

### Starting School



### Starting Primary School

### Supporting transition in- to school

### Information for parents and carers

### Get ready to start school

The COVID-19 pandemic has unsettled family life around the world and there has been a lot of uncertainty, worry, anxiety and loss.

With things moving back to a new sense of normal we can help our children have a regained sense of **safety** and **continuity** to support them to say **goodbye** to their nursery and help them to prepare for starting school.

Here are **6 top tips** to help you prepare for your child starting school:

#### 1. Look after yourself and have fun over the Summer!

Having children at home during the pandemic, being unable to go out and socialise with friends and family as usual, parents and carers trying to struggle work and child-care, have added extra stress to families. It is very important to look after yourself, so take care that you are looking after your own emotional wellbeing.

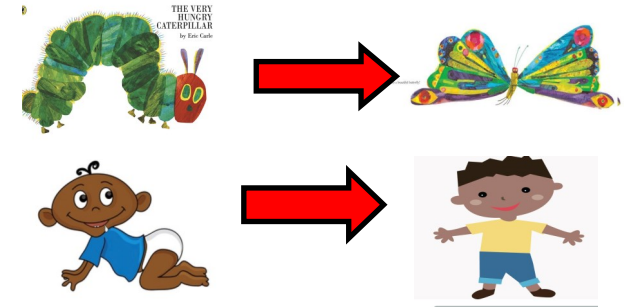
During the pandemic and the lockdowns, **it was and is normal to feel anxious** and these feelings may continue even though things have changed. It remains important to take care of yourself, so you can support your children. Visit the NHS Every Mind Matters website for advice on ways to support your mental wellbeing:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>



### 2. Help your child think about and understand change

Read stories or watch videos about change, like **'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'** by Eric Carle or **"Little Tree"** by Loren Long. Have a look through **baby photos** of your child and talk about how they have changed as they have grown.



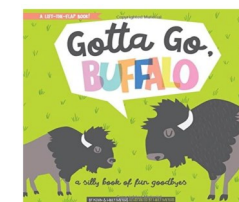
### 3. Help your child understand goodbyes and hellos

Help your child understand goodbyes and hellos. Watch on YouTube or read stories e.g. **Gotta Go Buffalo**— a light hearted view of saying goodbye. Help your child make a goodbye card for their teacher and emphasise that they can still keep in touch with their friends.

Help your child think about all the special people and pets they are connected to in their home life, even when they are not always with them.

Join in with the **ending activities** your nursery has like a teddy bears picnic, nursery book or goodbye song.

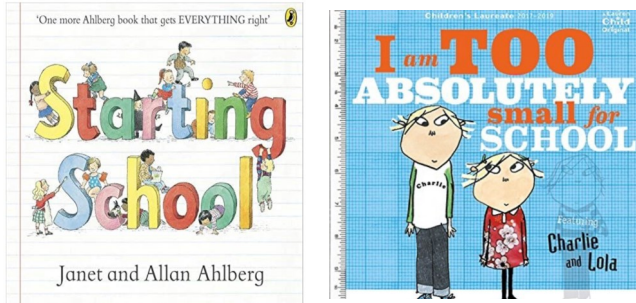
Use **photos of the nursery and school** to show now and next and to help understand and communicate **'goodbye'**.



#### 4. Help your child know what to expect

Your child's new school may provide information, a **welcome pack/ brochure**, photos and pictures of the school and teachers. Have fun looking and talking about these with your child.

Share, or watch on YouTube, books with your child about starting school, for example:

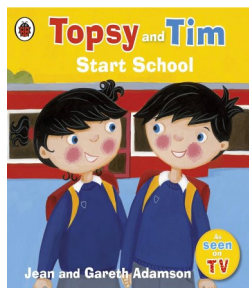


**Talk about school** with your child. What are they most looking forward to? Is there anything they are worried about? What sort of things would they like to find out about their new school? Share any concerns with the nursery and school.

Communicate with your child about what they like to do and what they would like help with and work with staff to produce an **'All about me' page** to share with the school.

**The PACEY website** has lots of advice and practical ideas to help children with **'school readiness'**:

[www.pacey.org.uk/parents/toolkit/](http://www.pacey.org.uk/parents/toolkit/)



#### 5. Connect and build relationships

Try to make **connections with parents and carers** of children who are also starting at the same school so your child can get to know and be familiar with each other before they start.

Arrange **play dates** and get together.



Have a **photo of your new teacher** or school somewhere visible.



#### 6. Plan for the first few days

Make sure your child gets to say goodbye to you before you leave. Having a **practiced routine for saying goodbye** can make separations easier. Starting school is **very tiring and challenging** for your child so they may need more **quiet and calm** time when they get home. Discuss with them before school what they would like to do after pick up so they know what to expect and have **something to look forward to**.

It is perfectly normal to have a mixture of emotions about your child starting school. It could help to **make a plan** for after you drop off your child the first few days. Think of an activity, call a friend, and prepare yourself for how you might feel and react on the day.

If your child has **additional needs** it is important to consider and plan around your child's understanding, needs, likes and dislikes so they can benefit from a smooth and supported transition. Your child's nursery SENCO will work with you and professionals (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist etc) and connect with your child's new school to arrange a **transition meeting** for you all to attend.

**And lastly,  
all the best!**

