

Preparing your child for school

Starting primary school can be nerve-wrecking for both you and your child, but it is the start of a new adventure. Your child will be making friends, learning new skills, and growing increasingly independent before you realise it.

How can you help them prepare for this big first step?



Please
can you
help

1. Support your child's independence

- **Going to the toilet.** Wiping themselves and washing hands.
- **Getting dressed.** Avoid clothing with fiddly buckles, buttons and laces.
- **Eating.** Practising using a knife and fork.
- **Solving simple problems.** Encourage your child to resolve problems by talking when they don't understand or something isn't going well. It is important that they also learn when to ask an adult for help.



Good
morning

2. Build up your child's social skills

- **Organising play dates.** Play dates with children from St Mary's may help improve their social skills and make the leap to primary school less scary.
- **Practising greetings.** "hello, my names is" and "Good morning"
- **Practising conversations.** Giving your child time to talk – and also having time when they have to *listen* – teaches vital speaking and listening skills. You could take turns to talk about the best part of your day during dinner. Can they ask questions to find out more? Can they remember their sibling's favourite part of the day?
- **Encouraging sharing and tolerance.** Sharing games such as Snakes and Ladders let children practise social skills and turn-taking. "Whose turn is it next?", "Thank you for waiting".



3. Make a start on early literacy and numeracy skills

- **Help them to recognise their name.** This will support your child to find their peg and can keep track of labelled clothes.
- **Share stories.** Reading to your child improves their vocabulary and listening skills.
- **Fine motor skills.** Building hand strength, fine motor skills, and hand-eye co-ordination helps prepare your child for writing. Making Lego models, using scissors, and threading beads onto string are fun ways to develop hand strength. Drawing and colouring activities introduce your child to mark-making tools.
- **Introduce them to numbers.** Recognising numbers. Counting songs. Can your child get five forks or three cups out?
- **Sound out words when giving instructions and playing games.** For example: Can you put on your 'c-oa-t'? Where is the 'c-a-t'?

Play I spy: "I spy with my little eye a b-u-s"

Play Simon says: "Simon says put your finger on your h-ea-d".

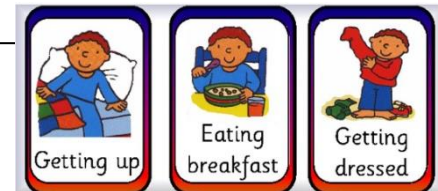


Where is the c-a-t?

How can we make the tower stronger?

4. Help your child learn to concentrate

- **Enjoy extended play together.** Make activities your child enjoys last a little longer with questions and providing other ideas.
- **Follow instructions.** Such as recipes
- **Good routines.** Breathing, exercise, sleep, water and food.



5. Talk to your child about school

- **Visit St Mary's.** Attend the drop-in sessions, walk past the building during the summer.
- **Share the teacher videos and photographs**
- **Talk about how fun school is!**
- **Practise the school routine.** Practice journey before the first day, looking for interesting things on the way. It might be a good idea to make sure your child has school-friendly bedtimes and getting-up times a few days in advance.

