**Helping Your Child Prepare For School**

What can you do at home to get your child ready to start school in September?

* **Talk to your child about the school.** Show them the school website and look at and talk about the pictures of children working and playing together. Be positive and enthusiastic about all the fun things that will happen at school. Use your child’s teacher's name (when you’ve been told the class your child is in) so it feels familiar to them and talk about the new friends they'll make.
* **Allow your child to practise dressing and undressing by themselves as much as possible.** If your child goes to nursery or pre-school, they’ve probably already mastered putting on their coat. If not, teach them how to put their coat on and off using a strategy that works best for your child. As for shoes, practise fastening and unfastening Velcro straps.
* **Toilet train your child.** Make sure your child is happy going to the toilet on their own and their uniform is easy for them to pull down and up. Reassure them so feel confident enough to ask whenever they wish to go. Talk to your child about how important it is to wash their hands really well after going to the toilet. Play games like covering their hands with paint (pretending it is ‘the germs’) and getting them to practise washing it all off!
* **Promote eating with others and using cutlery**. All children in England, in Reception and KS1, are entitled to a free school lunch. At Lilycroft, we encourage all children to have a school dinner on a daily basis. Practise using a knife, fork and spoon with your child. Model good social dining. If you wish for your child to have a packed lunch, make sure they can open cartons and packets and unwrap a sandwich with limited support. Packed lunches must contain healthy food.
* **Encourage sharing and taking turns**. If your child has siblings, or they’ve been to nursery or pre-school, they’ll be used to this already but its’ always good to check they’ve understood that sharing is a two-way process. Practise sharing and taking turns at home.
* **Talk to your child in English, as well as your home language, and encourage lots of verbal interaction**. Encourage your child to express themselves effectively, showing awareness of the listeners' needs. Teach your child to use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.
* **Praise good sitting and listening**. In Reception, at certain times your child will be expected to sit still and listen to a teacher during teaching input time or a story time. You can help with this at home by sitting together and doing an activity which allows your child to stay focussed for a short length of time. i.e. you could do a jigsaw, colouring or read them story.
* **Promote the love of reading by sharing books with your child.** [Books](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books) enable [children](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/Children) to go on a journey, meet new people and learn about the world. Read to your child as much as possible. Your child will have their own favourite types of books. Whether they are adventure stories, traditional tales or books about real people, places and events, promote their interest and get them to love listening to stories and enjoy looking in books.
* **Help your child to recognise their name**. It’s helpful if your child can recognise their name written down (you can practise this when you’re labelling all their school uniform). Your child doesn’t have to know how to write their name at this stage. Simply being able to recognise it is fine.
* **Most importantly get your child used to being away from home**. Make sure your child understands that once they start school, they will have to go back every day, Monday to Friday. Help them to understand and reassure them that parents and carers will always be there for them at the end of the school day to take them home. During the day their teachers will care for them and provide them with the key skills they need in life. Let the fun commence! 😊

