

## Starting school

Once you've decided which school you would like your child to attend, the next step is enrolment and preparing for this new phase in your child's life.

Enrolling your child can be as easy as contacting the school of your choice and filling in the relevant forms. Or it could involve putting your child's name down at a private school from shortly after birth. Our tips on [choosing a school](#) might help if you are still deciding which school is right for your child.

### Before school starts

- Visit the school together so your child is familiar with the grounds, including the drink taps, toilets and classroom.
- Visit the school when the other children are there so your child can get used to the noise of the playground and the size of the 'big' students.
- Meet your child's teacher together and give your child an idea of how many children will be in the class.
- Show your child where the after-school care facilities are, if needed.
- Get your child to try on the uniform and shoes before the first day, just to make sure everything fits.
- Make sure your child has all the extras. Remember – bag, hat, art smock, library bag and so on.
- It will help if your child knows another child from class before school starts. Try to organise play dates with other children before the first day of school.
- Explain the basic school rules, such as putting up your hand, asking before going to the toilet, listening quietly when necessary, and doing what the teacher asks.
- Have a practice run with the lunch box to make sure your child can take off the lid (perhaps before buying the box).
- Give your child lots of love and support. Be excited and enthusiastic about your child starting school.



### did you know ?

Research shows that having mum or dad come to activities such as reading or sports days helps children do better at school.

### During the first few weeks

Your child will need a lot of support when school starts. There are simple things you can do to help these first few weeks go smoothly:

- Pick your child up on time. If you're late it could make your child feel very anxious.
- Try to make after-school time a bit special, with a snack and time for the two of you to chat.
- Your child might want to blurt out every little detail about school, or clam up completely. Either way, be patient and respect your child's response to this new experience.
- Your child will probably be famished after school. School is a hungry business! Your child might want to snack after school and miss normal dinner.
- Your child might be grumpy and tired for the first few weeks, especially in hot weather. You could try keeping your child quiet at home and aim for early bedtimes for the first few weeks.
- Don't expect too much too soon. If your child is happy and seems to be enjoying school, that's a real achievement. The rest will come later.
- If your child doesn't seem to be settling well, or reports teasing or [bullying](#), speak to the teacher.

### Settling in and doing well

If you show your child that you think he can manage at school, he will start to believe it too. Try not to let your child know about any worries you might have. Sometimes it's helpful to talk to other parents about how they are doing this.

Inviting a school friend to play helps strengthen the links between school and home.

You can be an active partner in your child's education. At home you can help her with reading and any [homework](#) such as finding interesting show-and-tell or costumes for special days.



If possible, try taking part in school social events and getting involved with fundraising or working bees. Make time to get to know your child's teacher.

In the whole new world that is school, it will help if your child understands the following:

- How the school routine operates. For example, that he has to sit on the mat in the morning and come in from play when the bell rings. You could try reminding him about this routine.
- She has to listen when her teacher is talking and then put up her hand when she wants to ask a question.
- He needs to cooperate, share and play fairly with other children.
- All the teachers are there to help. She can ask for help at any time.



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Last Updated  
02-10-2009

Last Reviewed  
01-08-2011