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Starting nursery can feel like a big step for both you and your child. This guide provides our 10 top tips to help ease the transition for the whole family.

Top Tips and Advice for Parents

**Know the nursery** - Find a nursery where you feel comfortable.

**1**

**Say hello to nursery** - as you drive or walk past (manufacture this if you have to). Talk to your child about the fact that they will be going there soon to have lots of fun with other children. Wonder aloud what toys and games they might play with at nursery and offer some suggestions based on your own experience - ‘I liked painting when I went to nursery’. This helps your child recognise the actual building they are going to go to as well as giving them an idea of what ‘nursery’ actually means.

**2**

**Take the nursery up on visits** - often, children are invited into nurseries for visits prior to officially starting. We will invite you to do a ‘stay and play’ with your child and it is a great chance for you, your child and their teacher to get to know each other. It can also help with getting a feel for the place and, hopefully, help your child feel better about starting too.

**3**

**Don’t feel silly** - feel free to ask questions whenever you need to. Your child’s teacher will be very willing to help - and they are used to being asked questions! It is normal for parents and children to ask them lots of questions on a daily basis. They can also be grateful for a little insight into your child - knowing that they struggle with change or are scared of loud noises will help the teacher work with your child and give them the best support they can.

**4**

 **Keep smiling** - your child might struggle at drop-off times and you might too! Staying calm and putting on

**5**

 your brave face can really help your child adjust to this change - if they see you are upset or worried, they

 will feel this too. Staff in nursery are used to children being upset when leaving their adults and will have

 lots of ways to distract, comfort and reassure your child. Keep going and you will get to a day where your

 child skips into nursery and forgets to say bye to you because they’re so happy and settled there - sometimes

 this can feel hard too!

**Encourage independence** - at an appropriate level. If your child is going to start nursery at three years old, work on things such as putting their coat on independently, putting their shoes and bag away and going to the toilet by themselves as much as possible. Once they are at nursery, they are likely to be expected to tidy up, find their belongings, put them away and follow some school rules. Starting similar tasks at home can help them hugely.

**6**

**Expect to get ill** - of course, you and your child’s teachers will be talking to them about the need to wash their hands, use tissues for sneezing and so on… but your child will pick up germs and bugs at nursery. They will likely also pass these to you, unfortunately!

**7**

**Routines are key** - routines can help your child stay healthy (getting enough sleep, eating a variety of foods at mealtimes, brushing their teeth) but also often help them feel settled and prepared.

**8**

**We look forward to getting to know your child and know they will thrive at SMA Nursery**

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