

Giving your child
the best start to
Ynystawe Earth Phase
Dosbarth Ji-Binc - Nursery
Dosbarth Gwdihw - Reception/Year 1



We can't wait for you to join us!



Giving your child the best start.

Starting school is an exciting time for young children and their parents. However, it also can be a daunting time too. With a little preparation and encouragement, children will settle in easily at Ynystawe Earth Phase. Our staff have a great deal of experience in helping children to cope with times of transition. We are all passionate about children, their happiness and their development and we are looking forward to your child starting with us.

Here are some top tips to help you prepare your child for starting school. We hope they help you both to start school with a smile!



No need to worry!

Your child doesn't need to be able to read, write or do sums before they start school. Children start school with a wide range of abilities and our staff are skilled at helping children progress at their own level. What's most important is that you and your child have fun together in those preschool months and years – sharing stories, singing songs, playing games and talking about anything and everything.



Give this a try!

- Chat with your child about starting school. What do they think it will be like? What are they most looking forward to? Is there anything they're unsure or worried about?
- Look at the school's brochure, prospectus or website together and talk about the pictures.
- Find photos of you and other family members at school, and chat about happy memories from your own school days.
- If possible, visit the school with your child before they start – either on formal open days, or fêtes, plays and other events.
- Some things to try -
- Read books together about starting school.
- If your child seems anxious about school, try focusing on the things they'll like best – maybe trains, cars, water play, playhouse or new friends. Perhaps they have some friends from preschool who will be starting school at the same time.
- Practise the school morning routine, including getting dressed and eating breakfast in time to leave.

Some things to avoid-

- It's natural to feel nervous about your child starting school, but remember that your child can easily pick up on your emotions. Try to be relaxed and positive, rather than showing your own nerves.
- Try not to make comments such as "I hated school" or "I was rubbish at school", which might give your child a negative attitude.
- Try not to bombard your child with endless talk about school – treating it in a matter-of-fact, light hearted way....talking about school as somewhere all children go to learn fun things and make new friends, rather than focusing on the 'big step ahead'.

Give this a try!

Being prepared -

If your child has already spent time in a childcare or preschool setting, they're probably already well on the way to having the social and practical skills they need to succeed at school. They're used to spending time apart from you, mixing with other children, taking instructions from and communicating with other adults, taking some responsibility for tidying up after themselves and looking after their own belongings.

Don't worry if your child hasn't attended a childcare setting or preschool. Playing with other children, whether friends and family members, or other children at the park or soft play area, is all good practice for forming friendships with classmates at school. Often children who don't know one another will make friends very easily, but if your child struggles, teach them some useful phrases such as "can I join in?" or "do you want to share?".

If you already know some other children who will be in your child's class, why not organise a play date or outing together? As well as being beneficial for the youngsters, it's helpful for you to be able to chat about your own feelings and anxieties with their parents, who may be feeling the same.

As your child's Ynystawe Start date approaches, try to get into the school routine, so your child gets used to getting up, going to bed, and having meals and snacks at the times they will on school days. Bath time and stories instead of TV and tablet games all help children to wind down before bedtime. Making time in the evening to chat about your day for 10 minutes can be a lovely routine for sharing fun times and any worries.

Nutritious meals and plenty of sleep will help them to concentrate, learn and thrive at school. If your child has naps, it would be wise to try phasing this out. This should be more manageable for them if they have a good bedtime routine. Maybe offer a down time after lunch rather than a nap.

Caring for themselves!

Self-care

It will make life easier for your child (and school staff!) if your child can master these self-care skills before they start school.

Going to the toilet:

Support your child to be confident about getting to the loo in time and wiping properly, using toilet paper rather than moist wipes. Do you have a different phrase for going to the toilet at home? Letting the class teacher know what this is will ensure they understand what your child is trying to ask. Reminding your child to flush the toilet.

Washing their hands:

Chat about the importance of good handwashing with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet or handling animals. A good way of showing how germs can linger is to let your child cover their hands in paint (pretend germs!) and then try to wash it all off.

Feeding themselves:

Allow your child to feed themselves at home. At Ynystawe Earth Phase children have a snack during school time. We are a 'Healthy School' and will offer a variety of healthy snacks at this time. We also take part in cooking activities where healthy foods are incorporated. We will sometimes send the food made home with your child, or we might give your child the opportunity to eat the food in school in order for them to enjoy with and discuss with their friends.

Blowing their own nose:

Some children find nose-blowing difficult, so play games to practise nose control—blowing a feather into the air, for example, catching their sneeze or runny nose in a tissue, putting it in the bin straightaway, then washing hands to kill germs.

First week checklist!

- Do you know exactly where you need to take your child, and at what time? We open our doors at Ynystawe at 8:40am for Nursery, Reception/Year 1. Coming a little earlier would be great so that you could meet other parents outside along with other children. Your child can also then walk in with other children which can make them feel more secure. Reception/Year 1 will enter via the lean-to to the left of the front door. Next to the gate to their yard.
 - Do you know where to collect your child, and at what time? Nursery pick up 11.30am. Reception/Year 1 3.20pm.
 - Nursery children at Ynystawe don't wear uniform. We ask for them to come to school wearing casual, comfortable clothes suited to our daily indoor and outdoor, experiential and hands on activities.
 - Earth Phase take part in PE. Please send your Nursery child into school wearing a t-shirt, tracksuit and trainers on this day.
 - Nursery take part in Forest School on a Wednesday and Friday. Please send your Nursery child into school wearing wellies, layers and outdoor clothing suited to the weather. We go outside in all weathers apart from storms and high winds.
 - Reception/Year 1 take part in Forest School on a Friday afternoon. Please send your Reception/Year 1 child into school wearing layers and outdoor clothing suited to the weather. We go outside in all weathers apart from storms and high winds. Pack waterproofs in a bag. Wellies will be in school.
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- Does your child know who'll be collecting them each day? Talking to them each morning before school about who will be collecting them that day will make them feel more secure.
 - Have you put name labels on absolutely everything?! Show your child where the labels are and make sure they are sewn or stuck somewhere that's easy for them to find.

Caring for themselves!

Dressing and undressing:

Let your child practise putting on their clothes, taking them off and folding them neatly in preparation for PE lessons (Reception/Year 1 only), especially if there are fiddly fastenings such as shirt buttons and zips. Clothes with elastic bands and shoes with Velcro® are easier to handle for young children. Teach your child tricks such as putting labels at the back, holding cuffs to stop sleeves riding up, and wrinkling tights to put toes in first.

All children will need to help change for Forest School sessions. This includes waterproofs, wellies and a coat. Staff will always be on hand to support children.

Tidying up:

Get your child into the habit of hanging their coat up, putting their toys away, clearing the table, and so on, to prepare them for doing these things at school. Why not turn it into a game? In Ynystawe Earth Phase we use the song 'Clean Up song for Children—Kindergarten and Preschool Song by ELF Learning' which you will find on Youtube to indicate tidy up time and motivate children to help. Try playing this at home while your child is tidying up.



First few weeks checklist!

Many children settle into school life easily, while others take longer. Don't worry if your child is tearful and clingy for the first few days – it's quite normal. Although you might feel terrible leaving them, they will most likely be playing quite happily within a few minutes.

If your child seems exhausted at the end of the day, let them have some quiet time or even a nap when they get home. If they're hungry, a healthy snack and drink can help restore energy levels. Let your child get used to school life before introducing afterschool activities. It's a good idea to keep the first few weekends quiet, too, as they will likely need time to recharge, just as we do when we start a new job or a big project.

Keep talking to your child about their feelings about Ynystawe school, and put aside some special time to chat about their day. Ask them about the activities they took part in and who they played with. Look at the Class Dojo with them to remind them of their activities. Some children are enthusiastic at first, but once reality of going to school day after day sets in they can become reluctant. If this happens with your child, use a calendar to help them understand when weekends and holidays are coming up. You might want to arrange a few treats for them to look forward to as well.

Please feel free to come and chat with us at any point. If we are unable to speak there and then, we will arrange a time to do so. We are experts at helping young children to settle in and thrive at school, we will be able to reassure you about issues that come up.

If you do have any concerns, please come to us early as this will prevent them from developing into bigger problems. If there is anything you think might help your child to feel settled, suggest it to our staff.



Top Tips

- Play some listening games

Play some fun listening and doing games to help with following instructions. 'Simon says' or 'Can you find' are great games to play!

- A can do attitude, help to develop your child's independence by giving them a few everyday responsibilities as they get closer to school age. Perhaps they could lay the table, feed a pet or put their own laundry away.
- Putting together a wallchart of the week can help your child know what to expect and help them to understand routines.
- Have you heard of the 'flip trick' for putting a coat on? Put your child's coat upside down on a table in front of them. They can then put their hands in the armholes and flip the coat over their head – a handy way for your child to put their coat on by themselves!

Behaviour challenge!

It's quite common for children's behaviour at home to change when they first start school. Don't be surprised if your little one becomes more clingy, argumentative, lethargic, excitable or prone to tantrums for a while. Have a compassionate and caring attitude towards your child during these times.

We look forward to meeting you and your family!

See you soon

Ynystawe Earth PhaseTeam





'I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember,
I do and I understand'

Confucius 551-479BC

