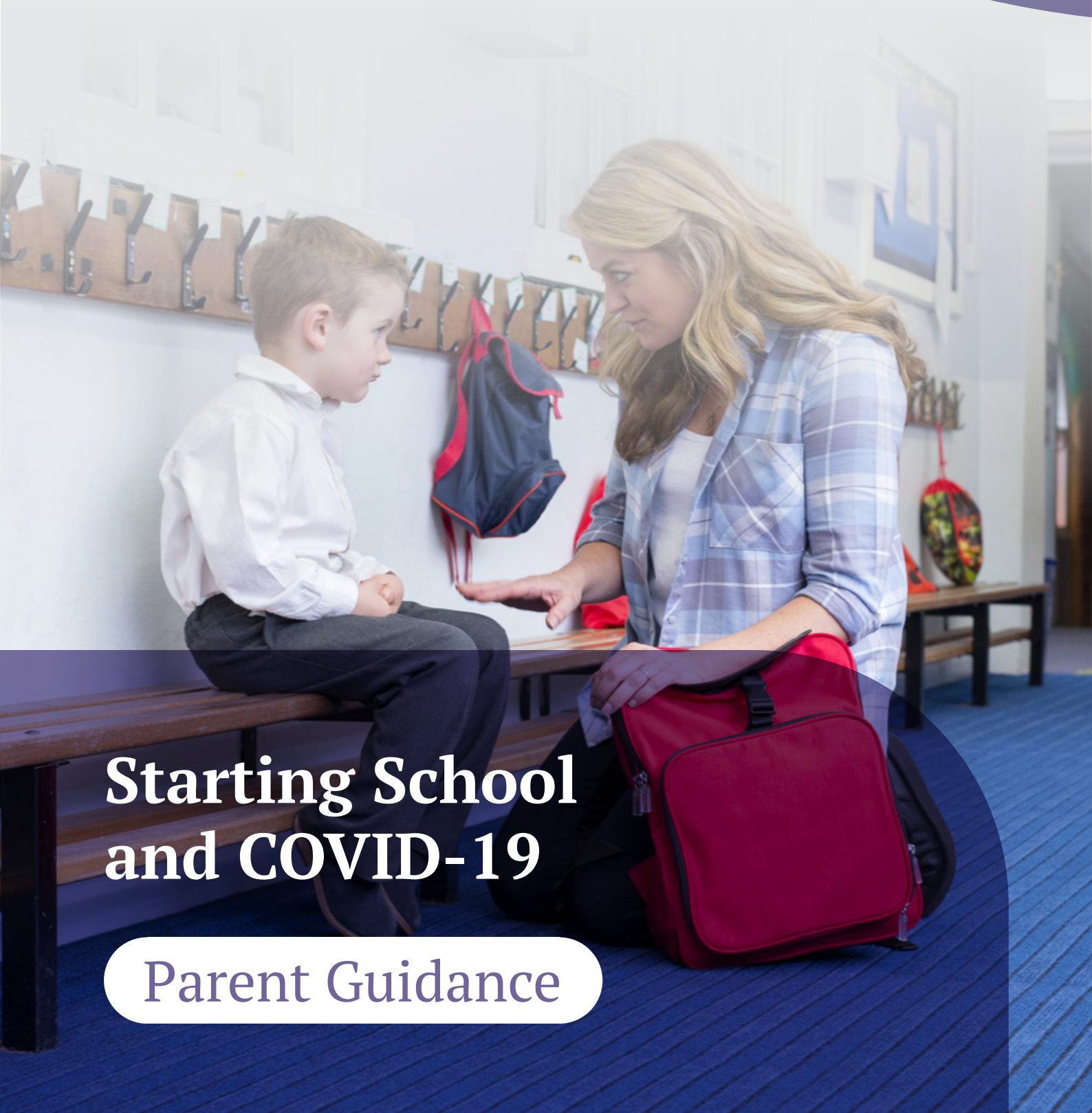




National Day Nurseries Association

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# Factsheet



## Starting School and COVID-19

Parent Guidance

# Starting School and COVID-19

This factsheet has been developed to support parents that have children going to school in September, with strategies to ease the transition. Due to the coronavirus pandemic many children will not have had the usual settling in visits and sessions. So this factsheet offers other ideas and solutions to try and minimize the anxiety for both parents and children.

## Children starting school

Starting school is an exciting milestone in every child's life, however as this change happens it can often come with some anxieties for both parents and children. This year, the coronavirus pandemic may mean that your child hasn't been able to say a proper goodbye to their childcare setting where they may have been for a number of years, or had the usual transition visits to their new school, which may make the transition more difficult.

Childcare settings will be working hard to try and still share information about the school with you and may also send information about your child to their new school. They may still hold leavers party days/graduations and invite you back, so make sure you ask and double check their plans.

Other ideas and suggestions to further support your child for the transition to school include:

- Talk to your child about starting school. Talk about your experiences, find some old photos about your school or show them photos online of where you went
- If you already have a child at the school, they may be familiar with the surroundings already, ask them to talk about their experiences and favourite parts of the day
- Show your child photos of the school, the website or, if possible, have a drive to the new school and tell them how special the child is to be chosen to go to that school
- Get in touch with the school to see if they have any transition information to share. Set up a video meeting through a video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and ask the teacher to walk them around the classroom. Or maybe have a phone call and ask for a photo of their new teacher if at all possible (often photos are included on the school website)
- Read books/stories about starting school e.g. Starting School by Allan & Janet Ahlberg
- Offer lots of reassurance and try to avoid showing your anxieties in front of them
- Find out from the childcare setting (if possible and with permission) which of their friends are going to the same school
- Look at (where possible with lockdown restrictions), order and try on new school uniform
- Talk about what needs to be included in their school bag, pack this together and talk about where it will be stored. You could create a school bag for a special teddy, or toy, and talk about its first day, what he/she might do or feel

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- Find a special space at home where they can keep their school things
- Put little notes in children's bags or pockets to cheer them up. Another idea is to draw a little heart on your child's hand and your own that they can look at throughout the day to offer reassurance
- Watching videos from BBC Bitesize about starting school and play the starting school games. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1>

Top tips for preparing children for school include encouraging independence, helping them to dress/undress themselves and put on their own shoes/shoes; supporting them to feed themselves using utensils, pour own drinks, go to the toilet and wash their hands independently.

Try not to worry about the learning and development requirements for school at this stage, all the things you will be doing e.g. playing, sharing stories, singing, dancing, will provide them with positive learning experiences to take to school and help them with settling. Some schools may ask children to find their name for registration; you could have a go at this and pretend to be a school, but try not to put too much pressure on you or your child during this time.

Dear parents,

Don't stress about schoolwork. In September I will get your children back on track. I am a teacher and that's my superpower. What I can't fix is social-emotional trauma that prevents the brain from learning. So right now, I just need you to share your calm, share your strength, and share your laughter with your children. No kids are ahead. No kids are behind. Your children are exactly where they need to be.

Love all the teachers on planet Earth!

Author unknown.

## Further support

- BBC, Bitesize videos and games (online) UK, 2020, Last accessed 22.4.20 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1>
- HM Government, Hungry Little Minds (Online) UK, 2010, Last accessed 24.4.20 <https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>
- NHS, Separation Anxiety (online) UK, 31.8.18, Last accessed 17.4.20 <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/separation-anxiety/>

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**Disclaimer - Legislation and policy guidance change regularly. It is the responsibility of the parent to review the latest COVID-19 guidance from the Government when undertaking these activities.**

**The information is relevant as of 29 April 2020. Should changes in legislation or policy guidance emerge after this date, this factsheet may not fully reflect these. It is advised that you continue to review the latest COVID-19 guidance from the Government.**

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# Factsheet

Our factsheets are written by early years experts for the early years workforce. Most NDNA factsheets are free to our members.

NDNA is the national charity and membership association representing children's nurseries across the UK. We are a charity that believes in quality and sustainability, so we put our members' businesses at the very heart of ours.

We are the voice of the 21,000-strong nursery sector, an integral part of the lives of more than a million young children and their families. We provide information, training and advice to support nurseries and the 250,000 people who work in them to deliver world-class early learning and childcare.

See the full range of NDNA factsheets at [www.ndna.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.ndna.org.uk/factsheets)

*The information provided in this factsheet is for use by early years practitioners only. It has been written by early years experts but is not intended to be, and should not be relied upon, as a substitute for professional advice. NDNA has endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of the information presented in this factsheet. NDNA assumes no legal liability or responsibility for your interpretation or use of the information contained within it.*

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