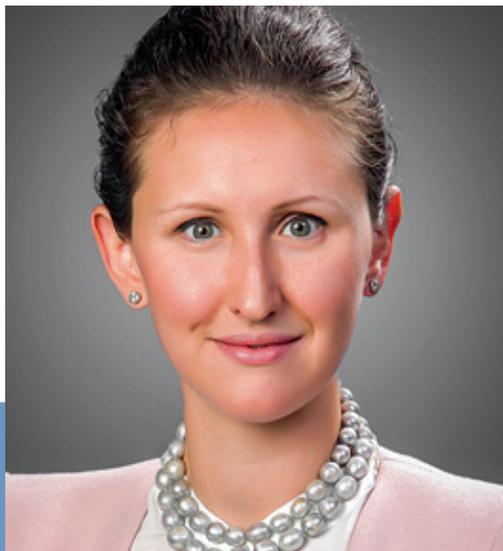


10 tips to ease into primary school

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Stepping into primary school is a huge milestone for children and parents alike. There are a number of things that parents can do to help prepare their child for their first day at 'big school'.

Here are a few suggestions to help your child make an easy transition to primary school.

Get a school uniform and kit

Nothing excites children about 'big school' more!

Check the uniform list sent by the school that will tell you exactly which uniform items and stationery your child will need. The optimum quantity is three full sets of uniform so there will be a smaller washing load for you during the week.

Visit school together for Orientation Day

Teachers will take you and your child through the daily routine, show you places that are really important to your child's settling-in process, such as the toilets, canteen and different classrooms. Encourage your child to speak to the teacher and share a few things about them that the teacher might like to know.

Label all personal belongings

Even though your child may seem to be an independent first grader, remember she is still five or six years old. Eventually, personal belongings may end up in the lost and found pile of unidentified items. To find your child's precious water bottle or a jumper, ensure that it is labelled right from the beginning.

Get into a school routine

In the run-up to big school, get your kids used to an earlier bedtime and waking up time. Move towards the new routine over a few days rather than starting it suddenly the day before.

Become familiar with the idea of school

Read storybooks such as *I am Too Absolutely Small for School* by Lauren Child or *Max and Millie Start School*

by Felicity Brooks and share your own happy memories of school during loved routines like bed-time, cuddletime and story time.

Encourage independent skills

This starts long before the first day of school. A first grader should be able to do these three things on their own: change for PE or swimming lessons, eat on their own using cutlery and go to the bathroom independently and clean themselves afterwards, including washing hands.

Teach your child the skills of friendship

To succeed in maths or reading your child needs specific skills. The same goes for connecting with other children and making friends. To develop good friendships, now and later, it is important to encourage children in developing the following skills:

- **Self-control:** being able to wait for what they want, using words to express their feelings.
- **Play skills:** being willing to take part in games, take turns and make suggestions for play.
- **Communicating:** talking and listening to other people in a friendly way.
- **Lending a helping hand:** being willing to help others.
- **Coping:** being able to respond to rejection or disappointment.
- **Empathy:** being able to respond to others' feelings with understanding.



Making friends is an important skill for children

Promote and build your child's cognitive skills

As a parent, you can encourage your child's cognitive development in the areas of memory, concentration, attention and perception, by incorporating simple activities and fun games into your everyday routine.

Encourage healthy food habits

Eating healthy foods, especially at breakfast time, helps children concentrate and learn. Swap out sugary cereals with healthy porridge, fruit and eggs. Try to set a good example with your own lunches. Encourage children to help choose and prepare their

own lunch. They might like to make a list of the foods they enjoy. Praise your child when they choose healthy foods for their lunch box.

Develop your child's character

When children know their strengths, they are more confident and feel better about themselves, which benefits learning. Parents can instill the right values through meaningful praise, highlighting enthusiasm, honesty, kindness, teamwork, fairness and humility and through their own behaviour – treating children with respect, and encouraging self-discipline. ☑