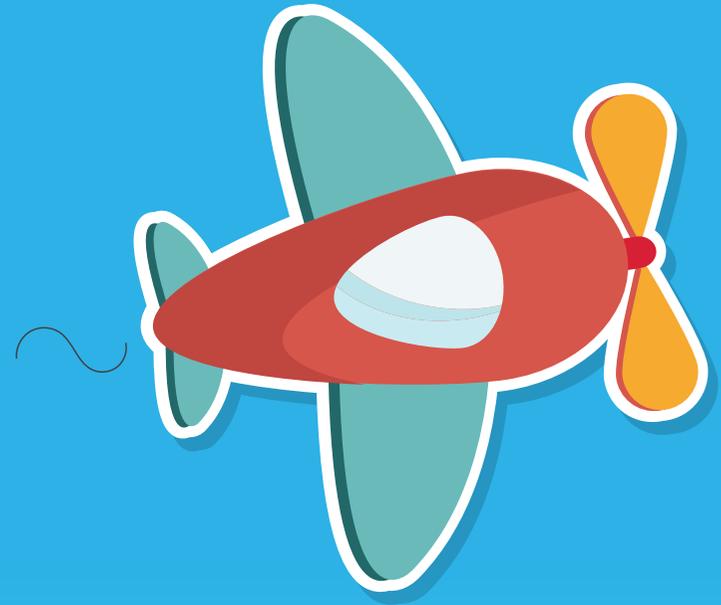
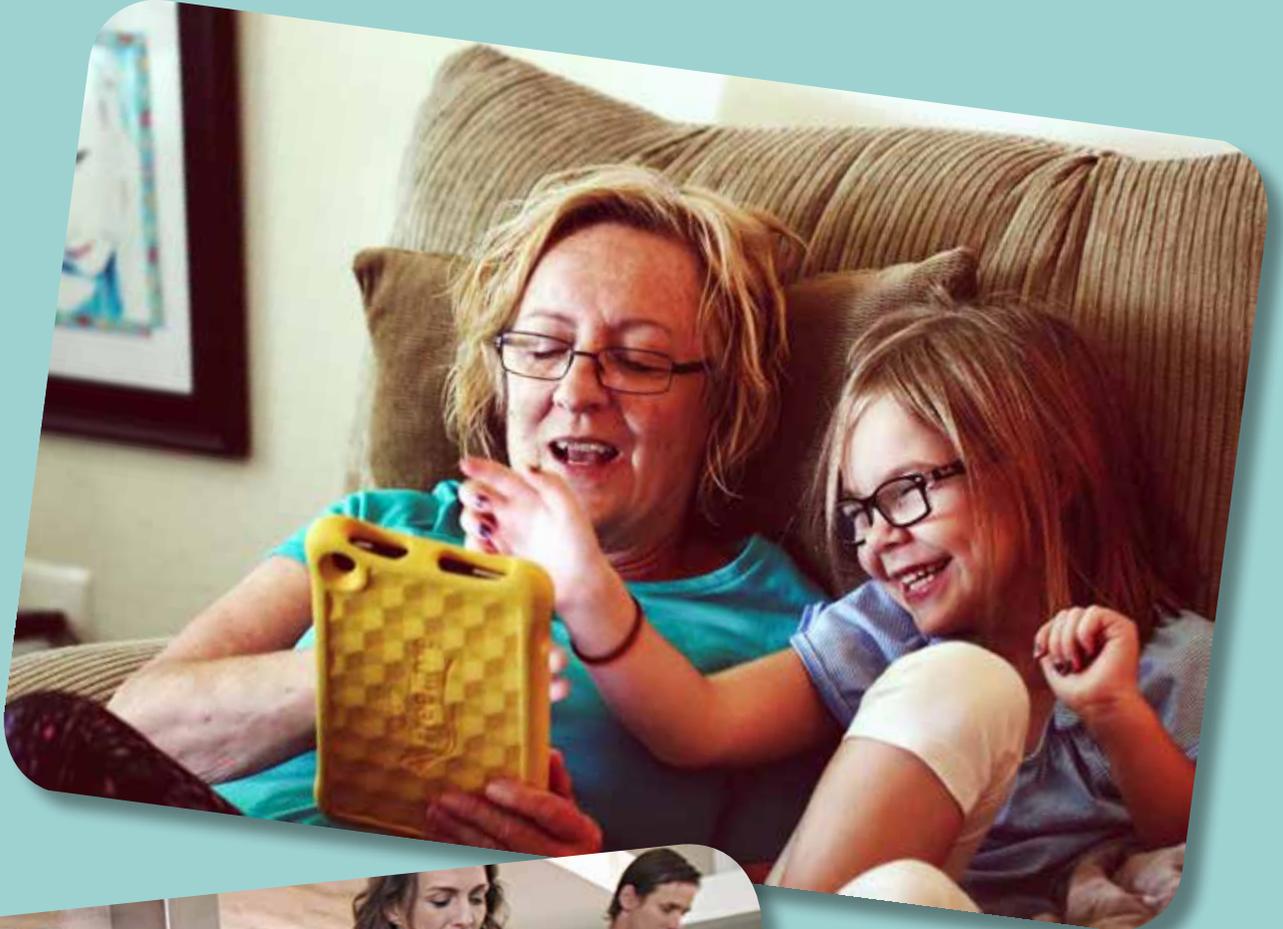




FLYING START



**Getting your child's education off to a FLYING START
during the summer months**





For many parents their child making the move to big school can be an emotional time. It's normal to be apprehensive about how your child will settle and adjust to their new surroundings. However as parents we have to remember that making the transition to big school is a time of excitement and new beginnings for children.

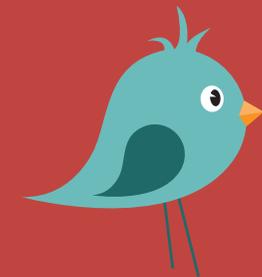
School success depends not only on knowledge and skills, but also on the habits and attitudes with which children approach learning. Parents sometimes think that school readiness means children being able to read and write before starting school. However, this isn't the case! As a parent you are the expert on your child and can help build your child's school readiness skills in many ways. Children cannot be expected to succeed at school if they haven't first developed the skills to manage things like getting along with other children, following instructions and communicating their needs. Parents play a crucial role in helping prepare their child for the transition to big school. This Summer Planner includes some of the areas that parents can focus on during the months prior to starting school.

The Flying Start Initiative

Supporting Transitions in the lives of Parents and Children

For more Information on all you need to know around transitions please visit:

www.flyingstart.ie



CHILD DIRECTED PLAY

A parent can never underestimate the power of play. Play is one of the most natural and effective mediums through which children learn. It is important to create as many opportunities for play as possible. Children develop their skills even more when they have ownership of the play process. Allow your children to really own and direct their play where possible.



Creative Play
Dancing, painting, playing with junk and recycled materials, working with play-dough and clay, and using their imaginations.

Games with Rules
Even babies and toddlers can partake in these, as peek-a-boo and turn-taking games have rules. In the beginning children often play by their own rather flexible rules!

Physical
Physical play involves children developing, practising and refining bodily movements and control. It includes whole body and limb movements, co-ordination and balance. Children gain control over their gross motor skills first, before refining their fine motor skills.

Language
Involves children playing with sounds and words. Children like playing with language - enjoying patterns, sounds and nonsense words. They also love jokes and funny stories.

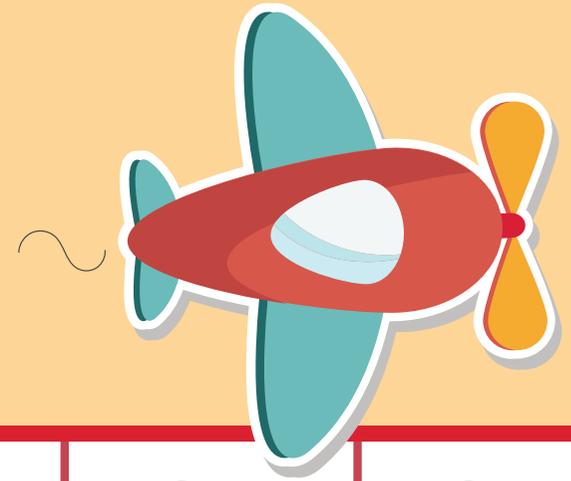
Pretend
Pretend, dramatic, make-believe, role, and fantasy play involves children using their imaginations. It includes pretending with objects, actions and situations.



June

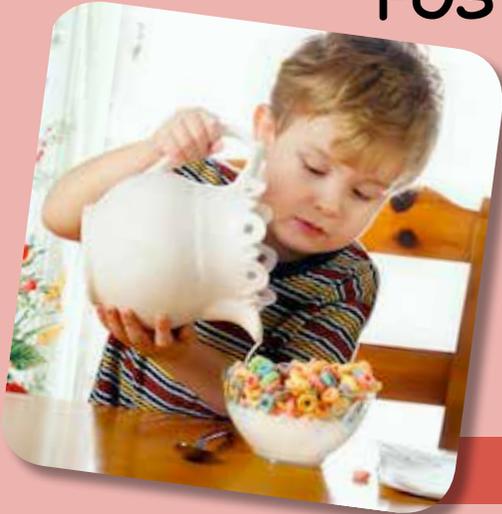


Play is a child's favourite way of learning



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1 June Bank Holiday	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

FOSTERING YOUR CHILD'S INDEPENDENCE



As parents we are often guilty of doing 'too much' for our children. Many parents have busy lives and schedules particularly when there are other children and work commitments. The Summer months are a good time to make a conscious effort to encourage children to do more things for themselves. The way in which you your child to become more independent is vital and remember to **Praise Praise Praise!**

It is important to take **SMALL STEPS** towards independence and to **PRAISE THE PROCESS**. Children will not master every task straight away so it is vital that we recognise their efforts along the way. If we wait for the end result to praise we will miss many opportunities along the way.

What type of Self Care Skills should I encourage and praise?

1. Feeding Independently

Make mealtimes fun, family focused events and include children in preparing food. Basic skills such as opening and closing lunchboxes are important at school. Mealtimes are also a great time to informally chat with your child about school and explore the different things that they are excited or anxious about.

2. Taking Responsibility for their Own Belongings and Tidying Up

Start early by labelling certain belongings to get children into the habit of being able to recognise their possessions and take responsibility for minding them. Encourage tidying up after play time. You can even use songs and rhymes to make it more play based.



3. Dressing Independently

Have fun when encouraging this skill and use role play practice by setting a school routine and getting prepared for a typical school day. It can be helpful to practice this a couple of times a week before the big day arrives.

4. Playing with Other Children

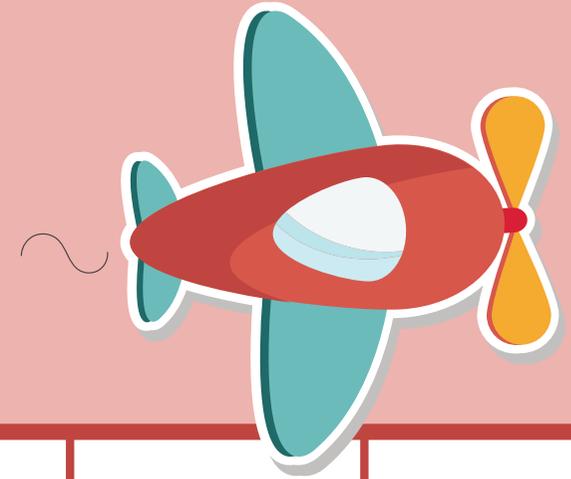
This may sound simple but some children may have less opportunities to interact with other children on a daily basis. Parents have a big role to play in encouraging play opportunities with other children or relatives where possible. Through such interaction children learn valuable social skills such as sharing and turn taking, both of which are crucial for school success.



July



It shouldn't matter how slowly some children learn as long as parents encourage them not to stop



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Parents as Coaches

As a parent you are the expert on your child. You are also their constant source of guidance, support and encouragement. How we encourage our children and the language we use to do so is crucial. Play time offers the perfect opportunity for parents to coach their child's social, emotional and academic skills.

Social Skills	Academic Skills	Emotional Skills
Sharing	Numbers	Happy Feelings
Turn Taking	Colours	Sad Feelings
Using their Words	Shapes	Excited Feelings
Being Kind	Patterns	Nervous Feelings

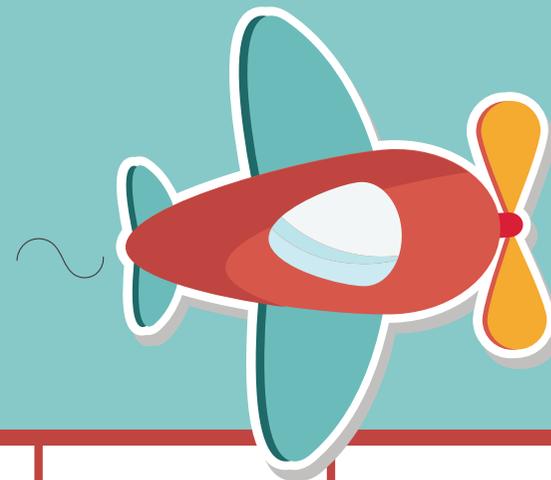


By describing and praising the skills outlined above to your child, you are validating that their play and learning is important to you, and that you recognise their efforts.

August



You're braver than you believe,
stronger than you seem and smarter
than you think



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3 <small>August Bank Holiday</small>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29	30

First Day, First Week, First Month



First Day Nerves

So the big day for both you and your child has arrived. The first day of big school can be daunting for some children as they are out of their comfort zone and their normal home environment. Having a familiar face can help children with their first day nerves. If your child doesn't know any of the children starting in their class, ask the school to perhaps put you in touch with some of the other new parents, and try have at least one play-date or more in advance of school starting. It will also help you get to know some of the new parents.

Separation Anxiety is extremely common and teachers and schools are used to dealing with tears on the first few days of school. Seeing your child upset can be very difficult but it is vital that you avoid giving the crying or tantrums too much attention.

First Day Tips

- Try to be happy and firm when saying goodbye. A positive 'Goodbye' is essential and will help your child feel at ease. It is important that your stress does not become their stress. If they see that you are positive and happy and not worried, it will help them to learn that they have nothing to worry about either.
- If your child is upset recognise how they are feeling but at the same time predict for your child that they will have a successful day and remind them that you are looking forward to hearing all their good news later.
- Be clear with your child in relation to who will be collecting them, at what time of the day this will be and where they will be waiting for them.



The Weeks Ahead

- **Don't compare** your child to other children of their age. Remember all children are unique and have different ways of learning and acquiring information.
- **Teach children to be organised.** Having a daily schedule can help children especially in their first year of school. Having a specific place where they store their school bag and books can be helpful.
- **Foster Friendships.** Try to arrange play dates for your child with other children in their class if possible. Again all children are unique and some are more sociable than others. As a parent you know your child best and will know what works best for them. Playdates do not always need to be lengthy afternoons or evenings and it can be as simple as meeting for an hour in the local park.
- **Establish a good relationship with your child's teacher.** Getting off to a good start with the class teacher means that you will be comfortable approaching the teacher if you have any concerns regarding your child's progress throughout the year.



September



Behind every child who believes in themselves is a parent who believed first



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 August Bank Holiday	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				



Supporting Transitions in the lives of Parents and Children

