



Going to Primary School

Making the Transition from Pre-school to Primary School Information for Parents* & Families

Going to primary school is a time of new beginnings for young children. Moving from pre-school to primary school brings excitement, sometimes tinged with a little apprehension. This major transition for young children is a shared responsibility between children, families, communities, pre-schools and primary schools.

Early Childhood Ireland has developed this information leaflet to help you and your child make the transition to primary school a positive one!



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This leaflet has been developed by Early Childhood Ireland and National Parents Council Primary

**Where the word 'parent' is used in this document we are referring to parents and/or guardians.*

Leaving pre-school and preparing for primary school

Over the last few years your child has been developing many skills at home and in pre-school which have prepared them for this next step on their learning journey.

Social Skills: Prior to going to primary school children have developed their social skills through play and spending time with friends at home and in pre-school.

Language Skills: Children communicate in a number of different ways and surprise us with their competence in letting us know what they want and need. For children with English as a second language, it is important that your teacher is aware of this in order for them to support your child's transition to primary school.

Motor Coordination: At home and in pre-school you will have noticed how independent your child has become, putting on his / her coat, shoes, hat, packing and unpacking their lunch box. This is all wonderful preparation for your child but of course if your child needs help in primary school they will be supported to be as independent as possible.

Concentration and emotional adjustment: Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, is a play based curriculum, that extends from pre-school into primary school and helps support your child's transition. Through play, children learn many things: they learn to think critically; analyse and make meaning; regulate and control their emotions; and develop empathy with their friends, to name but a few. The basis of this has been nurtured in the pre-school years.

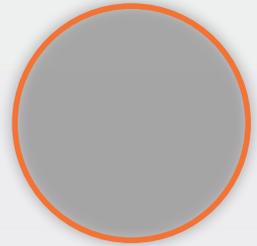
Learning through Play

Pre-schools and infant classes in primary school recognise the importance of play for children.

The curriculum framework Aistear (which means 'journey') helps teachers to plan and provide suitable experiences for each child.

For more information on Aistear:

www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/resources-for-parents



Before your child starts primary school

Support your child's curiosity about primary school by:

- reading books and stories about starting school;
- encouraging your child to ask questions and express their ideas and feelings about starting school;
- playing school at home – have fun trying on the uniform (if there is one) and packing a school bag and lunchbox; and
- talking about how your child will get to and from school – take a drive or walk past the school to help your child familiarise him/herself with the building.

Visit the school. Most schools have Open Days, so bring your child and:

- familiarise yourself with the layout of the school;
- go to see the classroom; and
- meet the teacher.

As a parent you are your child's first teacher. You know your child best, so share the following information with their primary school teacher:

- What does your child enjoy and what are they good at?
- Does your child have any specific health or other needs, and how can these be supported?
- Is there anything happening that might affect how your child is feeling?
- Who may collect your child?



Find out what your child would like the teacher to know so you can pass this information on. The teacher might also appreciate you sharing your child's portfolio or profile book from the pre-school service, thus continuing the learning journey from home to pre-school and on to primary school.

Useful Links & Resources

www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/information-parents/resources-parents/going-big-school-leaflet/

www.ncca.ie/en/primary/resources-for-parents

www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/resources-for-parents

aistearsiolta.ie/en/Building-Partnerships-With-Parents/

www.npc.ie

First Day Tips

- A good nutritious breakfast and arriving on time sets us all up for the day. This is equally important for your child.
- The first day of school is an emotional day for many parents. A smile and chat with the teacher or assistant on arrival can help to alleviate anxiety and will also be beneficial for your child.
- Help your child to hang up his/her coat and to find a seat.
- Show or remind your child where the toilets are.
- Confirm with your child where he/she will be collected at the end of the day, and by whom.
- Say hello to other children and parents in the room. This helps to support your child with an initial introduction.
- Advise the teacher of the name and relationship of the person who will collect your child at the end of the day.
- Make goodbyes short, and reassure your child that you (or a designated person) will be there to collect them at the end of the day.
- Don't worry - teachers have a lot of experience helping children to settle in!

Practical Considerations

- Lunches: prepare food that is easy to eat and open (peeled, cut). Use a lunchbox that can be opened easily. Practice beforehand.
- Establish a school routine before school starts – with consistent meal times and a bed time routine.
- Toileting: ensure your child can toilet independently, has good toilet hygiene, and can wash their hands.
- Dressing: encourage their self-help skills. Ensure they know how to put clothing on and take it off without assistance. Velcro or zip-up shoes may be easier than laces for children to manage.
- Encourage your child to pack their own school bag and to take responsibility for their own belongings. Label all items and help your child to recognise their own name.

Some children may take time to settle in. We are all different and each child will get there at their own pace, in their own time.

For more information please see: www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/information-parents/resources-parents/going-big-school-leaflet/ or bit.ly/2Cos23L