

Supporting your child's independence and self confidence in readiness for school



One of the things that parents have the most questions about when their children start school is 'Will they be able to manage?' Lunch in the school hall; dressing for P.E, there are lots of new challenges in the school day. They all get used to routines - with different amounts of support.

Rest assured that no one will allow your child to struggle with something they are finding hard. However, there are some things you can do together with your child to help them feel more ready to manage their own care and needs.

Mealtimes



- Practice using a knife and fork, pouring water from a jug into a cup, opening a lunchbox and carrying a small plate of food. You can also encourage your child to try some new foods.

Dressing



- Let your child practice dressing themselves. Can they do up a zip or buttons? Can they put on their own socks?

Why not try....



[Getting dressed activity sheet](#)

[Information on developing knife and fork skills](#)

[Visual timetable worksheet](#)



Using the toilet



- If your child is worried about managing their toileting or needing help then talk with them about it. Talk to them about who they could ask for help and talk to the teacher about your child's worries and needs - it is much easier to help when you know what to look out for!

Working together



- Try to tidy up together and make it part of any activity you do. In the classroom children will be expected to start taking responsibility for their belongings and working together to keep the classroom a nice place to be.

Did you know?



Well-being is vital for good mental health in children and adults. When children's well-being is high they feel relaxed and more able to make choices and learn.

Self confidence and self esteem come from being allowed to make mistakes and take risks and have their own ideas - 'step back and let your child do it themselves.'

Being able to make their own choices - for example, about what they wear or which sandwich filling they'd like today gives children a sense of autonomy. This is the feeling that they can do things for themselves and builds confidence.

Supporting your child's independence and self confidence in readiness for school



Skills for school superheroes

Using a knife and fork with playdough is a great way to practice cutlery skills.

To make a basic playdough just mix:

8 tbsp. plain flour
2 tbsp. salt
60ml warm water
1 tbsp. vegetable oil



Many schools use a visual timetable to help children get used to their new routines. Using a visual timetable at home can also be a great way of supporting their independence.



Helping children with their emotions

Find some quiet time and keep listening to your child's feelings about school

Talk with your child about starting school - what do they think it will be like? What are they looking forward to doing there? Do they have any questions or worries?

It's natural and normal for both you and your child to experience a range of emotions. Reassure and support them by listening, cuddling, responding and staying calm.

Your child has been learning about emotions from you since they were born. When you were calm, they were calmer; when you were anxious their behaviour would change too. This is called co-regulation. Gradually children learn how to manage their own emotions (called self-regulation) by listening and learning from you.

Having their feelings acknowledged helps children feel valued and listened to but also helps them understand what they are feeling.

Some children will need help in recognising and naming their feelings. There is more information about this in our 'Incredible Independence' video clip.

There are also some great books about starting school. Have a look in your local library. The Children's Centre may also have some that you can borrow.

Why not try....

Watching some online clips and programmes about starting school as a conversation starter. This Topsy and Tim one is perfect:

[Click here](#)

Having a look at the school website. Most have class pages so you can see the exciting things that go on.

Print and play games with these emotions playing cards:

[Click here](#)