



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School EYFS

Preparing Your Child For Starting School



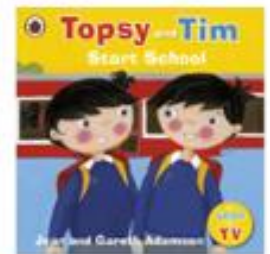
Starting school is an exciting (and slightly daunting) time for you and your child. We hope that this leaflet of 'top tips' will help you and your child feel as prepared as possible for their new school journey as part of our school family.

Don't worry, your child does NOT need to be able to read, write or count before they start school. Children start school with a wide range of abilities and their teacher will be skilled at helping children progress at their own level. What's most important is that you and your child have fun together in those preschool months and years – sharing stories, singing songs, playing games, and talking about anything and everything! See the selection of books to help support starting school.

Health and Self-Care

It will make life easier for your child (and school staff!) if your child can master these self-care skills before they start school:

- **Dressing and undressing** – Let your child practice putting on and taking off their school clothes (cardigans, jumpers, shoes, wellies etc..) folding them neatly especially if there are fiddly fastenings such as shirt buttons and buckles on shoes. Clothes with elastic bands and shoes with Velcro are easier to handle for young children.
- **Going to the toilet** - Support your child to be confident about getting to the toilet in time and wiping themselves properly and flushing.
- **Washing their hands** – This is a big priority in the current climate so continue to talk about the importance of good handwashing with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet and before eating. A good way to practice this is to cover your children's hands in glitter (pretend germs) and then see if they can wash it all off.
- **Feeding themselves** - Children having school dinners need to be able to use a full-sized knife and fork and carry their own tray. Children will have an hour for their lunch so it is good to practice eating meals within this time frame. Do not worry, they will get help and support with cutting up their food.
- **Using a tissue** - Introduce your child to the routine of 'catch it, bin it, kill it' – catching their sneeze or runny nose in a tissue, putting it in the bin straightaway, then washing hands to kill germs.



It is natural to worry about your child starting school, but remember that your child can easily pick up on your emotions. Try to be relaxed and positive rather than showing your own nerves – remember we are here for you and your child every step of the way.

Some things to practice before starting school:

- Practice recognising their name
- Using scissors and holding them correctly
- Using pencils and crayons and holding them correctly
- Fine motor activities – If your child finds this hard, fine motor activities can strengthen the muscles in their fingers and hands to help with this. These include: playing with playdough, threading beads, sorting small objects with washing line pegs, peeling fruit, popping bubble wrap etc. The following links contain videos with activities to help support fine motor skills from home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PC6vKh3bhTI>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Na_TYZqYXBU

Being Prepared

If your child has already spent time in a childcare or preschool setting, they're probably already well on the way to having the social and practical skills they need to succeed at school. They're used to spending time apart from you, mixing with other children, taking instructions from and communicating with other adults, taking some responsibility for tidying up after themselves and looking after their own belongings. Don't worry if your child hasn't attended a childcare setting or preschool. Playing with other children, whether friends and family members, or other children at the park or soft play area, is all good practice for forming friendships with classmates at school. Often children who don't know one another will make friends very easily, but if your child struggles, teach them some useful phrases such as "can I join in?" or "do you want to share?". If you already know some other children who will be in your child's class, why not organise a play date or outing together, if this is possible, or if we are still in Lockdown then arrange a video call with friends. The following video has top tips for starting school from Topsy and Tim <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/topsy-tim-top-tips-school?collection=starting-school-curation> As well as being beneficial for the children, it is helpful for you to be able to chat about your own feelings and anxieties with other parents, who will be feeling the same. We hope this leaflet is useful and we can't wait to begin, what will be a special and rewarding year!

