

## Starting School

Many children make the transition from home to school with few problems. However, we must remember that every child is different and some take longer to settle than others. Some children are anxious about starting school and can display some of the following behaviours as a result of this. Crying and clinginess, a return to earlier behaviours such as thumb sucking, bed-wetting or daytime 'accidents', tantrums and baby language, mood swings i.e. sometimes dependent, sometimes needing you more, babyish one minute then a bold 4-5 year old the next. Many children find full days at school tiring and may sleep more or become more upset or restless.



It is not unusual for parents to find this time difficult too, especially if it is your oldest or youngest child. Feeling sad, being unwilling to let go and even feelings of jealousy can surface. If you feel like this it is important not to unwittingly give these signals to your child.

### Things you can do to promote transition to school

- Have a positive attitude – use positive language so your child knows you believe they can do it.
- Listen to their feelings and fears but focus on their achievements and give praise for these.
- Have a good daily routine and be organised with uniform, lunches, PE kit etc
- Establish a good sleep routine – children of this age need 10 to 12 hours sleep daily
- Provide a healthy diet – breakfast is essential and don't overwhelm them with too much lunch
- Keep an eye on fluid intake, 6-7 drinks per day are required but can easily not be achieved
- Encourage independence such as getting dressed and looking after possessions

### References

The Child Psychotherapy Trust (2001) *Understanding Childhood: key stages in your child's emotional development from birth to adulthood*. London: The Child Psychotherapy Trust  
Parentline Plus (no date) *Starting School*. (Online) last accessed 3.12.09 at [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)