

Bright Sparks

Nursery

Igniting Learning

at

Langney Primary School
Moving Forward Together
www.langneyprimary.co.uk
brightsparks@langneyprimary.co.uk

Boost their social confidence

Socialising with other children is a skill that has to be learnt gradually, and some children will find it easier than others. If you can introduce them to the idea of sharing and taking turns before they start at Nursery they will find the whole experience less daunting.



Don't expect great things at first - children usually play alongside each other rather than together until they're around three years old. And while you don't need to stand over young children while they play, you need to be close by to step in if they start to squabble over toys. If you don't have a network of other parents with children the same age as yours, joining a mother and toddler group is a great way to introduce your child to socialising while you keep a watchful eye.

Time away from parents

It will be easier for your child to settle at Nursery if you've gradually got them used to being left with other carers, such as grandparents, relatives and friends. Start off by leaving them for short periods - an hour while you go shopping, for example - and then gradually build it up until your child is happy to be left for a whole morning or an afternoon without you. Most children won't like being left with Nursery workers they don't know at first, but it shouldn't be long before he comes home chatting about what "Mr X said" and "Mrs Y did"



Potty training and self care



It is ideal if your child is out of nappies before they start Nursery. However, all Nursery staff are prepared for occasional accidents and don't expect children to ask every time they need the toilet - they'll get plenty of gentle reminders. Pack spare pants and a change of clothes in your child's bag just in case and tell them that no-one will be cross if they do have an accident.

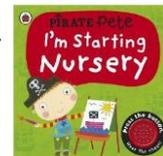
Encourage your child to help with putting on their coat and doing the zip. Aim for your child being able to put their coat on by themselves.

Feeding themselves

If your child will be having hot meals at Nursery, practise at home with a little knife and fork, but don't expect your child to be able to cut up their own food - the staff will do this for them if needed. Encourage your child to develop self-help skills such as being able to wash and dry their hands independently.

Borrow some books to help

Visit your local library and borrow some books on starting nursery, such as *Pirate Pete I'm Starting Nursery* and *Princess Polly I'm Starting Nursery* by Amanda Li.



When you've read them, talk to your child about all the fun activities they might be doing at Nursery, such as playing outside on bikes, painting pictures, playing with sand and water, making models, singing rhymes, baking cakes and building with bricks and Lego.

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On the first day

- Allow plenty of time. The chances are, your child won't be prepared for you to just drop them off and leave on the first day, so be prepared to hang around until they are settled.
- You'll probably be feeling just as anxious and emotional as they are, but try to stay cheery and confident - children pick up on your feelings of apprehension.
- Explain to your child when you'll be back - don't fob them off with fibs such as "Mummy's just going to move the car" when you make your exit. Tell them you'll be back after lunch or story time.
- If your child cries and won't let you leave, ask staff for advice. In most cases they'll ask you to stay for a while with your child in the early days.
- When you've said your goodbyes, try not to worry. If there is a problem, you'll be contacted, but in most cases your child will be enjoying their exciting new experience.

Problems settling in?

- Some children find the experience of starting Nursery stressful and still won't settle after a few weeks. Don't worry and don't blame yourself - just accept that children are all individuals and your child will get there in the end.
- Find out from your child's key person what happens once you've left. Do they continue crying inconsolably throughout the session or do they perk up 10 minutes later once they're distracted by an activity?
- Try building up sessions gradually. Start with just 30 minutes and build up the time gradually each week until they're able to stay a whole session without you.
- Try staying with your child for the session, moving away once he becomes engaged with an activity, but not leaving the room.
- Invite children from the group back to play to encourage friendships.
- Some children will settle better if you keep your goodbyes brief - lingering may only make the whole process more painful for your both.

Don't fret about letters and numbers

We all want our children to do well, but we do not expect your child to have a good grasp of letters and numbers when they start. "Young children learn by playing and therefore optimal learning means being encouraged to play." This doesn't mean your child will have free, undirected play throughout the session - we provide a balanced agenda of directed activities that are suitable for your child's level of development and will help them to learn through playing.



If you want to encourage their learning at home it helps to make it fun: play games of I-Spy to associate sounds and letters; encourage number recognition by counting everyday objects like red cars in the street; bake cakes to find out about weighing and measuring; give him dressing up clothes to encourage role-play games; let him paint, scribble and draw so he learns pencil control to help with writing later on.