

Helping your child with school transition

Starting school can be both an exciting and yet nervous time for both children and their parents and never more than after the last 15 months. At Shadwell Childcare we understand that you would like to ensure your child will have all of the skills to allow them to settle into their new reception class. This guide has been produced in response to previous parent communication and will hopefully help with a smooth transition for your child as they move from nursery to school.



Be Happy!

The main priority for our children is for them to be happy and confident when they start school. At nursery we work hard to ensure that your child has all of the skills they need to make the move to school as easy as possible for them. It has been shown that children who are settled, happy and confident with their nursery environment are more likely to engage and concentrate when in school allowing for greater education, **this is extremely important to us as a setting**. We work hard to offer a fun and stimulating environment to show your child that nursery, and school, are fun places.

Be Ready!

Parents ask us if their children will be able to recognise or write their name and have an understanding of numbers. You also wanted your child to be able to sit and listen at carpet time to develop concentration and to learn to follow instructions such as tidy up time. Our focused moderation and tracking ensures that the Key Person has a deep understanding of your child and activities are created to help each child achieve their best across all of the 7 areas of learning. Our children have lots of small group work developing focus and concentration through sharing exciting stories and take turns in large group circle time. They know learning is FUN!

Be Independent!

We encourage self-care, hand washing and clear bathroom expectations as we aim to give each child as much independence as possible. We teach them how to put on their own coats and shoes and encourage them to cut up their food and to eat their lunch using the cutlery. We support their confidence to share their experiences and feelings at circle time with adults and peers.

Seven Areas of Learning

Each day our staff use the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance and Development Matters to plan activities that will allow each child to engage in activities that give them new skills. Your child's Key Person will assess and track your child's progress and monitor their development. Children should develop the 3 prime areas first as these are essential for your child's healthy development and future learning;

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

At nursery we work hard to ensure that all children are as secure as possible in these areas. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in 4 specific areas. These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive arts and design
- Understanding the world

You will find the Parents Guide to the EYFS which explains how the areas are used for each child's development on the Parents notice board.

How we Plan and Assess across all areas of the Early Years curriculum

To plan effectively we observe each child's development and learning, assess their progress and plan for next steps. This is all based around the children's interest - we believe children learn better and more in depth when engaged in activities they enjoy.

At Shadwell Childcare, ongoing formative assessment is at the heart of our practice. We offer a balance of planned activities and free flow play. We consider ways to support the children to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development. Organic planning follows each child's individual interests to keep them engaged and enjoying their learning.



Maths

We engage children in maths continually through play and also focused activities. We use the children's interests to lead our planning. Mathematics learning can be found throughout the setting weaved into every area. For example we may number all of our vehicles and chalk parking spaces on the floor, the children can then park the vehicles in the correct space matching the numbers. We try to use the outdoor environment as much as we can too and collect leaves and stones which can be painted with numbers.

Members of staff also sit with groups and individual children for planned maths activities and fun number games. It is important to ensure children understand the concept behind numbers 'what makes 3' rather than learning 1-100 with no deeper knowledge.

All staff recently attended a maths mastery course where we received the very latest methods for teaching young children maths and a deeper understanding of numbers and patterns.

We plan appropriately across all areas of the Early Years curriculum so your child has all the skills ready for school. We introduce our children to mark making, listening and communicating, following instructions and maths work - all through play activities or specific small group work. Young children learn tremendous amounts when singing, sharing stories, playing games and talking to each other. Our provision in both Sunflower and Bluebell rooms provides the opportunities to help your child develop and learn following their own interests.

Phonics

In both Bluebell and Sunflower rooms, we follow the guidance from the DoE document "Letters and Sounds" Phase 1. These are adult-led activities which focus on the 7 aspects of the Letter and Sounds programme. It begins with environmental sounds and instrumental sounds through to oral blending and segmenting. This lays the foundations for the phonic work that start in Phase 2 (Reception).

- Our daily sound box engages children directly relating sounds and objects
- Adult led phonics activities with small groups, dependent on abilities, as they progress through all aspects of Phase 1 Letters and Sounds
- Jolly Phonics Songs with actions and writing letters is a daily activity
- We offer mark making areas for developing fine motor skills



At Shadwell Childcare, we give every child the opportunity to develop their confidence by talking to their peers at registration and sharing their news, discussing emotions and feelings in circle time and concentration skills are developed in small focused group activities



- Registration time we listen for our name and can share our exciting news
- Quiet times, such as story time, to develop listening skills, recalling events from stories, using communication skills to tell their own versions of them. They are able to enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books in our cosy book corners.
- Singing rhymes and songs throughout the nursery day develops important listening skills, tuning into those rhyming words and predicting what comes next.
- After lunch time, we have Circle time which is a special time involving children in our planning, reinforcing knowledge and understanding, taking turns, listening to each other's ideas.
- We sing 'Silly Soup' rhymes which helps children listen for sounds and match them, concentration and awareness of their surroundings are developed

Top tip

Useful phrases to teach your child to allow them to make friends... "Can I join in?" or "Do you want to share?"



You can help your child's independence with a 'can do' attitude, give them responsibilities everyday as they get closer to school. This could be anything from laying the table, hanging up their coat to feeding a pet.

At nursery we use **Open Ended Questioning** that you could also use at home. Questions such as:

- Can you find a way to.....?
- I wonder if.....?
- Why do you think that happened.....?
- What did you notice about.....?
- Tell me about.....?



What can you do at home?

Talk to your child about school. Explain the routine of the day and visit the school together. Most schools now hold settling in days specifically for the new pre-school children but also visit for school fairs or fun days.

Look at the school brochure together, visit the website and see all of the children taking part in fun days. Talk about your own school days

Try to focus on the fun elements if they are anxious, such as new friends, the wonderful climbing wall or the amazing wooden play house.

If your child has a particular security toy or blanket now is the time to try to get them to use it less through the day. Have a fun day out buying big boy / girl school uniforms, school bags and sport kits. *The most important thing to remember is this is a fun, exciting time for your child which will give them lots of new opportunities and experiences.*

Please see the attached sheet for Getting Ready for School with your child for ideas

Working with schools and transition reports

Shadwell Nursery works closely with all of its local primary schools to give our children the very best opportunities as they move on to school. All pre-school children, regardless of whether they will attend Shadwell Primary or another school, will have the same opportunities and take part in all experiences to prepare them for their move.

We have a wonderful partnership with Shadwell Primary school and all pre-school children will experience lunchtime as they would in school but this year from nursery. They will be taking a tray and cutlery, queuing and collecting their own food. We have held some Gingerbread sessions outside this year where the teachers have come to read to us –it's always fun!

We work closely with all primary schools and invite reception teachers to come to our setting to meet the children and watch them play in a familiar environment.

Most schools also offer settling in sessions for you and your child and these are useful to help you familiarise yourself with the setting and the teachers. Children can often meet new friends at these sessions and are happy to return to continue their play afterwards and share their stories with us.

A transition report has recently been shared with you. This was completed by the child's key person and is passed to your child's new primary school. It allows your new teacher to understand your child prior to them starting. We hope you enjoyed the report and thank you for all returning them with comments and feedback, it was wonderful to hear how happy you are with everything.

A tracker was also part of the report and this shows your child's progress across the seven areas of learning and will help the school plan for activities they like when your child begins school.

Picture books about starting school that you could read to your child include;

- I am too absolutely small for school – Charlie and Lola
- Starting school by Janet and Allend Ahlberg
- Topsy and Tim Start school
- Harry and the dinosaurs go to school
- Usborne, going to school sticker book and starting school sticker book



We value all of our children and always give them every opportunity to thrive and meet their full potential investing whole heartedly into each child during their time with us.

If you have any questions or would like more information on any specific areas, please speak with the key person or Room Leaders. The Room Leaders will also be very happy to explain the planning and next steps that are shared on our planning boards and we welcome any ideas that you may have that will enhance the learning available to all of the children.

We understand that this year has been challenging for everyone alike but especially our little ones. We are fortunate to have wonderfully caring staff who have been working hard to support our children across all of the changes allowing them to learn and grow in a fun, happy and secure environment.

We are confident they will all enjoy school we will miss them all tremendously.



Helping you child to get Ready for School

With only a matter of weeks until your little one leaves nursery, there are lots of ways that you can help them prepare for life at school. Here are some of our top tips:

Communication and language

1. Being an active listener is key to being an effective learner. To develop these skills, you could set your child two-part tasks, for example, 'Please put the toys in the box then wash your hands for dinner'.
2. Model the correct use of language, for example, if your child says, "I gotted a little nana today", recast it as, "Yes, you **have** a little **banana** today".
3. Read stories and sing songs – can your child spot the rhyming words or fill in the missing word when you leave it out of the story? Can your child suggest how the story might end?

Self-Care Skills

4. Can your child dress and undress themselves? Don't forget that, alongside being able to put on and fasten their own coat, your little one will need to change into and out of pumps and get themselves ready for PE! They will, of course, practise at school, but it can really help your child's confidence if they have learnt these skills at home with you.
5. Can your child use a knife and fork and feed themselves effectively? Using a knife and fork also helps to develop the fine motor skills they need when learning to hold a pencil effectively.
6. Encourage your child to use the toilet independently, including wiping their own bottom and washing their hands. In pre-school we always encourage the children to try to do this for themselves and practise definitely makes perfect with this skill!

Managing Feelings and Emotions

7. Be prepared for emotional outbursts (including your own!). Even the most confident of children can have a little wobble when starting school. Try not to project your worries on to your little one and talk about school positively.
8. Having clear rules and behavioural expectations at home can really help your child in a school environment. For example, those children who understand that when an adult is talking to them, they are expected to listen and not to talk will find it easier to follow the instructions of a teacher.

Questions about my school

A 'Questions about my school, post box is available where any questions or feelings about school are placed in the box and we discuss the question and answers with all of the children, if one child feels that way maybe others do too. If your child mentions anything at home, please write it on some paper and they can post it to discuss in nursery with their friends and key person



Literacy

13. As mentioned above reading stories and singing songs and nursery rhymes is one of the best ways of helping your child develop their vocabulary and understanding of the patterns of language. When reading, show your child where the text is and that the words are read from left to right and from top to bottom. Point out the title, the page numbers and the names of the author and the illustrator and help your child to spot the letters of their name.
14. When looking at letters, it is very important that you use their **sound** and not the letter name, for example “a” not “aye”, “b” not “bee”. Every school in the local area teaches children to read using phonics – letter sounds – and at nursery we use “Jolly Phonics” to help introduce our children to this system.
15. Provide lots of opportunity for drawing and mark making – damp sand, water and paint brushes along with traditional pencils and pens are some of our top suggestions for reluctant mark-makers!
16. When helping your children learn to write, we usually begin with their name. The first letter of the name is, of course, a capital letter, but it is really important to use the **lower case**, cursive letters for the rest of the name as it is this letter formation that the children will be using in school as they learn to write simple words. We always talk about the direction we are moving our pencil as model letter formation (“up, down, round, back”), as this helps the children understand how to form their letters.

Mathematics

9. Being able to count is wonderful, but to develop their mathematical skills children need to **understand what numbers mean**. At nursery we work to develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects without counting, and also to help children understand that the last number they say when counting is the total amount in a set (while they are learning most children will just carry-on counting). We then begin to link quantities to numerals (1-5).
10. At home there are so many opportunities to **count and compare small numbers**: for example, counting the number of steps to the car; spotting numbers on the doors of houses or number plates; counting out the plates as you are serving dinner; completing count-downs to bed/bathtime (5-4-3-2-1) .
11. To develop their mathematical skills, children also need to be able to identify patterns and sequences and use descriptive language. Ways to help at home might involve looking at patterns on clothes or furnishings (“the stripes are red-blue-white, red-blue-white, encouraging your child to continue the pattern or spot a deliberate mistake you make!); talking about the sequence of routines (“every day we... then...”) or using calendar to count down to events (“3 more sleeps until your birthday”).
12. To help your child you could also draw their attention to shapes in the environment and compare their properties, for example, counting the number of sides on a triangle and comparing it to a square, or looking at the difference between a 2D square and a 3D cube.