



Helping your child when they start or change primary school

Place2be has some advice for parents to help reduce any anxiety Parents, Carers and children may have around starting a new school. You can watch a video at <https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/helping-your-child-when-they-start-or-change-primary-school>

Other suggestions for things for parents and carers to try include:

1. Talk to your child about the change

Children respond in different ways to starting or changing schools. Most children will feel a mixture of positive and negative things.

Some children are ready for change and starting 'big school' is exciting. Your child might also feel sad about leaving their old school or Early Years Centre. They may worry about making new friends and if they'll be bullied. They may worry about getting on with teachers and coping with the work.

Reassure them that having a mix of emotions is normal. Remind them of how well they coped with change, like when they first started nursery. Say "Remember when you started nursery. You felt anxious and had to be very brave when you went for the first time. But then you had a great time and made lots of friends."

Facts about change

- Starting or changing schools is a big event in your child's life - and yours! Any kind of change can bring up strong feelings and uneasiness in us all.
- Lots of parents notice changes in their children's moods or behaviours.
- Some children might be very unsettled and unable to talk about what's going on for them. If that's the case, they might show their feelings through their behaviour. They might behave like they did when they were younger. For example, they might start to have tantrums again, or wetting themselves.
- Help them to say goodbye to friends and teachers. Suggest they make a card for the staff and take photos of them with their friends.

2. Help your child find out about their new school

Look at the school website together. Find pictures of teachers and other information about clubs and groups. Visit the new school, shop for uniform and other equipment and plan the journey to school.

Other things that will help

- Remind each other of things that will stay the same. For instance - assemblies, breaktimes, lessons they like and lessons they don't like.
- Read books about starting school which you can find in a library or online.



3. Explain that starting a new school isn't about the first day

You could say 'it's very normal for it to take a while to settle-in and to feel confident'

Important things to bear in mind

- You may share the same worries as your child. For instance, how they'll settle, make friends and cope with learning.
- Your child will take their lead from you, so try to stay calm and reassure them it'll be okay.
- Your child may need a bit of extra attention and support as they adjust to the change.

4. Look after yourself too, starting school can take an emotional toll on parents

What you might be feeling:

- It's natural for you to feel a mixture of emotions too.
- It can bring up memories of your time at school, particularly if that was difficult.
- It can be hard to keep calm and not to worry about your child.
- Link up with other parents. Others will be feeling just the same as you.

Each child is unique and we hope there are some suggestions that work for you and your child. If you're looking for help parenting children with additional needs, you can get specific advice from specialist organisations or contact the school.

If your child is very anxious about starting school, we can arrange for additional visits to take place in June. Please contact the school to discuss this.

We hope that you find this information helpful.

Kind regards,

P Lockie
Depute Head Teacher