

From mountain to sea

Educational Psychology Service Tips and ideas for parent/carers to help prepare your child for a key transition.

Nursery into Primary 1

There is a common myth that there are a set of skills which a child needs to have before starting Primary 1. However, this is not the case. The Association of Directors of Education in Scotland are very clear that schools in Scotland should “provide developmentally appropriate provision and are ready for all children.” The Curriculum and Frameworks which Primary Schools in Scotland follow allow for play-based learning and planning to meet individual needs. Please do not worry if your child is not able to complete any of the skills we list below, these are merely examples of things you might like to practice. The school your child is enrolling in will meet your child at the level they are at and work from there.



Here are some things you might like to look at when thinking about how to support your child with the transition from Early Learning and Childcare into Primary 1.

Practice skills:

- ❖ Changing in and out of gym clothes – practice those fastenings on shorts/trousers. Help will be available if needed though.
- ❖ Putting on and taking off shoes and coats.
- ❖ Toileting independently. Do not worry if your child is not able to do this, let the school know and they will support as much or as little as is required.
- ❖ Listening skills using games like traffic lights (stop, get ready, go), Simon Says, I went to the shops and I bought... Listening skills are not set by age and there will be differences in how long each child can pay attention or listen for.
- ❖ Try and include a few adult-led activities into your day (e.g. time when you choose the puzzle or lead the game).



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Developing motor skills

- ❖ Children do not need to be able to write / read any letters or sounds before starting school. If your child is interested in these activities there is no reason why you shouldn't encourage them, but please don't worry if they have not shown interest yet, there is plenty of time!
- ❖ This webpage offers advice around the development of a wide range of motor skills, including pre-writing skills.
<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/parents-carers/support-for-families/developing-motor-skills/>

Eating

- ❖ Whether having a school or a packed lunch, helping your child prepare for lunchtime is very beneficial. Useful lunchtime skills include:
 - being able to use a knife and fork.
 - opening containers / packets (including lunchbox, yoghurts, boxes of raisins, crisps, cartons of juice – if allowed in school).
- ❖ Adults will help the children with these skills as required, but most children like to try and be as independent as possible in school which is why it's helpful to try these things out before they start having lunch in school.

Organising belongings

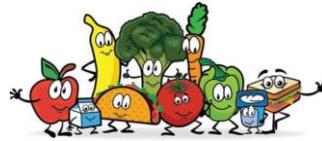
- ❖ This might be the first time your child will be responsible for their own belongings. It is helpful to encourage your child to get into the habit of packing their own bag. You can practice this beforehand by having picnics in the garden or the local park and leaving out the bits and pieces needed for your child to collect and put into their bag.
- ❖ Similarly encourage them to tidy away pencils / crayons they might have been drawing with.
- ❖ Encouraging them to loosely fold their laundry will also be useful when it comes to getting changed for gym (it is challenging to find the correct pair of grey school trousers when standing in a sea of grey school trousers!)

Making Meal Choices:

- ❖ At school children make a choice for lunch between fixed options which are shared with you in advance, or packed lunch.
- ❖ You could show your child a lunch menu on the Aberdeenshire website which might help them feel excited about school meals.

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- ❖ The Aberdeenshire school menu is interactive and you can click on the menu items. This gives the recipe for the dish. You could make this at home if some children are unsure of the foods.
- ❖ Think through snacks for “playtime”- what will they like to take with them? Getting children involved in these decisions gives them a sense of ownership.



Learning about the school:

- ❖ You might like to go on to the school website and see any photos of teachers or pupil activities which are there. If the school are on Facebook or Twitter then you could use these to show them videos or pictures of different school activities and key members of staff.
- ❖ Some schools may send out specific transition information, which you could use to talk to your child about the school. Think about what is the same as nursery (e.g. sand pit, water tray, outdoor area, whiteboard) and what might be new or different (e.g. are there desks in their new classroom?).
- ❖ Learn about the school uniform. Perhaps think about getting a jumper to use to pretend play “going to school”. Role play is a great way to help children think about new routines and changes. You could also begin practicing with pencil cases, lunch boxes etc.

Nearer the time:

- ❖ If allowed you might like to prepare something that your child can take in to school on their first day to show their teacher. Children often like having something concrete to take with them and although schools may individually ask for this in different ways some “show and tell” photos or information that they have put together over the lockdown may help them to feel more secure.
- ❖ You could make a visual plan with your child to plan out their first day. You could include things like what time they get up, what they wear, how they will get to school – who will they go with, what they will need to take etc. It could also include other children that they may know who will be there (if you know this information). It is good to keep it really detailed and concrete so it feels real to them. It might be good to include a special breakfast that day or a special snack so that they feel excited about going to school.

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- ❖ Consider walking past the school (if appropriate) and look into the playground and point out interesting features. Begin to establish a route to school as it may be a new route to many and can be a reassuring task for both parents and children and fun along the way, timing it and spotting features.



Key messages to talk to them about are:

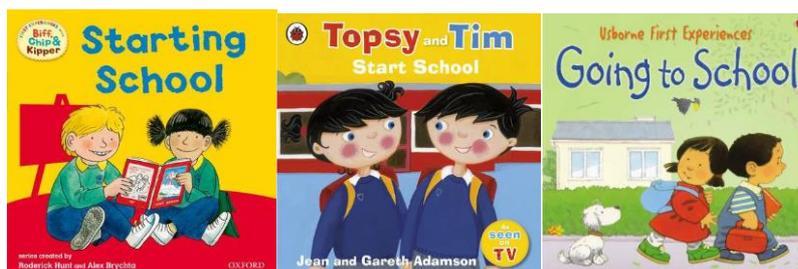
- ❖ School will be fun! Children have lots of adventures at school and learn lots of new things. There is lots of time for play in Primary 1.
- ❖ Adults are helpful and will keep you safe
- ❖ You can talk to adults about anything that is tricky

The following website is a good resource for more information.

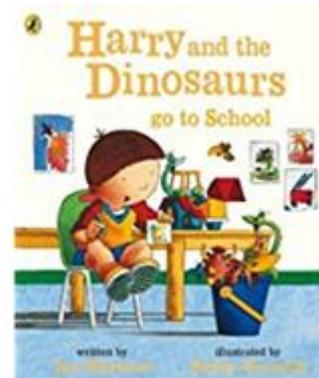
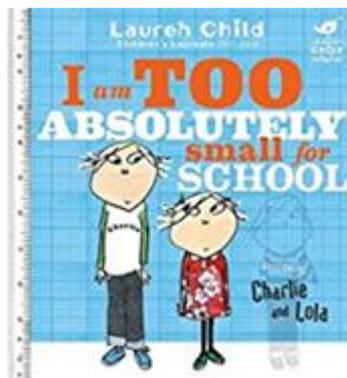
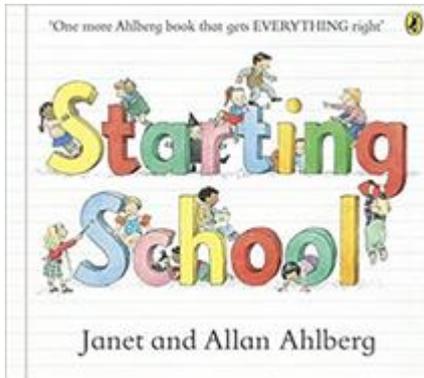
- ❖ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1>



Books about starting school:



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If your child is anxious about being away from you then you could consider purchasing The Invisible String book – this is a story about how we remain connected to our family even when we are apart.

