

## **Preparing your child for primary school**

The school will send you information on basic details of school dress, lunch arrangements and school times for example. You need to be aware of these so that your child is equipped and dressed as requested. Young children do like to fit in, particularly when they first start. It is likely that your child has already had 'taster' sessions at his new school that went well so hopefully he should be looking forward to going, particularly if he has friends there.

### **Build his confidence before he starts school**

When your child stammers it is particularly important to build up his confidence at times of change such as this.

You can lower the demands placed on him if he is able to understand before he starts school what will be expected of him and is used to doing some things for himself. This will help to reduce his level of anxiety and reduce the demands on him so that he is more likely to be more confident about his speaking.

### **Talk to your child**

When you talk with your child about going to his new school give him space and time to bring up any concerns he may have: often these surprise the adult because they seem trivial but they must be taken seriously and talked about in a supportive manner. Go at the child's pace and do not transfer any anxiety you may be feeling to him by putting him under pressure to think about his new school, he will talk about it when he is ready. Show him by your conversation and gestures that he is valued and that you are very proud of him.

Give positive answers to his questions about the school and help him to see it as interesting and exciting rather than frightening. Help him to see the staff as helpful and there to explain everything to him, particularly if he is unlikely to know other children at the school.

There are a number of books available in children's libraries on starting a new school and provided you check them for suitability and a positive message one could be read with your child to provide a basis for chats about what will happen there. Reassure him that the teacher will help him and all the other new children to settle in so that he is not worried about accidentally breaking a rule or making a mistake.

When he is the sort of child who likes to hear details then you can go through with him as much as he wants how his day will be planned so that he feels prepared in his own mind. If he wishes you can take him to watch the children coming out of the school, playing outside and so forth and show him exactly where you will be taking him on his first day.

### **Get him used to noise and crowds**

All children at first can be intimidated by the noise of a playground full of children, the school dining room or even the classroom as children pack up. When your child stammers he may be quite sensitive to this busyness and noise and feel easily overwhelmed by all the apparent rushing around. It is important to provide him with some similar experiences before he starts school and to talk to him about what is going on, and how it shows that everyone is busy there and enjoying themselves just like at school. Try to get him used to noisy settings where he is in the middle of a crowd for instance in a big café or shopping centre.

### **Encourage 'life skills'**

Children at school have to do things that you'd often do for them at home so put in some preparatory work at home, so that he can completely dress and undress himself as for PE lessons, doing up shoes

as well if necessary with Velcro tabs, rather than worrying laces. Encourage him to put things away at home and to fold up his clothes and make sure that he can cope with all the hygiene aspects of using the toilet.

Further information: [Mumsnet](#)

Parents discuss their experiences of their child starting primary school in the education forums.

### **Information about stammering for staff**

It is important to make sure that staff have information about stammering in advance of your child starting so that they can talk with you about your mutual concerns. [BSA:Education](#) provides online training on stammering for primary school staff and the BSA and/or your child's therapists can supply more details.

**Please print the following information and give it to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) at the school, or to your child's class teacher.**

Click on the following links to open PDF handouts, use the back button on your browser to return to this resource. To save the handout to your computer, right click and choose 'Save as'.

[Stammering - Advice for staff in the primary school](#)

[Core messages for primary school staff to support a child who stammers](#)

[Advice for the SENCO in the primary school](#)