



Ready for School

Here's how you can support your child's journey to school:

Support your Child's Independence Skills

- encourage and practice independent dressing. Let children dress themselves and put on their own shoes and coat;
- encourage and practice independent eating. Seek help with setting out place setting and cutlery and encourage children to clean up when finished eating. Children should pour their own drinks and butter their own toast and so on;
- encourage and practice toileting. Children should use the toilet independently where possible where they use the loo, flush and wash and dry their hands;
- try not to do any task the child can do for themselves even if it takes a bit of time;
- encourage them to help you with jobs around the home. Good jobs for 4 and 5 year olds include: straightening out their bed in the morning, getting themselves dressed and teeth brushed, using the shower independently, clearing off the table after a meal, putting their clothes in a laundry basket and bringing their washing to the washing machine, folding laundry, emptying the dishwasher, clearing up toys when they are finished playing and helping outside;
- all children develop at a different pace. Talk to them about what you are working on together. Let them make the choices and practice the skills they want to work on.

Support your Child's Emotional Wellbeing

- encouraging your child to play as much as possible inside and outside the home;
- if your child is stuck when doing something, allow them to keep trying, as this builds their perseverance and confidence. You can say something like; " I see you are really trying to finish that, well done for trying so hard";
- talk about and name your child's feelings to help them regulate their emotions and deal with different feelings. Talking about and naming feelings helps children cope with all the different feeling they have. Help them name their feelings if they have difficulties expressing them. Reading picture stories about feelings is a helpful way to help your child name what they might be feeling in their bodies, how they are thinking and feeling. Your local library will have many books to recommend;
- work on kindness, talk about being kind and model kindness for them. They can practice on their siblings;
- arrange to talk by phone with your child's pre-school key person or pre-school leader to discuss your child's time in the pre-school and if they have any advice specific to your child for transitioning to primary school;
- discuss what your child knows about primary school, what are they expecting it to be like, what are they looking forward to, or, what might they be nervous of? Reassure them of any fears. The way adults show upset or worry will have an impact on your child. Children will see this behaviour and may be affected. Remember to speak positively about the change and manage your own worries or concerns;
- visit the primary school to have a look at the building/playground and talk about how your child will get to school each day;
- show your child some photos of the school uniform and tell them about other children they may know that already attend the school. Maybe you know some of their pre-school friends, who are going to the same primary school, and you could arrange to meet up in the park over the summer?
- involve your child in setting up a primary school play space over the summer including their lunch box, school bag, paper and crayons/pencils, books and so on;
- if your child seems overwhelmed by the thought of school, hold off on talking about it for a while, but keep working on opportunities for play and independence.

If your child has been directly affected by COVID-19 be very careful about having conversations with other adults in front of your child that might cause concern or upset. Parents should ask other members of the family not to talk about certain topics in front of children also.

Sharing Information with your Child's Teacher

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has a special transition template that parents can complete and share with their child's teacher. You can view the Mo Scéal (My Story) transition template [here](#).

You may be sent a transitions pack by your early learning and childcare service that includes this template and a card for your child to draw a picture of themselves for their teacher. You might want to fill in the template and share it with the teacher when school starts. If you don't get a pack you can ring your local City and County Childcare Committee and they will send you one. Their contact details are [here](#).

Stuff about School

If this is the first time a child in your family will attend school, here are some handy tips.

Schools will communicate with families directly on the requirements for that school.

Uniforms (where applicable):

The school will have been in touch to let you know about uniforms and where they can be purchased. Primary school uniforms usually have two parts a uniform that consists of a trousers/pinafore, shirt and jumper and a school track suit with a t-shirt. Your child's teacher will tell you which day children should wear their track suit or the school might be flexible about it. The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BTSCFA) helps those in financial need meet the cost of uniforms and footwear for children going to school. For more information see [here](#).

School Books:

You may get a book list and you can purchase the books online or in a local bookshop. The books can be covered and your child's name added.

Some schools have a book rental scheme. These schemes loan textbooks to children and charge a rental fee. The books are owned by the Board of Management of the school and are rented out each year to students.

The cost of renting the books from the school is much lower than buying the books in a bookshop.

School Bag and Pencil Case:

Each child will need a school bag, pencil case and lunch box and water bottle with their name on them. Children should be able to open their own lunch boxes and water bottles. Check the school bag every evening. Teachers may send notes home in children's school bags. Some schools communicate by using text or email.

Making Friends:

Starting school presents the challenge and opportunity of making new friends for children and parents. Some adults and children find this easier than others. Parents can help by being open and friendly with other parents and children. As children settle in, you can encourage these friendships by organising playdates, when this becomes possible, with other parents. Parents with older children can be a great source of advice and information about the school.

Building a Relationship with your Child's Teacher

Before COVID-19, you would be meeting the teacher as you drop your child into their class. This won't be possible for the moment and schools are thinking of new ways to communicate with families. It will be hard for teachers to have lengthy chats at this time but you can contact them and ask to make a time to talk to them if you have any worries and concerns. The relationship with your school may seem more formal than pre-school and the group size is very likely to be larger. Be friendly and open to the teacher. Make a list of what you might need to say. Don't be afraid to ask questions about the school day and the content of the curriculum. Your child's teacher will be only too happy to answer them.

The National Parents Council have a leaflet on how schools work and the different jobs in a school such as the role of the principal and the school Board of Management. You can view it [here](#).

Tusla Education Support Service (TESS):

TESS has operational responsibility for the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Coordinators are teachers who visit and support parents, in order to improve educational outcomes for children. HSCL Coordinators work closely with colleagues from the other two strands of TESS; the School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) in order to provide an integrated service to children and families in DEIS Schools.
COVID-19 Concerns

In this time of uncertainty, schools will be working very hard with guidance from the Department of Education and Skills to put the public health advice into practice. You can support your school by adhering to any instructions you may receive. If your child has particular health concerns or conditions, you should discuss these with the school in advance of starting. The latest public health advice from the HSE is available [here](#).