

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Moving on to school: Role play

The transition from nursery to school can be an exciting yet challenging time for young children (and their parents).

By providing a supportive environment and encouraging conversations about starting school, practitioners will be able to address any fears, anxieties or queries and offer practical help and reassurance to ease the process at this important time in their lives.

This activity will help to ease the transition to school.



Learning aims

- Help children practice and become familiar with the routines of a typical school
- Build confidence and address any emotions surrounding the prospect of starting school
- Provide a safe space for children to express their feelings, uncertainties or excitement
- Introduce and use new vocabulary.

Resources

- Clothes to dress up in different school roles: teacher, lunch time assistant, school uniform
- School supplies, e.g. book bags, PE bags, PE kit, school lunch trays, school uniform from feeder schools
- Photographs of the new schools, classrooms, teachers (if available).

Activity outline

1. Set up a pretend school role play area with all the resources available
2. At circle time explain the role play resources to the children and how the role play will help to prepare them for moving on to school. Find out what children already know about school
3. Talk the children through some of the aspects of the role play, e.g. uniforms and supplies. Find out whether the children know about items such as PE kits and book bags
4. Support the children in their role play by asking open-ended questions and introducing new vocabulary where relevant

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5. Children ready to move to school can use the lunch trays so that they experience carrying their food to the table and clearing it off afterwards
6. Each day, discuss their experience of the role play area. Ask questions to gauge their feelings and encourage them to share any highlights or concerns. Listen to children's responses to develop a shared understanding of what they may expect in their new school and identify if children may need further support.

Extension ideas

- Share books or tell stories about starting school, e.g. Lulu's First Day by Anna McQuinn or My First Day by Leilana Sparrow. These will help children to familiarise themselves with the idea of school and raise discussion points
- Encourage parents to arrange playdates with other children who will be attending the same school. This will help children, and parents, build friendships and a sense of community before starting school
- See our Top Tips for Moving on to school.

Special considerations

Please ensure you never leave milk for hedgehogs - they are lactose intolerant and it will cause stomach issues. You can use this as a discussion point with children for how allergies can affect people too.

NDNA products to support you with this activity

- Online course: [Supporting Children through Transition and Change](#)
- Factsheet: [Parents Getting Ready for School – Building Confidence](#)