

Keswick House Nursery

How we prepare children for the transition to Reception Class to become 'Reception Ready'

At Keswick House Nursery, we develop strong links with the many local primary schools our children feed into. We must not take for granted that all children will be able to take the transition process into the Reception Year in their stride. It is therefore important to create a smooth and positive transition with appropriate preparation and understanding.

- One of the most important head start that any child can have is to be encouraged to be independent. Nursery staff encourage independence along the way so that the term before they are due to move on, many of the children are developing confident self-help skills and a good level of independence. This will help the child when moving into a larger Reception Class where staff to pupil ratio decreases significantly. Encourage your child to be independent at home too, especially at meal times. Give them opportunities to cut up their food and clear their plates away from the table. Encourage your child to use cutlery. It would also be helpful to encourage and support your child too to dress themselves and practise taking shoes on and off. Encourage your child to use the loo independently and reward them for any independent tasks they try; it's the small tasks that make the big difference. It is also important to encourage them to ask for help and praise them too for asking so that they find their voice.
- At Keswick House, we arrange visits with primary schools during the summer term so that the reception teachers are able to visit us and meet the children in their own environment. This is successful as the children are more relaxed and a more accurate picture of the child can be seen. The child has the opportunity to show the teacher their setting and create first bonds with their new teacher.
- Sharing information with the Reception teacher is most valuable and with parents' consent we discuss your child's progress and share their learning journals. This exchange is a wonderful celebration of your child's achievement and will demonstrate to their teacher their stage of development and interests and styles of learning that best fit your child. All information will provide foundations for the Reception teams to build upon.
- When preparing a child for School we must remember that the preparation is not about assessing their academic skills but about helping the child to develop confidence and self-esteem. A positive disposition will promote a child's readiness. It is important for parents/carers to talk encouragingly about their child's new school especially when the child announces they want to stay in the Nursery forever! Draw on the positives. Pass by the new school grounds and point out exciting equipment or a display you may be able to see. Talk about the different uniform or in some schools the similarities.
- Study the new school's transition process policy and see if there are opportunities to visit the new primary school aside from the set introductory day e.g. do they have a school summer fair you can attend? Contact the new school if there is anything you are unsure of. Many of our Nursery staff have Reception experience so please ask us questions too!

- If you know your child is moving on to the same school with an existing friend keep that friendship going. Having friends in the same class may help your child adjust to the demands of a new environment. Ask the new school whether they can be in the same class.
- In some cases, it may be helpful for your child's key teacher to visit the school. The key teacher has a particular role in supporting and preparing the child for transition. Many children experience great sadness at the thought of leaving Nursery. The trusting relationship the child and key person has formed will help enormously to reassure your child that they will manage and enjoy their new environment. Teacher visits to the new school or transitions meetings are also an opportunity to communicate any concerns about a particular child and to ensure that any needs and adaptations are understood by the new school. Nursery staff fill out transition forms too outlining the child's interests and other helpful comments.
- Encourage your children at home to maintain their attention and focus and praise them when for example you set them a task and they complete it. Encourage them too for good listening or waiting their turn. Classes are bigger in Reception and they may find that their attention skills are put to the test immediately.
- Read school related books with your child. Stories provide a wonderful way to talk around feelings that some children may struggle to express. Suggested books include\;

Boris Starts School

by Carrie Weston & Tim Warnes

Jellybean Goes to School

by Margaret Roc & Laura Hughes

Charlie and Lola: I Am Too Absolutely Small For School

by Lauren Child

- At Keswick House, we arrange trips to The Roche School for all our older Nursery children to visit a primary school and to visit a school library – a true highlight of our Nursery school calendar.
- Focus on change as a good thing. You can use seasonal changes as an example and describe all the wonderful aspects a season brings – changing schools can be the same!
- Do remember that the Nursery works in partnership with you and together we will prepare them successfully to be 'Reception Ready'.