

HELP ! My child is starting SCHOOL!!

5 steps to get them school ready



STARTING SCHOOL

First day of school can be very exciting but also very emotional for both, the child and the parent! It's hard to see them go into the big world. We realize that they are no longer our babies, but they are becoming independent little people. We want them to be ready, happy, independent. We want them to make friends and succeed in school. Many of us would start preparing the kids before September to make sure they are prepared academically: we will teach them letters, numbers, colors, how to put letters together, how to write their name how to read but we often forget that there are way more important skills that our kids should learn before starting school. When children come to junior infants the teachers will look after their academic skills. There are new methods of teaching and your child will not be expected to read and write straight away. The teachers will guide them step by step on their learning journey, so rest assure you don't have to do it yourself at home. But what you should do is to make sure your child is socially ready and here is how you can do that



1. Teach them self help skills

Putting the coat on and off, zipping it up, putting a hat on, shoes on and off, zipping up and opening the school bag, opening and closing lunch box, eating and drinking independently- those are the most important skills that you should teach your child before they go to school. Practice them at home before you send your child off. It seems obvious to us but very often we help our children to do those things when we are around, so they may not be able to cope when on their own. The teachers will not have enough time or hands free to do that for everyone, so if you want your child to feel confident, teach them as many self help skills as possible so they can do everything for themselves on their own without any help. Ability to do that will boost their confidence!

2. Turn taking ,sharing and loosing

If your child was attending pre school, more than likely they are familiar with the concept of sharing and turn taking, but if they haven't they may be in for a big shock! Prepare them for the fact that there will be many children in their class and that they will have to take turns in games, share their toys and that they will not always be the winners! The best way to practice that is by playing games at home while following rules and making sure that your child gets a chance to experience losing in a game. Teach them how to behave after they lose.



3. What if they miss me?

For children who struggle with separation it would be a good idea to prepare something special. There are many ideas on the internet that you can use such as drawing a little picture inside your child's palm that will remind them of you, you could put a special object into their pocket such as clay heart or an acorn, sea shell or a pebble and tell them to squeeze it every time they feel that they miss you. Explain to them that you will come and collect them and you will do something nice together.



4. Involve them

Involve your children in small decision making such as choosing their bag and pencil case. Show them their books and copies and all their supplies so they are familiar with all the items. Get the uniform ready and try it on before to make sure its comfortable.

Some of the children may be sensitive to certain materials, textures and labels so make sure they are happy to wear the uniform before the first day.

5. Get them into a routine

Routine is very important for your child's well being and proper functioning. Make sure they are used to healthy habits, bed time routine, meal times etc. There is always time to introduce routine to your life style. Routines give children the sense of security as they know what happens next. They will also help them with transitions of going to and from school, doing homework etc. It will help to avoid unnecessary arguments and meltdowns and will make the days run smoothly.

