

Starting School





Oral Segmenting and Blending

- Oral segmenting and blending is a vital skill in early Phonics and will give your child a solid foundation for future learning.
- Blending – You say the sounds within a word and they merge these sounds to form the whole word, e.g. “d-o-g” – “dog”, “ch-air” – “chair”
- Segmenting – You say a word and then they tell you the sounds in they can hear, e.g. “cat” – “c-a-t”
- Model this as much as possible and play games such as ‘I spy’ or ‘Simon says’ where you say the sounds and they blend then to make the word.
- There is no expectation that children know any of the letters and their sounds when they start school. Children will be introduced to these within their Reception Year.



Name Recognition

- Give your child as much exposure to their name as possible so that they begin to recognise it. This will help them recognise their name amongst others – on their pegs, drawers and clothes and they will be able to independently look after and put away their belongings.
- Being able to spell and write their name when they start is not an expectation but if they are able to practise this it is useful for them to begin to label their own work (copy of name in induction packs).
- Box – Read and write names using lowercase pre-cursive letters, except for the first letter which should be a capital.
- Box – Make sure you label everything that goes into school (even pants and socks) so they can be identified and returned.



Fine Motor Skills

Please provide opportunities for your child to develop the muscles in their fingers, hands and wrists and practise mark making. By taking part in pre-writing activities that support fine motor development, children develop their finger and hand muscles to eventually support them to hold a pencil and form letters.

Any activities that involve children making small movements with their fingers are brilliant. These could include –

- Making models with lego
- Clipping pegs onto a washing line
- Creating play dough models
- Placing pom poms into ice cube trays
- Using cotton buds to paint
- Passing coin into a money box
- Using keys to unlock padlocks
- Using scoops, tongs and large tweezers
- Unscrewing and screwing lids onto bottles and jars
- Threading pasta onto string or pipe cleaners



Sharing Books Together

- “Children are made readers in the laps of their parents” – Emilie Buchwald
- Share books at every opportunity. Reading books together not only means that you model how to hold and take care of books, turn the pages and read from left to right but you also prompt speaking and listening skills, conversation and vocabulary development.
- You could also practise oral segmenting and blending some of the words within the book. You say the sounds of a simple CVC word and your child blends the sounds to say the whole word “In the light of the m-oo-n”.
- Box – Discuss the role of the Author and illustrator
- Find rhyming words.
- Can you spot some of the letters in your name?
- Can you retell the story in your own words?
- What happened at the beginning of the story?
- What do you think will happen next?



Getting Dressed

- Give your child the chance to practise dressing and undressing themselves independently. Practise with buttons, poppers and zips.
- Practise putting on their coats, trousers, skirts and tops. Talk about how the label needs to go at the back and show them where their name is on their clothing so they know where to look if they lose it. Practise turning jumpers, cardigans, trousers and coats the right way around when they are inside out.
- Footwear – Please only send children to school in shoes that they are able to do up themselves 😊



Independent Skills

- Snack and Lunch – practise using a knife, fork and spoon, opening items that may have in their lunch boxes if they are bringing their own lunch, drinking water from an open cup and peeling their own fruit.
- Toileting – try and encourage your child to use the toilet independently, wipes themselves and wash their hands afterwards. If your child is still struggling with this in September please let your child's class teacher know during your 1:1 meeting.
- Using Resources – discuss with your child about how they can take care of their toys and resources and encourage them to help tidy things away after they have finished playing.



Social Skills

- Have a chat with your child about speaking to adults if they feel things are not going well. Tell them it is okay to ask for help. It is also helpful for children to be able to tell someone if they need the toilet.
- Encourage sharing of toys, turn-taking and following instructions. Playing simple board games such as 'Snakes and Ladders' is perfect for this and will develop patience too. If they do not win the game, this exposes them to the feeling of not winning and they will learn how to deal with these emotions and develop resilience.
- Discuss some social situations that they might come across, such as a child saying they can't join a game, and talk to your child about how they will react and what they should do.