



You and your child have already achieved many milestones and now they are about to begin their school journey. Starting school can bring big changes to family life and is an exciting time but it is also natural for you and your child to have worries.

You may have many questions, such as 'how can I help my child prepare for school?' You may have noticed that your child's behaviour is changing which is perfectly normal - they too may have questions about starting school. There is lots of support available and we are here to help you find it:

<https://families.barnardos.org.uk/4-8-years/starting-school>

OUR TOP TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD TO START SCHOOL

Talking with your child: Spend some time talking to your child, to find out how they are feeling about starting school. Actively listen, giving your child your full attention, getting down to their level if you can, and giving them time to talk. Encourage your child to talk about their likes and fears.

Help your child to recognise their feelings: A good way to start this is by naming their feelings, drawing them and talking about them. Try to talk in a positive way about starting school. Buy or borrow from your local library that will help with starting conversations

Ask the school for resources: You could consider using social stories with your child, Social stories are helpful for all children, especially for those who are on the autistic spectrum; the National Autistic Society website has great ideas for creating them.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S INDEPENDENCE

Give your child lots of practice getting themselves dressed and undressed: Encouraging your child to have a go at buttons & zips on coats will help them get ready for PE or go out at playtime. Use lots of encouragement and descriptive praise for what they have achieved as this will help your child want to learn these skills and make it more fun.

Offer your child small choices at home: For example which colour socks they would like to wear and giving them small tasks to complete such as putting their shoes away can support with decision making and independence skills. These will prepare them for life in the classroom.

Get them into a good sleep routine: If you can get a routine in place now, & practice the school run before your child starts school in September, it can make the school morning routine a little easier for everyone.

Help and support your child to be able to use the toilet independently: This includes flushing the toilet & confidently washing their hands. If you are worried that your child might have an accident talk to the school prior to your child starting- they will be able to reassure you or link you with the school nurse who will be able to offer advice to support you. Please don't worry as there is lots of advice and support available.

Keep playing: Your child has already developed a range of skills through play and they will keep on learning! Climbing, crawling, colouring, painting and threading can all help support brain development and build the smaller muscles that are needed for writing. Activities such as board games, card games and ball games all have an element of sharing and turn taking and these are great skills for your child to have as it will help when building friendships at school.

For more information about the support available for parents in Solihull, please contact the parenting team via email to bsmhft.parenting@nhs.net; by phone on 0121 301 2773; or by finding us on Facebook

