



St. Kevin's Junior National School

Newbrook Avenue, Donaghmede, Dublin 13.

Getting Your Child Ready for School



Important Information for Your Child's School

Our teachers at St. Kevin's Junior National School want to support your child through their educational journey with us. To help us to do so, it is important that we have a full understanding of your child's needs.

If your child has any identified needs, diagnoses, or health needs, please let us know. It is important that you discuss your child's needs with our principal and your child's teacher. The school will work with you to make sure your child's additional needs will be supported.

What do I need to do?

- Give copies of any reports to the school
- You could create a scrapbook with your child called "All About Me". This can include information about:

Areas of strength

Examples:

I am good at playing sport



I'm good at taking turns



Areas of difficulty

Examples:

I find it hard to make friends



I find it hard to tie my shoelaces



What your child likes and dislikes

Examples:

Favourite Activities



Foods



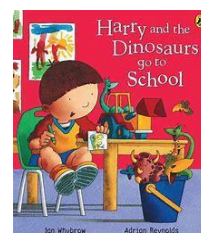
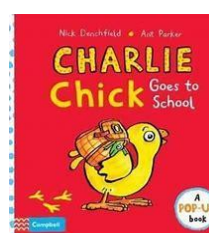
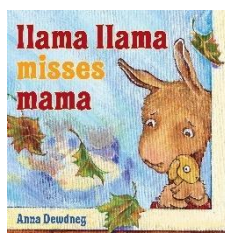
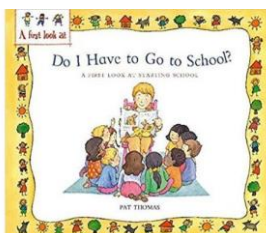
Games



Prepare Your Child for the Transition

To help make your child's first days in St. Kevin's easier, it is important that you prepare them for this big step. Here are some simple tips to help:

- **Familiarise your child with the school building:**
Take a walk past our school, point it out to your child and name the school
- **Meet with your child's teacher if possible or tell your child the teacher's name:**
In May/June prior to your child starting with St. Kevin's Junior National School you and your child will be invited to a meeting in the school. At this meeting your child will have the opportunity to meet his/her teacher (where possible) and to see the classroom for the first time. This meeting will also provide you with the opportunity to learn a little more about our school and to meet for the first time the other parents and children that will be attending the school.
- **Visit our School Website: www.stkevins.ie**
Our school website provides a window to all the activities that your child will participate in at our school. Take some time to sit with your child and look and discuss all the fun pictures and videos on our site.
- **Shopping for our School Uniform:**
Take some special time together shopping for your child's school uniform or trying on the uniform.
- **Involve your child in choosing a school bag / lunch box / pencil case etc:**
Your child may choose a bag that has his/her favourite colour or character. Please make sure that the school bag / lunch box / pencil case, are easy to open. Let your child practice to make sure they are comfortable with the tasks. If you have a plain lunchbox, it might be fun to decorate it with some stickers!
- **Speak positively about school (children pick up on your anxiety):**
Talk about your favourite things about school when you were small. Relate school subjects/activities to your child's interests, if your child likes arts and crafts, chat about the pictures on the website.
- **Reassure your child that there is lots of help available at school:**
There are class teachers, special education teachers/resource teachers and special needs assistants who are all there to help them as needed.
- **Read stories about starting school**
These stories will help prepare your child for what going to school might be like. Your local library is a great resource and will provide you with free access to these books. Here are some titles that your child might enjoy!



Most importantly, have fun together getting ready to start "big" school!

Establish a Routine

About two weeks before your child starts in St. Kevin's Junior National School it is a good idea to start preparing a school routine for morning and bedtime.

How do I go about setting a bedtime routine?

A good routine will allow your child to wake up fresh and ready for the day ahead. For this reason, about 2 weeks prior, you should gradually put your child to bed earlier at night time so as to embed the new routine. The 30 minutes before bedtime should be calm with no screen time (phones, tablets or tv). If possible, follow a set sequence of steps for example:

Bath, teeth, pyjamas, story and bedtime.

It's also important to remember to leave everything ready the night before (uniform, schoolbag, lunch) to reduce stress and rushing in the morning!



How do I go about setting a morning time routine?

Get up early, make sure you allow enough time to reduce stress and rushing. A good routine for your child might be: morning snuggle, have breakfast, brush teeth, help your child put his/her uniform on, make sure the school bag is packed, use the toilet, coat on and then off to school!

On the First Day ...

The first day at school is very exciting for everyone. It is important to have everything ready the night before to reduce last minute panic e.g. school bag packed, uniform laid out and ready (name on clothing) and a plan for breakfast. Some additional good tips include:

- Leave plenty of time so you arrive a few minutes before the bell rings. This will help you and your child to arrive at school relaxed.
- Reassure your child and talk about the fun they will have in school.
- It's a big day for mum and dad, try not to let your child see if you are upset and don't hang around for too long on the first morning as this may unsettle your child.
- Make sure your child knows who will be collecting them!



Going Forward ...

It is important to maintain a good relationship with our School Team, our priority is to support your child and his/her educational needs. Help us to help them:

- If you have any concerns about your child, contact the school immediately (do not wait!). Find the best way to communicate with your child's teacher.
- Attend courses or parent meetings offered by our school, here you will learn more about your child's school, what you can do to support your child at home and to meet our parents.
- Arrange for your child to arrive and be collected on time. This may involve changing your daily schedule if you work or seeking support from family members/friends.

How You Can Help to Develop Your Child's Skills

Learning is not just a school based activity, there are lots of ways that you can help develop your child's skills at home:

1. Encourage self-care skills and independence

- Practice dressing skills when you have some quiet time together on the weekends.
- Encourage your child to take off/put on their own coat/shoes.
- Practice opening and closing their lunch box and drink bottle.
- Get your child to carry and open and close his/her school bag and put in and take out his/her lunchbox and books when needed.
- Encourage your child to complete toileting tasks independently.
- Teach your child how to wash his/her hands by showing them how to use the soap, rub hands together and dry them with a towel. Use pictures to show the sequence of events if needed.
- Write your child's name on their bag, books, coat, uniform and lunchbox. Show them when you have completed the task. This will help you and your child easily locate items if misplaced.
- Try to get clothes and bags etc which your child can easily manage (eg velcro shoes and a bag with one zip pocket only). This is a great way to help develop your child's independence.
- Children respond well to the use of reward charts and stickers. Why not use a reward chart to help motivate your child to practice these independent skills at home.



2. Develop Gross Motor Skills – using BIG muscles in the body

The following fun activities will help develop your child's gross motor skills:

- Wheelbarrow Games
e.g. wheelbarrow races or walking over cushions and mats.
- Pushing & Pulling Games:
e.g. pushing each other's hands or feet, tug of war
- Animal Walks
e.g. bunny hop, crab walk, duck waddle – all of which can be done through races.

How You Can Help to Develop Your Child's Skills



- **Obstacle Courses:**
e.g. climbing up and over, crawling through, sliding down, spinning around, running around cones, jumping over, ball games etc.
- **Ball Games:**
Younger children enjoy playing with balloons, - and this is a good place to start. Catch and throw a medium sized soft ball standing close together – move further apart as the child masters each distance, throw a bean bag or ball at/into a target e.g. skills wall target.
- **General Activities:**
General activities including use of playground equipment, trampolines, space hoppers, play “Simon Says, rolling and jumping games.
- Extra-curricular activities such as swimming, dancing, football, and hurling are all great activities for helping to develop your child's gross motor skills.



How You Can Help to Develop Your Child's Skills

3. Developing Fine Motor Skills – using small muscles in the hands:

Posture:

- At home, think about how your child is sitting when doing activities such as colouring, or using cutlery.
- Try to ensure that their feet are flat on the floor or resting on a surface. Pop a box under their feet if necessary!

Strengthen hands and finger grips:

- Simple play with playdough is wonderful activity to aid strengthening hands and finger grips
- Building activities such as blocks and Lego.
- Use clothes pets – hang up pictures on line or pick up cotton wool balls



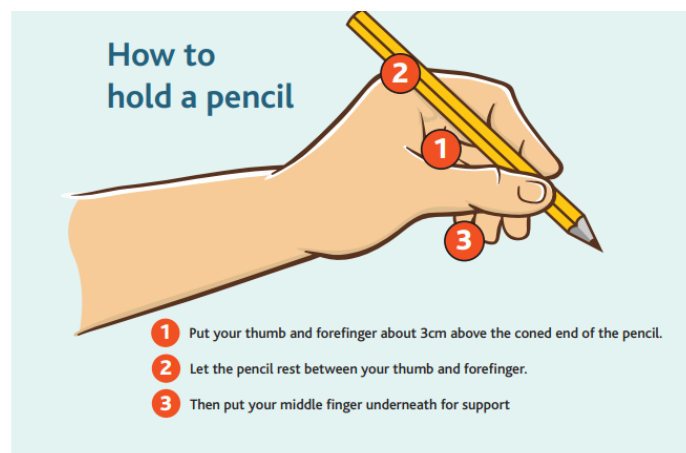
Scissor activities:

- Get some small child-sized scissors and show your child how to hold them.
- Cut along thick lines on paper and you can also use scissors to cut playdough too! Encourage your child to use their imagination and have lots of fun!

Pencil activities:

- Drawing and colouring activities.
- Drawing lines and shapes

If you find your child is having difficulty holding a pencil ... why not give your child a small crayon instead!



How You Can Help to Develop Your Child's Skills

4. Developing Communication Skills

Play listening games:

Listening games help to build children's attention skills and encourage them to follow longer instructions. These skills are very important when understanding and learning in the classroom. Examples of listening games are 'Simon Says' & 'Run and Touch'.

Repeat, Repeat, Repeat!

Repeating words lots of times and in a variety of different sentences and situations helps children to learn. It's a great idea to recite nursery rhymes together: Use a slow pace when saying rhymes so that your child can hear all the words and join in more easily. Use lots of actions and facial expressions to make the rhymes fun!

Please Remember: It's normal for young children to make mistakes in their speech and language. If your child makes a mistake, say the word or sentence again correctly for your child to hear but without directly correcting him/her. Give the correct model more than once if possible so that your child hears the right way several times. Take a look at our samples below for ideas.



Use Every Day Routines:

Everyday events provide great opportunities for children to learn! Why not let your child help with the shopping or unpacking your groceries or using a plastic knife to help prepare fruit? These little activities provide a great opportunity to chat about what you are doing and why.



Mealtimes are also a great time to chat too!

How You Can Help to Develop Your Child's Skills

Read with Your Child:

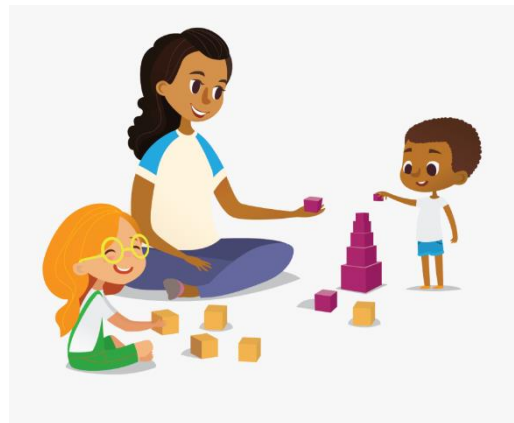
Reading with your child provides a great opportunity for bonding.

- Use books with plenty of pictures and encourage your child to guess what the story is about.
- To make the experience more fun, why not read the story with an interesting voice and lots of facial expressions.
- Take the opportunity to explain new words that you come across.
- Encourage your child to develop their own story telling skills by asking them what they think the story is about by looking at the pictures. Ask them questions to encourage them to think about the story.



Play with Your child:

- Follow your child's lead during play so that you know it is something that he/she likes. Chat with your child about what you are playing and use your imaginations in pretend games.



Reference:

Preparing Young For Primary School: A Resource for Parents, Early Learning and Care Settings & Schools