

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PLAYGROUP OR NURSERY

It's a worrying time when parents have chosen that right nursery and the first day approaches so here are a few ideas on ensuring that the anxiety is reduced and the transition is made more smoothly. First a little basic preparation: label clothing, prepare and label a favourite toy and ensure you have support with collection and emergency contact with family/friends. Try to make clothing easy to remove e.g. avoid very snug socks.

KNOWLEDGE

Nursery/Playgroup

It's important that the nursery knows a few things but they should set this up together with such matters as passwords for collection of your child:

- Special needs of your child
- Medication and conditions such as asthma
- Contact details in event of emergency
- Keep the nursery informed of events at home (loss of loved one or pet; health issues; separations/divorces)
- Details of any people other than parents who may collect the child

You

You should be clear on aspects of the day-to-day running of the Playgroup/Nursery

- Nursery routines
- Arrangements for food or breaks
- Times for collection (always be prompt)

Child

- Most centres arrange for a pre-visit and a settling in session before the big day (It helps if the child has a named teacher or leader)
- Make your child aware of ‘stranger danger’
- It may sound obvious but your child needs to be clear that you will be returning and drawn out goodbyes make it harder for children
- Teach your child to say “No” to other children if they are doing something the child is unhappy with.

SKILLS

The possession of skills isn't essential but will help your child to build a sense of confidence and independence that is so very helpful at nursery. Nowadays, children often start nursery stage from early age but if your child is 3 or more, here are a few additional skills that are useful to develop.

Physical skills

- To remove and put on a coat and hang it on a peg
- To remove and put on shoes
- To recognise own coat and shoes

Personal skills

- Toilet training and recognising when to ask for the toilet
- Ability to wipe nose

Social skills

- Ability to play with others
- Ability to share toys
- Ability to take turns

Intellectual skills

- Can recognise own written name
- Can use a pencil or crayons
- Can use scissors
- Understanding of basic counting
- Awareness of colours
- Awareness of shapes
- Language skills are very important

These skills are better developed by regular engagement with the child, counting steps, examining shapes, identifying colours as you drive along, go shopping or on days out. Talk to your child and help build that important understanding of wider vocabulary. Have fun and make the learning enjoyable.