



Getting Your Child Ready For Nursery

Starting nursery is a big change for both children and parents. A calm, gradual, approach usually helps children feel safer and more confident.

A Few Weeks Before Starting...

Build Familiarity

- Talk positively about nursery in everyday conversation.
- Read books about starting nursery.
- Walk or drive past the nursery if possible.
- Look at photos of the nursery, staff, or rooms together. There are photos on our website.

Practice Independence Skills

- Putting on/ taking off coat and shoes
- Washing hands
- Using a cup independently
- Tidying toys away
- Sitting for a snack/ lunch at a table or on the carpet for story times.
- Asking for help using simple words or gestures and listening when being spoken to.

Establish a Routine

- Gradually move bedtime and wake-up times to match nursery days.
- Practice morning routines.
- Introduce regular meal and snack times. Our snack time is 10am and lunch is at 12pm-12.30pm. We support children to sit for 30 minutes at a supervised table with their peers.

Encourage Short Separations

- Leave your child with trusted family/ friends for short periods.
- Always say goodbye clearly rather than sneaking away.
- Return when promised to build trust.

What Parents Can Do Emotionally

Talk About Feelings

You can say:

- "Nursery is a place where you'll play and meet new people."
- "Mummy/ Daddy always comes back."
- "It's okay to feel nervous."

Avoid:

- "Don't cry."
- "You're a big girl/ boy now."
- Long emotional goodbyes that increase anxiety.

Create Comfort and Security

- Allow a comfort item (small toy, blanket, family photo).
- Use a consistent goodbye phrase each day.
- Keep drop-offs calm and confident.

Practical Nursery Checklist

Label Everything:

- Spare clothes
- Coat
- Shoes
- Water bottle
- Comfort items/ find a photo of your child with you and familiar people or places to share with others at nursery

Pack a Nursery Bag

Include:

- Spare clothes/ pants
- Nappies/ wipes if needed
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Comfort toy
- Any medication/ forms required

Share Important Information with Staff

Tell Nursery Staff About:

- Allergies
- Sleep routines
- Comfort strategies
- Toileting stage
- Favourite activities
- Any worries or family changes

During the First Few Weeks

Expect Some Regression

Children May Temporarily:

- Become clingy
- Cry at drop-off
- Have disrupted sleep
- Be more tired or emotional
- Have more accidents

This is very common and usually settles with consistency.

Keep Goodbyes Short:

A simple routine helps:

1. Hug
 2. Positive goodbye phrases
 3. Leave confidently
- If your child is very clingy, we suggest using a nursery sand timer as a visual aid to show how long you will stay before it is time to say goodbye.
 - Lingering often makes leaving harder.

Allow Quiet Time After Nursery

Children may become overstimulated and tired.

Try:

- Earlier bedtime
- Calm evenings
- Extra cuddles and connection time

Helpful Activities

At Home

Role Play Nursery

Use dolls/ teddies to:

- Say goodbye
- Sit for snack time
- Sing songs
- Practice routines

Story Time Suggestions

Books about starting nursery or separation can help children process emotions.

Confidence-Building Play

- Turn-taking games
- Simple group activities
- Singing nursery rhymes
- Messy play and crafts
- Choosing their own bag or lunchbox
- Helping to choose fruit/ lunch box items with you at the supermarket for nursery.

Reassurance for Parents

It's completely normal for transitions to feel emotional. Some children settle quickly; others take several weeks. A child crying at drop-off does not mean nursery is the wrong place for them - many children calm shortly after parents leave.

Consistency, reassurance, and calm routines are usually the biggest factors in helping children settle successfully.