

Transition to school, top tips for parents

The first thing to remember, is that most children by the age of 4 have already had several transitions; this might include starting with a childminder, moving from one group to another in a nursery, or changes at home such as moving house, parents separating, or a new brother or sister arriving.

Starting school is a major transition in a young child's life. Planning and preparation are really important in helping your child to settle at school, so they are as ready as possible for this next stage in their life. This all may be very new to you, too, but even if you have already supported one child through transition into school, another child may have very different needs for this step.

If your child goes to a preschool, nursery or is with a childminder, the setting will be planning the transition of children who are due to go into school this year. This might include visits from the teacher. They will also be passing on relevant details of your child to the school, so the teacher can be as prepared as possible. They should be talking to you about your child's transition, and involving you, so everyone is working in partnership to make your child's transition go as smoothly as possible.

Some of the ways you can help your child to feel more ready for this next step are:

- ✓ Create a memory box about preschool or nursery or sharing feelings about the move. Transition to school is also about saying 'goodbye'
- ✓ Share books about starting school; there is a wide range including 'Jellybean goes to school', and the classic 'Topsy and Tim start school' (see <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/s/starting-school/> for more ideas)
- ✓ There are also many videos online, such as 'Froggy goes to school' and 'Chu's first day at school'
- ✓ CBeebies 'Topsy and Tim's first day at school' is at: [Youtube starting school](#)
- ✓ BBC Bitesize has an online game about starting school <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/znc9vk7>
- ✓ Look on the school's website with your child to see what is on offer there
- ✓ Attend any of the school's transition sessions and events that you can
- ✓ If the school has a Facebook page look at that for further information
- ✓ Some schools have virtual tours of the school on their website, too
- ✓ If your child won't know anyone else going to their school, ask the school about local events or Facebook groups for parents
- ✓ Complete the walk to school regularly, so it is familiar
- ✓ Allow/help children to try out their new uniform, shoes, lunch boxes, etc.

- ✓ If your child will be having a school dinner see if you can help them practice carrying a little food tray
- ✓ Send a postcard to their new teacher/class from summer holidays or a day out, or share a picture
- ✓ Talk about what will happen at school, especially their first day
- ✓ Practice getting ready for PE, which might be taking off socks and shoes and putting them on again
- ✓ Practice putting on and taking off their coat
- ✓ Let them wear their new shoes and school clothes at home beforehand, so they are more comfortable when they wear them to school
- ✓ Have school clothes and shoes which are easy to take on and off

You know your child best; you will know, for example, if your child manages better with lots of time to prepare for a change. One of the most important points is that you remain as positive as you can, and always talk to the school and early years setting if you have any concerns or questions about your child's move to school.