

# PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PRESCHOOL



Every child in Ireland has a right to avail of free preschool. This is known as The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE scheme). It is available to all children prior to starting school. This funding is a recognition of how important early childhood care and education is.

The following are helpful tips for you to help support your child to make the transition to preschool a happy one.



## Learning About the New Preschool

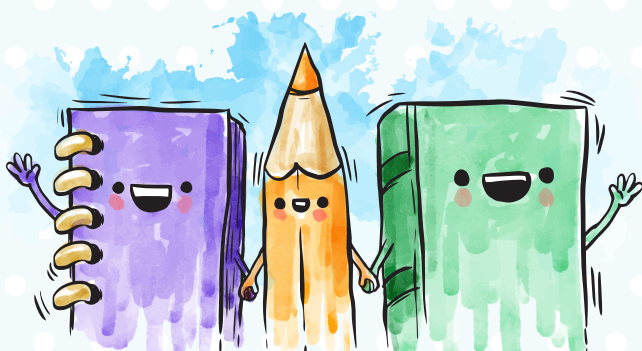
- Visiting your child's preschool room before preschool starts can ease the entrance into an unfamiliar environment. It provides you with the opportunity to meet your child's educator and ask about routines, curriculum, and daily activities. This is also an opportunity to discuss your child's interests, preferences and particular needs.
- Take time to fill in the 'Getting to know you form' with your child, which the preschool will give you.
- Take some photos of the preschool environment (if possible) to make a book with your child so they can look over it during the summer.

## Preparing Your Child for Preschool

- Involve your child in everyday activities like cooking, shopping and, working in the garden etc.
- Give your child opportunities to mix and play with other children. Learning to communicate, take turns and share are all challenging skills for young children.
- Read to your child. Join your local library, and help your child choose books to enjoy together.
- Sing songs, tell stories and play games with your child.
- Discover and find things out together.
- Become familiar with the two National Frameworks which support early childhood curriculum and quality provision: Aistear, The National Curriculum Framework and Siolta, The National Quality Framework. See more at [www.aistearsiolta.ie](http://www.aistearsiolta.ie)

## Settling In

- It is important that you don't leave children in the preschool without letting them know that all will be well and you are going, but that you will be back.
- It might take a few days or even weeks for your child to settle so plan to spend time with your child as they settle in.



## Your Child's Well Being

- Let your child know it is normal to feel happy, sad, excited, scared, or worried. Explain that starting something new can feel scary and that lots of people feel that way.



## What Your Child Needs to Bring to School



- With your child's help, purchase a backpack and lunchbox.
- Ask the preschool what type and size of bag is suitable.
- Make sure your child can easily open the lunch box or bag. If they bring a drink, teach them how to open it.
- Include a sun hat, sun cream, a pair of welly boots and a change of clothes if needed. Usually the boots are left in their room.
- Label all items—backpack, jacket, etc., with your child's name in permanent ink.



## Journey to and from Preschool

- If possible, develop a habit of walking to and from the preschool. If a childminder or Grandparents are collecting your child, make sure they are introduced to the preschool staff.
- Talk about the preschool's routine so that your child understands that they will be safe and cared for.

## During the Summer

- During the summer months, children don't seem to go to bed as early as they normally would, so help your child get into a bedtime routine a couple of weeks before starting.
- Read stories about preschool or even help your child make a book of what might happen in their preschool and include the photos you may have taken.
- Help your child become independent in the bathroom. Educators are available to support your child when needed.

## The First Day

- Wake up early so you don't feel rushed and then you are not rushing your child.
- Make sure your child is wearing appropriate clothes and shoes for climbing, dancing, painting and outdoor play.
- Let your child take time to observe what is happening in the room. Explore the play space, meet the other children and play with a few toys with your child.
- Support your child as they learn to become independent with putting their coat and bag on their hook or shelf.
- When you see that your child is comfortable, it is time to leave.



Plan to spend time with your child as they settle into preschool and enjoy this wonderful experience together. It is important that families and educators work together. Just as your child is becoming part of a new group you are also becoming involved in a new community of parents.

For more information, visit: [www.earlychildhoodireland.ie](http://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie)