

How do I help my  
child before starting  
school?



# Independence

- Practise taking your coat on and off alongside using zips and buttons
- Try putting your shoes on and off, remembering your left and right. How do you know?
- Identify where their name will be on their clothing and shoes
- Use a knife and fork when eating and practise cutting up your food or indeed opening and closing your lunchbox
- Using the toilet independently, wiping and washing afterwards. Not everyone will be able to do this yet, if that's the case in September please talk to your child's class Teacher, they will be grateful to know
- Practise tidying away toys and taking care of them

# Gross Motor Skills

- Gross motor skills help us develop our core strength, balance and co-ordination. Resultantly they help develop our fine motor skills for writing and drawing. Have a go at home and try some of the following;
- Running
- Jumping
- Climbing
- Pulling yourself across the floor using only your hands
- Digging
- Kicking a ball
- Throwing a ball
- Using the monkey bars at a local park

# Fine Motor Skills

- Fine motor skills lead from gross motor skills
- Practice fine motor skills at home, this will help your child develop and strengthen their finger muscles. These activities are so important for pre-writing and indeed if your child can already write.

Give some of the following activities a try daily (if possible) at home;

- Creating with play doh
- Helping peg the washing out
- Painting with cotton buds
- Using Lego
- Threading beads and pasta
- Using scissors with your thumb pointing upwards
- Colouring, keeping within the lines

# Name recognition

- Try to write you child's name everywhere! It will be really beneficial to them that they recognise their name on their clothes, coat pegs, trays and exercise books. This will help them to be independent and organise their belongings.
- It would also be useful for them to be able to write their own name with a capital letter at the start, followed by lower case letters, although this is not an expectation. This will help them to own and identify work they have completed independently in the classroom.

# Sing!

- Sing as many nursery rhymes together as you possibly can between now and starting school.
- Nursery rhymes help children with many aspects of their learning, including;
- Vocabulary
- Story sequencing
- Physical development
- Listening skills
- Attention skills
- Numeracy skills
- Understanding of the world

# Oral segmenting and blending

- Oral segmenting and blending is a key skill in early Phonics and will give your child a solid foundation as they begin their school life. Oral segmenting simply means to break up and merge sounds they hear in words, for example;
- Segmenting - You say 'cat' and they tell you the sounds 'c-a-t'
- Blending - You say the sounds 'c-a-t' and they say 'cat'
- At home, practise this with your child as much as possible. We don't expect children to know their letters when they start school, they will be taught these but hearing sounds, segmenting and blending is a really important starting point.

# Reading together

- Sharing books really helps your child develop their language skills, how to look after books, how to read books from left to right. Reading together develops listening and attention skills but most importantly, enhances vocabulary – the amount of words they know and can use in context
- Share a story and look at letter shapes, play the game 'what comes next?' trying to guess what might happen on the following page or at the end of the story. Discuss rhyming words and find some of your own. You could even practise segmenting and blending!

# Ready, Respectful, Safe

- These are our school rules.
- We demonstrate these socially by encouraging your children to speak to adults if there is anything troubling them
- Being independent with our own belongings
- Sharing with others
- Taking turns and listening to and following instructions
- Having patience, understanding that we don't all win every time or come first at everything we set out to do and that's ok
- Using kind hands, feet and words with friends and staff at all times

We hope you have found this useful. Any questions, please get in touch.

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