

Preparing for School... Activities - October 2014

I now it feels a long way away, but next September will creep up on us very quickly and we need to start thinking about the school ready skills your child will need to cope in a busy classroom environment. Gone are the days when school was ready for the children with lots of classroom assistants happy to do up shoes and zips... we are told by the Department of Education (DfE) that the children have to be ready for school and learning and that it is our responsibility to teach them the skills they need.

Well DfE, we accept the challenge! So... during October we will be focussing on developing and consolidating your child's independence skills. We won't just be doing this during October of course... but we will be starting to think more about how to promote independence to ensure your child can do the things they will need to be able to do in school such as...

- Putting on their own coat - hood on the head, reach back to put arms in one at a time.
- Putting on and fastening up their shoes - Velcro are much easier for everyone! Half a sticker in each shoe can help them go on the right feet.
- Managing their own lunches - your child will be taking turns to help pour their own drinks, share out fruit during morning and afternoon snack, as well as using cutlery at lunch and dinner times rather than fingers.
- Toileting and hand washing and drying their hands properly afterwards.
- Changing clothes after playing outside or getting wet - even if they go ion back to front.
- Doing up zips (we will start them off to begging with) and fastening buttons.
- Talking to and sharing ideas with a group of children, during circle time and focused activities.

We do not expect to start practicing all these skills on Monday and Tuesday and have them consolidated by wednesday... we are going to ne thinking about them from now until next August, encouraging and supporting them a little at a timer until they are able to manage independently.

I am sure things will go wrong sometimes! They will not want to put on their shoes... and water will be spilled... and some days will feel like a battle... and that's absolutely fine because we are all entitled to have bad days! However, we will keep plugging away because, when your child has learned these skills, they will be one step closer to being prepared for school.

So... no more "I can't and 'do it for me'... we are promoting a 'can do' attitude to learning new things with lots of praise for trying even if it doesn't go quite as planned!