sharing, and following instructions.

- Share the words to songs and rhymes.
- Finger rhymes and action rhymes are really useful for children learning English as an additional language as they can join in with the actions whilst learning the English words.
- Have a selection of interesting objects which can prompt conversation and new words.
- Model story telling if you feel confident. Use props and talk about the pictures.
- Encourage parents/carers to use the local library. Tell them how to join and that it is free. You could invite the library service to your event.
- Share simple recipe cards to help children learn to follow instructions or encourage joining in a simple game which involves following basic instructions.
- Have some matching games available such as a washing line and a box of socks to match.



We all need the confidence to ask for help sometimes. Children need to learn how to do this from an early age.

- Encourage children at your event to try an activity.
- Have a sample lunch box with those tricky to open items and talk about practising opening these and how to ask for help if needed.
- Suggest parents/carers talk to their child about asking for help and practise at home 'Help please'.
- You may have photos of school staff that children might ask for help or talk about how to recognise school staff (lanyards, school jackets at playtime).
- Suggest stories that parents/carers could share with their child about starting school.



Children will start school with more ease if they can independently use the toilet.

- Provide leaflets on toilet training.
- Invite health colleagues/school nurse to your event.
- Talk about elastic waist trousers.
- Display some useful books on toilet training.
- Display a teddy or doll on a potty.
- Display some stories about using the potty or toilet.



An exciting, but sometimes scary part of starting school is trying new things and being able to handle all sorts of different tools.

- Provide some playdough and encourage parents/carers to play alongside their child to experience the feeling and see how it develops strength in the fingers and hand.
- Provide a small variety of activities that involve using hand/eye coordination and fine motor skills.
- Have scissor activities available (schools tell us this is a particular challenge for many children).
- Have some foods to try and talk about developing children's confidence to try new foods so they are ready to enjoy school dinners.