



**'One more step
along the world I go'**

Moving on to school

**Parent
Handbook**



Contents

Introduction

1. Separation Issues
2. Personal Hygiene
3. Sleep
4. Nutrition
5. Routines
6. Getting There

7. On The First Day
8. Screen Time
9. E Safety
10. Gaming Devices
11. Television
12. Mobile Phones

13. Radical behaviour awareness
14. Trending challenges or 'dares'
15. After School Care
16. Smoking and vaping
17. Medicines
18. School Attendance

19. Homework, Book Bag, PE Kit
20. Phonics, Letters and Sounds
21. Early Writing: Key starting points
22. The Continued Importance of Play for Language 'Rich' Development

23. Grown Up Talking
24. Useful Contact Numbers/Websites
25. Final Thoughts



Dear Parents and Guardians...

Hello...I'm Dawn and I'm the co-founder of The Oxford Nursery.

I'm a Primary School teacher with experience of seeing hundreds of children grow and develop through the three age groups, Freshers, Sophomores and Scholars at The Oxford Nursery to gain not just 'School Readiness' but preparedness and the important zest for the next steps in their journey. This in mind I thought I'd put together a little booklet of useful moving on to 'big school' information and tips to help the transition be as smooth, well organised and dare I suggest as enjoyable as it can be?! I remember this time so well and I recall the anxiety and the 'what if' questions that crowded my thoughts as the start of term loomed. I hope this booklet helps allay some of your fears and concerns but I hope it also gives you some useful food for thought on how to make the leap into to school life with some good planning and maybe be a little more aware and informed of some important issues to keep your child happy, healthy and safe and you feeling relaxed with the armour of knowledge you have . Even if this is not going to be your first encounter of 'big school' I hope the information here is relevant and current to keep all your children thriving and safe, whatever their age.

There are lots of things your child will already be accomplished in from their time at The Oxford Nursery but even if they are not as school ready as you think they should be (and it's not a race or a competition as children learn and develop at their own pace) I think this booklet will give good advice and ideas on how to deal with any of the concerns and information on where or who to get the answers from....



continued...

When we refer to 'school readiness' we have been preparing the children during their time at The Oxford Nursery for their next steps and going on to school and we have included these developmental areas:

Introducing themselves and helping them feel confident about who they are

Speaking to others and communicating how they are feeling or their ideas

Turn taking and helping them develop a sense of fairness

Making friends, being a good friend and kindness

Developing an understanding of learning and expectation to participate and understand when they can do something. The "I can" idea when competent and understand when something is still being learnt and not yet achieved, the "Not Yeti"

Pencil control (Which we have introduced in fun ways)

Recognising and writing their name

Recognising numbers, becoming numerate and counting to 10 and beyond

Getting dressed with a desire to be independent and occasionally accept support if necessary

Going to the toilet and working towards independence

Washing hands and the importance of doing this properly

Eating lunch and snacks with sound knowledge of being healthy and making informed choices

Following instructions and being able to pay attention to what is being requested of them

Listening carefully and being able to engage

Here are a few of these areas further explained with some additional points to be aware of:



1. Separation Issues

'I am happy to be away from my parents or main carer'

At nursery we have worked hard to help your child be school ready but sometimes when moving on to school some of the old habits and feelings re-emerge. When children are unsure of the changes and specifically where they are being taken, who will be their significant care giver during the day and what the expectations are they naturally feel anxious. This often can present itself in regressive behaviours such as tantrums, being clingy, or bed wetting to name a few. Strangely, too, I've see over confidence and exuberance masking underlying fear which manifests once in school and a usual 'quiet' child can become boisterous and seemingly 'naughty' (although we don't use this terminology but refer to 'unwanted or challenging behaviours'). These are all reactions to an undercurrent of worry and anxiety. So being aware of these changes and remembering that the transition to school is huge is half way to solving the issues. There are many things that can be done ahead of time.

1. There is a selection of 'moving on to big school' books that you can share with your child. We have been sharing these books with your child at nursery but nothing beats that lovely 1:1 time where you can chat at a relaxed time. Use this time to both ask each other questions such as 'how are you feeling?', 'I wonder if your new teacher knows about dinosaurs (or whatever favourite topic your child has)?', 'What yummy things would you like in your packed lunch?' etc The idea is to run through all aspects of the day.
2. In many cases your school will have arranged a home visit with your child's teacher...this is fabulous practice and really helps children bond and associate with their new teacher. Make a point of sharing little snippets of home life with your new class teacher... 'We have a big tabby cat called Bonzo' or 'Uncle Dave is a pilot in the RAF and we love looking at airplanes', etc. This gives the new teacher instant things to talk about in those first few days which signals to your child that they are 'known' to this new person and instantly fosters a sense of belonging.
3. A visit to the school is very helpful too, so your child can visualise the new classroom. It sounds a bit cheeky but if you can ask the school for some lost property school uniform for dressing up purposes which is a fun way to role play school life. We do this at nursery but obviously we might not have your child's particular school uniform.
4. Much the same as Christmas, talk about how many sleeps away the big school day is, about a week before school starts. Build the positive excitement but not too 'all consuming'. Still talk about the usual things you will be doing after the school day eg, going swimming, having a tea time visit with grandma or karate club at the weekend...keep sight of the regular 'normal' things.
- 5 Invariably the holiday times signal a break from routine and life quickly becomes a bit chaotic...try to pull the routines back into place a week or so before school starts. Regular nutritious meals, sleep routines, bath time, breakfast, exercise and fresh air etc.



2. Personal Hygiene

'I can go to the toilet, wipe myself properly and flush the toilet unaided and wash my hands.'

As you know, we work on this at nursery. Independence is encouraged and facilitated very early on at nursery but sometimes there are mishaps for whatever reason. Children sometimes get caught up in the excitement and forget to go to the toilet, or they might be too nervous to ask to go or even too anxious about going in a strange place. All these factors and more may be the cause of the odd accident or indeed a prolonged spell of what seems a backwards step in wetting themselves. This is not unusual behaviour and we can be prepared for the unexpected.

1. Make sure your child has a good routine in the morning and visits the toilet before setting off for school.
2. Make sure they have a spare set of pants and 'bottoms' as well as socks or tights in their school bag...if there is an accident, there's nothing worse than having to sit there in school spares or your PE kit when everyone else is in uniform...it basically announces to everyone what's happened.
3. Make sure your child knows to go to the toilet at play time and lunch time when everyone else is going..it becomes the social pattern.
4. Although it may be frustrating, especially if it's a prolonged spell, but try hard not to be cross or show agitation. Be matter-of-fact and reassure your child that you understand it was just an accident. Do ask if anything is worrying them and maybe you can remedy their fears.
5. Persistent accidents of 'weeing' or 'poohing' can be signs of deeper rooted worries or illness and should be discussed with the class teacher and GP just to make sure there are no underlying issues. In all cases, keeping a good dialogue with the teacher is very important.

'I know when to wash my hands at other times and can wipe my nose.'

Young children only sometimes know when they need to wipe their nose and at nursery we are constantly reminding them. Washing hands is something they often forget and so need reminding. We have worked hard on this and have 'Snuffle stations' in each room and the children know to wash their hands after blowing their nose.

1. It's good to chat about hygiene and germs regularly at home...the more children understand about how things work the more they will take it on board. I always smile at the 'germ police' children who will remind everyone or tell the teacher about that someone who didn't wash their hands. It's a good idea to teach your child how to cough into their sleeve at their elbow and do the same for a sneeze. Also remind them to wash their hands after nose wiping - just as we did so well during Covid-19.
2. Send your child in with a little pack of their own tissues...some of the cheaper shops like Poundland or Poundstretcher will sell them in bulk packs with superhero or princess packaging which children love and they feel so grown up to have that independence.



3. Sleep

What an understated and important part of well being sleep is. If your child does not get regular good sleep they are likely to find the whole school experience fearsome and grueling to be honest...it's a tough long day, even though it's shorter than a normal nursery day. The National Sleep Foundation says these are the sleep ranges for the different ages...

- **Newborns (0-3 months):** Sleep range narrowed to 14-17 hours each day (previously it was 12-18)
- **Infants (4-11 months):** Sleep range widened two hours to 12-15 hours (previously it was 14-15)
- **Toddlers (1-2 years):** Sleep range widened by one hour to 11-14 hours (previously it was 12-14)
- **Preschoolers (3-5):** Sleep range widened by one hour to 10-13 hours (previously it was 11-13)
- **School age children (6-13):** Sleep range widened by one hour to 9-11 hours (previously it was 10- 11)

(sleepfoundation.org)

For your information New EYFS safe sleep guidance, effective September 2026, strengthens requirements for children under two, mandating they sleep on their backs on firm, flat, separate surfaces (cots for under-ones). Key updates emphasize keeping cots clear of toys, pillows, and bumpers; keeping heads uncovered; maintaining room temperatures; and enforcing strict, frequent supervision to prevent SIDS. (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** statutory framework is being updated to include explicit and enforceable safer sleep requirements, following a review of safeguarding standards. While these changes are expected to become legally binding from **September 2026**, the Department for Education has stated that providers should be compliant with these standards immediately as they represent current best practice.

We have a comprehensive sleep policy at The Oxford Nursery but I have included the key information as I feel it is relevant throughout childhood to consider safe sleep...



3. Sleep

Key 2026 EYFS Safe Sleep Changes

- **Legal Mandate:** While legally enforced from Sept 2026, providers are expected to comply immediately with the updated, explicit requirements.
- **Clear Cots:** Cots/beds must be clear of all items: no toys, pillows, bumpers, wedges, or straps.
- **Sleeping Surface:** Babies must sleep on a firm, flat, waterproof mattress.
- **Positioning:** Babies must be placed on their back, feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot.
- **Temperature & Clothing:** Ideal room temperature is between 16–20°C. Use lightweight bedding tucked in below shoulders or a well-fitted sleeping bag.
- **Supervision:** Children must be frequently checked and in the same room as an adult for children under six months.
- **No Smoking:** a smoker must wait 30 minutes after smoking before handling children.

Environment & Equipment

- **Under 1 Year:** Must use a cot.
- **Sitting Devices:** If a baby falls asleep in a car seat, bouncer, or swing, they must be moved to a flat surface immediately.
- **Rollers:** Once a baby can roll from back-to-front and back again, they do not need to be repositioned although at nursery our policy is to move babies back onto their back at each 10 minute sleep check, up to 3 times. There after with parental consent we would leave them to sleep in their preferred position once they are 1 year old.

Supervision & Practice at nursery and at home...

- **Never Force Sleep:** One should not force a child to sleep or keep them awake.
- **Monitoring:** Regular checks for the rise and fall of the chest are mandatory in nursery and advisable at home.
- **Safe Sleep Areas:** Cots should not be in direct sunlight or near radiators and be aware of the how the sunlight changes. All sleeping children must remain within sight and hearing of staff at nursery and advisable to consider this at home too at all times.
- **Individual Care:** At The Oxford nursery as a Provider we must develop individual sleep plans in partnership with parents, considering medical or cultural needs while maintaining safety as the priority. It is advisable to remember to put safety first at home too.

I've seen little ones in Foundation or Reception classes literally falling asleep in their lunch or just curling up on the carpet and dropping off. Other times sleepy children are tearful, argumentative or overly emotional. They do of course build stamina but good routines at home are the best starting point.



4. Nutrition

'I can use a knife and fork and open my lunch on my own'

A lot has been written on this subject and it's in the news often. Undeniably childhood obesity and related diseases are on the increase and so we should all evaluate regularly what our diet is doing for us. Most families, research suggests, have a rather narrow repertoire of meals. For me, time was always a factor but I found a way to have a 'cooking spell' when I put aside a whole Saturday morning once every half term and cooked nutritiously for the freezer. Even the simplest of meals was embellished with grated versions of all kinds of vegetable so a Bolognese sauce would have the added goodness of Spinach, Carrot, Courgette, Sweet Potato and Peas. Quite often the same meal was made without the meat and no one was any the wiser with so much 'depth' of vegetable. 'Big School' often brings on faddy eating born out of a bit of anxiety and sometimes born out of wanting what friends might have.

1. If packed lunches are your preferred meal option make sure they are varied and packaging is easily opened. I've seen children give up on foods they can't open easily in favour of wanting to get outside quickly to play instead. School will provide water and milk for Reception or Foundation children and water is always best in the water bottle.. sweet drinks are not necessary and detrimental to their dental hygiene. A cautionary note on colourful sweet drinks or SLUSHIES

Children under seven or eight years old should avoid slushy ice drinks containing glycerol to prevent serious illness, including shock and loss of consciousness. These drinks can cause glycerol intoxication syndrome, particularly in young children, due to high levels of glycerol used for the slush effect.

Key Safety Information:

- **Age Restriction:** The Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises children aged under 7 should not consume these drinks.
- **Limit Consumption:** For children aged 7 to 10, the recommendation is to have no more than one 350ml slushy per day.
- **Risks:** High levels of glycerol can cause headache, sickness, dizziness, low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia), and potential loss of consciousness.
- **Symptoms:** If a child becomes acutely ill within an hour of drinking a slushy, it may be due to "glycerol intoxication syndrome".

Why are they risky?

Many bright-coloured, flavored slushies use glycerol (a sweetener) to prevent the beverage from freezing completely. While considered safe for adults, this additive is unsafe for young children in large quantities.



4. Nutrition

To add sweetness to your child's packed lunch include a couple of pieces of fruit, one for snack at play time and one for lunch. Finger foods such as cucumber, carrot or cherry tomatoes are great options too but do cut up round fruits/veg in length way slices to avoid choking.

2. I mentioned the water bottle... it cannot be stressed enough that an alert brain is a well hydrated one! A good size water bottle, easily opened with fresh water daily is best. Remember to freeze the water bottle for those hot summer term days and sports day...there can not be anything more delicious than iced water when you've been playing hard! Also do make sure you purchase the plastic bottles that have the re-useable plastic...some are harmful.
3. If your child is having school dinners just make sure you are having a good dialogue with the teacher or teaching assistants so you know that everything is being eaten, or at least a good amount.
4. Make sure snacks are varied and healthy..latest thinking is that raisins are too sugary and badly affect the teeth as they get lodged in the teeth and should be avoided as snacks but fine included in a cooked meal. Also make sure the snack portion is small...a big snack can put them right off their lunch. We have taught them to 'Swish and swallow' after meals and they know this is to clean the mouth of food debris which is important to protect teeth as well as prior to any nap time, making sure there is no choking hazzard.



5. Routines

' I understand the pattern of the day and I have a good bedtime routine so I'm not tired at school'

Most routines are challenged by little ones... never more so than when you're trying to fit everything else in as busy parents! Sometimes less is more and rather than pack in everything evaluating what is important at that moment. I've seen some tired parents responding to their 'fractious', tired and hungry child at home time with a telling off 'You're having an early night tonight!' to the response of...'NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!' What we tend to do as parents, (Well I did!) is pour a nice little dose of petrol on the embers we can see before us...and before we know it we have an inferno!

1. As said earlier, a good sleep routine will cure most ills and tantrums.
2. Meal routines... when you pick up from school avoid 'treating' your child with a trip to the sweet shop, or at least just keep it to once in a while. I really don't like to see children demanding in this way and being quite forceful if they don't get what they want. Greeting your child at the end of the day with a healthy little snack box and some fresh water before a trip to the park, library or swimming baths is lovely.
3. Once settled at school, try out a club or two... swimming, karate, gymnastics, piano etc. These add a great pattern to the week. A 'try out' is half a term in length...anything less and they haven't given it a good go but anything more than that when they have said they don't want to go any more is costly, pointless, and defeating the object of helping to make the learning journey fun and if ignored you are giving a message that they do not have a voice being listened to.
4. If, like I was, a busy parent working long hours, you may struggle to find that 'desirable routine', but it's really what works for you as a family and how your little one fits into that pattern and how they understand how it all works. We held on to some routine in a very busy way but Sunday lunch was the 'and breathe' part of the week. Sunday lunch was always a sit down affair with family and close friends, or a bbq in the summer. The emphasis was on the togetherness and pattern. We still do this now where everyone brings their week to the table and we eat and chat...no mobiles and no gaming devices and no Television. It may not work for every family but it constitutes a routine.
5. End of day routines are important... bath time is a good chat time and no matter how much you think they are growing up, close supervision around water at all times, even more so if there are younger ones bathing too. Never let your older child be 'the responsible one', as they are still young too.
6. Brushing teeth twice a day at least is a good routine to adopt. Once teeth are brushed no drinks to go to sleep with unless it is just water.

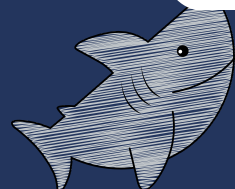
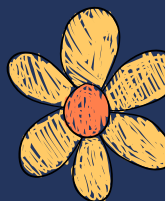


6. Getting there...

'We have a big ambition: every child that can, walks to school.'

The walk to school campaign says... 'A generation ago, **70% of us walked to school** – now it's less than half. We want to reverse this decline. We want children to be energised and empowered, and to make walking to school their natural choice.'
(www.livingstreets.org)

Undeniably this is the healthy way and I do feel for busy parents who simply would struggle to actualize this routine. I include it as something to think about and maybe even just once a month, clear it with the boss to come in late and get the bikes, scooters or just walk to school. Maybe this is something that could become a once a week practice and schools are nearly all promoting this.





7. On the first day...

The first day of school is exciting, scary, emotional, an event and sometimes a bit sad...as parents we know it's the next step and our 'baby' is growing up. Try very hard not to let your child see you cry...go with their emotion. If they are quiet and unsure then try to present as 'normal' a day as possible...be matter of fact but be reassuring. Most love to take pictures of the first day ...tell them you can take a picture to show all their friends back at nursery. Talk about the end of the day and what lovely tea they will have. Lots of positive chatter on the way to school...notice the person walking their dog, stop to look at the cat on the wall, pick a beautiful dandelion for the teacher...but make sure you have allowed time to enjoy the journey to school and if possible, walk. Make sure you have left plenty of time to get to school so your own stress levels don't go up as your child will pick up on this. Your child will need..

1. A labelled uniform and shoes. Buy a laundry marker and label every item ..it saves so much time over the year. Also, shoes tend to be duplicated x more than 10 so better to label each shoe so you know exactly which is your child's.
2. A labelled PE Kit with labelled plimsolls...remember all 30 children in the class will likely have the same plimsolls!
3. A labelled water bottle...as mentioned previously it's a good idea to freeze it over night during hot weather and make sure they know where they can fill up their water bottle at school safely...not all sinks may be safe drinking water.
4. A healthy snack (School will generally provide something to Key Stage 1 children but something from home initially is a comfort) and some schools have 'tuck shop' days where children can purchase a healthy snack from school which they love to do...this is encouraged so children can learn to look after their money in a secure purse and understand the process of purchasing something they have chosen.
5. A labelled packed lunch box if having one. Remember to pack easily opened items and as part of any school health policy they may have rules about chocolate bars and sweet items so check first and try to make the choices healthy. Making and baking healthy sugar free snacks at the weekend is a fun activity which you can then portion out for the week and freeze...maybe not every weekend but whenever you have time.
6. Play the 'I wonder' game on the way there. I wonder if...there will be a sand pit? I wonder if there will be some lego? I wonder if there will be some dressing up? This all paints a picture in their head before they get to the classroom.
7. Help your child find their coat peg and find the place to put the lunch box and water bottle together..take the pressure off your child to do everything for themselves but let them take the lead.
8. When the teacher signals time to go for the parents...expect tears. Yours will be welling up too...try not to show them...put on a happy smile and say bye bye, big hug and a kiss and reassure them that you will pick them up at the end of the day. (If someone else will be picking up, try to make sure you are doing the first week at least if possible)



8. Screen time

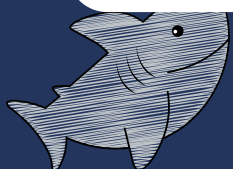
New 2026 UK government guidance advises limiting screen time for children aged two to five to a maximum of one hour per day. For children under two, the advice is to avoid screens entirely, except for interactive, shared video calls. The guidelines prioritize "co-viewing," where adults interact with children during screen time, and advise against using fast-paced, social media-style content. Online safety for nursery children (aged 0-5) centers on strict supervision, utilizing age-appropriate content, and parental/staff education. Key measures include setting up parental controls on devices, limiting screen time, and fostering an environment where children feel comfortable discussing what they see online. It is essential to use trusted apps (like YouTube Kids) and maintain high-privacy settings.

Key Recommendations

- **Under 2s:** Avoid screen time except for shared, interactive video chatting with family or friends.
- **2-5 Year Olds:** Aim for a maximum of 1 hour per day.
- **When to Avoid:** Avoid screens entirely during mealtimes and in the hour before bed.
- **Content Choice:** Choose slow-paced, age-appropriate, educational content over fast-paced videos or AI tools.
- **Co-viewing:** Watch together. Interact, talk about, and engage with the content together rather than letting them watch alone.

How to Implement New Guidelines

- **Use Parental Controls:** Use tools to block inappropriate content.
- **"Safe Screen Swaps":** Replace screen time with activities such as reading, playing games, or chatting, particularly before bed.
- **Lead by Example:** Children often copy parents' screen habits.
- **Context for Special Educational Needs:** Time limits for screen-based assistive technologies or SEND support are not applied in the same way, allowing for flexibility.
- **Active Supervision:** Always supervise young children while they are online or using devices. Place devices in shared, visible areas, rather than private rooms.
- **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear, consistent rules for screen time and permitted content.





8. Screen time

How to Implement New Guidelines continued

- **Utilize Safety Features:** Activate parental controls on home WiFi and devices (e.g., Apple iPad restrictions, Android tablet settings) to block inappropriate content.
- **Age-Appropriate Content:** Use apps and websites designed for pre-schoolers and check app store age ratings. Educational, interactive, and active content is preferred over passive viewing.
- **Use "Safe" Apps:** Use restricted apps like YouTube Kids to help filter content, but still keep a watchful eye.
- **Educate on "Stranger Danger":** Teach children that, similar to real life, they should not talk to strangers online. Secure Privacy: Ensure that photo usage and internet access are strictly managed.
- **Establish Trust:** Encourage children to tell a trusted adult if they see something that makes them feel uncomfortable or worried.

Useful Resources

- **Internet Matters:** Offers tailored advice for children under 5.
- **NSPCC Online Safety:** Provides expert advice on speaking with children about online risks.
- **LGFL Digital Safety:** Features resources for EYFS staff and parents.
- **Twinkl EYFS Safety:** Provides classroom resources and posters.

As this booklet is to help and support your child as they enter primary school (5-11 years) here is the guidance for children aged 5 years and older...

For children aged 5 to 11, safe screen time is generally recommended to be capped at two hours per day of non-educational, recreational use. The focus should be on high-quality, age-appropriate content, with breaks, avoiding screens before bed, and balancing usage with physical activity, schoolwork, and face-to-face interaction.

5-11

- **Daily Limit:** Generally 1-2 hours of recreational screen time (TV, gaming, tablets) per day.
- **Educational vs. Recreational:** The two-hour limit primarily applies to non-educational screen time. Schoolwork and homework should not be restricted by this limit.
- **Content and Quality:** Ensure content is educational or age-appropriate. Active, co-viewed screen time is better than passive, solitary consumption.
- **Set Routines:** Avoid screens during meals and at least one hour before bedtime to support better sleep.
- **Balance:** Encourage at least one hour of daily physical activity and prioritize in-person social interaction.

Parental Controls: Use tools to monitor and restrict access to inappropriate content, as recommended by the **NSPCC**.



8. Screen time

Tips for Managing Screen Time

- **Use Timers:** Use sand timers or digital timers to help children visualize how much time they have left.
- **"First/Then" Method:** Encourage active play or reading first, followed by screen time as a reward.
- **Co-viewing:** Watch, play, or talk about screen content with your child to make it an engaging, social activity rather than a solitary one.

While some studies suggest a 90-minute limit for children on the younger end of this range (6-10 years), the generally accepted guideline for 5-11 year olds is two hours, with a strong focus on content quality.

Strategies for Healthy Usage

Rather than just watching the clock, experts recommend focusing on the **quality** of content and maintaining a balanced "digital diet".

- **Co-viewing:** Watching or playing together is linked to better cognitive development than solo use. Discuss what is happening on screen to make it an interactive experience.
- **"Screen Swaps":** Replace device time with "unplugged" activities like reading a book, outdoor play, or family board games.
- **The 20-20-20 Rule:** To prevent eye strain, encourage your child to look away from the screen every 20 minutes, at something 20 feet away, for 20 seconds.
- **Screen-Free Zones:** Keep bedrooms, dining areas, and the hour before bedtime tech-free to protect sleep and encourage family bonding.

Potential Risks of Excessive Use

Studies indicate that exceeding recommended limits—especially with "fast-paced" content—can lead to several issues:

- **Mental Health:** Linked to increased anxiety, poor self-esteem, and concentration difficulties.
- **Physical Health:** Higher risk of myopia (short-sightedness), digital eye strain, and poor posture.
- **Social/Behavioural:** Can negatively impact emotional management and lead to sedentary habits that replace physical activity.

Screen time is a necessary part of your child's future and a lot of school time will incorporate screen learning...this information is set out to help you navigate the safe use.

9 E-Safety

This is a big subject of great concern. The internet is such a big tool for learning, entertainment, intrigue and a big part of our daily lives for most of us now. At nursery we are seeing children as young as one 'swiping' the pages on books rather than turning them...it's a sign of the times. So it is inevitable our children will encounter computers at school...it is part of both the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and National Curriculum. As long as parents follow the guidelines and are aware of the dangers the experience of computers should be wonderful. Here is a poster of helpful tips....



Be smart on the internet

Childnet International
www.childnet.com

S SAFE Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information when chatting or posting online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and password.

M MEETING Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present. Remember online friends are still strangers even if you have been talking to them for a long time.

A ACCEPTING Accepting emails, IM messages, or opening files, pictures or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

R RELIABLE Someone online might lie about who they are, and information on the internet may not be true. Always check information with other websites, books or someone who knows.

t TELL Tell your parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.
You can report online abuse to the police at www.thinkuknow.co.uk

THINK U KNOW

www.kidsmart.org.uk

KidSMART Visit Childnet's Kidsmart website to play interactive games and test your online safety knowledge. You can also share your favourite websites and online safety tips by Joining Hands with people all around the world.



10. Gaming devices

The Uk safer internet centre says...

'Gaming devices provide a variety of interesting activities and ways for young people to engage with their friends and families. However, it is important to be aware of what these devices can do and how you can talk with your child to help them to use this technology in a safe and positive way. All modern gaming devices offer parental controls to help you manage how your child uses their device, but these do need to be set up in order for them to be operational.'

Three steps for parents:

- Understand the capabilities of gaming devices and how you as a parent can support your child to be smart and safe in their gaming. To help, read the FAQs below. If you are buying a gaming device, why not print our Shopper's Checklist and ask these questions in the shop?
- Find out about the parental controls available - it helps if you are the one to set up the gaming device so you are in control of these. Gaming devices have parental controls to help parents manage their children's gaming, for example, to prevent internet browsing or restrict access to age-restricted games (see our tips for Nintendo, Xbox or PlayStation 4 and Playstation 3 devices). Find out about PEGI age ratings to help you decide which games are appropriate for your child's age.
- Talk with your child about safe and responsible gaming and agree a set of family rules. Perhaps you could agree rules with your child about how long they are allowed to play for, how they should behave towards other gamers and agree rules about not meeting up with people they have only met online. See our Family Agreement for more ideas. Remember that gaming devices like the Xbox 360, Wii and PSP connect to the internet, so the same advice and rules for keeping safe online apply.

Here are the basics...Three steps for parents

1. Understand the capabilities of the gaming device and how you as a parent can support your child to be smart and safe in their gaming.
2. Find out about the parental controls available - it helps if you are the one to set up the gaming device so you are in control of these.
3. Talk with your child about safe and responsible gaming and agree a set of family rules. Perhaps you could agree rules with your child about how long they are allowed to play for, how they should behave towards other gamers and agree rules about not meeting up with people they have only met online.

Taken from saferinternet.org.uk check also internetmatters.org for more information

I will just add that the saddest thing I see all too often is whole families out to dinner...all sitting at the table playing on a 'device'. No interaction, no communication, no laughter. Have a family rule that says no gaming devices, no mobiles at the table and let's revert back to old fashioned conversation!



11. Television

Undeniably entertaining in defined small amounts of time but scarily all too absorbing when sooooo many other things can be happening like making a den, going for a walk, reading a book, making a junk model monster etc! This is an age old discussion...I'm not going to say too much other than... switch it off... there's a world out there.

12. Mobile Phones

Mobile phone use for children under 16 is a major safety and wellbeing concern, with growing calls to restrict smartphones, especially for those under 13, due to risks of mental health issues, cyberbullying, and addiction. While devices offer connectivity, guidance recommends limiting younger children (under 11) to non-smartphones and employing strict parental controls, such as those recommended by NSPCC and EE, for older children to manage content and screen time.

Key Considerations for Children and Mobile Phones:

- **Risks to Well-being:** Excessive use is linked to mental health issues like anxiety and depression, sleep disturbances, reduced physical activity, and exposure to inappropriate content or sexual exploitation.

Age-Based Guidance:

- **Under 11s:** Experts recommend using feature phones (limited capability) rather than smartphones to restrict social media and harmful content.
- **11-13s:** Parents are advised to provide smartphones with strict parental controls and use family-sharing apps.
- **Under 13s:** Some studies advise against giving children smartphones entirely before this age to mitigate risks of mental health issues.
- **Safety and Social Media:** While many apps have a minimum age of 13 years, 6 in 10 children aged 8 to 12 years are already on them. 3 in 5 secondary school-aged children have experienced uncomfortable contact online.
- **Parental Control Tools:** Utilizing tools like Google Family Link or Apple Screen Time can help manage safety and monitor usage.
- **Government/Industry Action:** Proposals include raising the digital age of consent from 13 to 16, restricting social media access for younger teens, and pushing for guidelines similar to EE's to protect children.



12. Mobile Phones

Tips for Parents

- **Start with Restricted Devices:** For younger children, provide a phone that only makes calls and texts.
- **Use Parental Controls:** Register devices as child accounts to limit content and set time limits.
- **Open Conversations:** Talk openly about the impact of social media, online risks, and potential bullying.
- **Set Boundaries:** Establish "phone-free" times, such as during meals or before bed, to encourage better sleep and communication.

Mobile phones are a controversial tool. Used wisely they can offer peace of mind when away from your children at sleep overs or when they start exploring the wider world.

Estranged parents have found them useful so they can more easily talk with their child without a contentious phone call to the ex wife/husband...again a controversial use but it works for some. The reality is that children younger and younger are playing on their parent's mobile phones and it's better to be well informed of the dangers before you commit to a purchase.



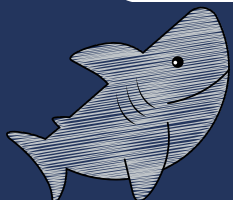
13. Radical behaviour awareness

The Prevent duty

Government document of June 2015 says... 'Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. The Prevent duty does not require teachers or childcare providers to carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but as with any other safeguarding risk, they must take action when they observe behaviour of concern'

I include this aspect of safeguarding our children because radicalisation exists as a real concern and it is all of our responsibility to be aware to keep everyone safe. At nursery, as many of you know, we are all 'Prevent Duty' trained which is a training we have undertaken to be as well informed and aware as we can. It would be good to read the documents detailed here to gain a greater awareness for yourselves...there is a free government training session you can take.

www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk





13. Radical behaviour awareness

Keeping children safe in education

The Government document of September 2016 says..

'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.'

- No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Children includes everyone under the age of 18.



14. Trending Challenges or 'Dares' and Current Concerns

Over recent years there have been some worrying challenges being set by both young people and adults in some cases. You may be aware of some of them because you have seen them trending on social media platforms.

I raise this as a concern for your little one as we often think they are blissfully unaware of so much that is potentially dangerous to them.

However I know first hand how children like to chat and 'scaremonger' and this is how these trends perpetuate as well. In some schools, Key Stage 1 play on a different play ground to Key Stage 2 and so the younger children are largely protected from talking about the older issues. However this is not always the case and so we can not assume our very little ones are innocently unaware of some of the world's harsher evils.

Young children and adolescents are increasingly exposed to viral "challenges" or "dares" through social media that encourage risky behaviour for social validation. These trends can be broadly categorized into several areas of concern:

- **Ingestion and Inhalation Risks:** Some trends involve consuming common household products, medications, or spices in excessive amounts, or inhaling toxic fumes. These acts can lead to severe medical emergencies, including poisoning, respiratory failure, or long-term organ damage.
- **Physical Pranks and Injuries:** Certain dares involve physical maneuvers intended to cause a fall or a sudden loss of consciousness. These can result in traumatic brain injuries, spinal damage, or bone fractures.
- **Property Damage and Legal Risks:** Some challenges encourage vandalism, theft, or the use of projectile toys against unsuspecting people. Participating in these activities can lead to serious legal consequences, school disciplinary actions, and physical harm to others.
- **Fire and Electrical Hazards:** Dares that involve tampering with electrical outlets or heating non-food items in microwaves pose significant risks of burns, explosions, and house fires.



14. Trending Challenges or 'Dares' and Current Concerns

To help protect children, it is important to maintain open communication about the influence of social media. Discussing the difference between a harmless joke and a dangerous activity can help children develop better judgment. Parents and guardians can find detailed guidance on how to navigate these digital risks through specialized resources such as [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) or [Common Sense Media](https://www.commonsensemedia.org).

- 1. Always keep a good dialogue open with your child. Ask them who their friends are. The more you stay involved with their world the less like an interrogation it seems when you want to know something.**
- 2. Do keep yourself well informed of the latest concerns in safeguarding. Have a look at the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board website and email them if you have concerns.**
- 3. Some recent dare devil trends have been 'The Ice Bucket Challenge'...which many find hugely funny but is a really crazy thing to do on a winters day when the temperatures are below 0. A very recent trend is to dare your friend to take a rubber and rub it so fast on the skin that the friction causes a nasty burn. Similarly, some use an aerosol and spray it so close to the skin that it creates a burn, as a dare. One of the worst challenges is known as 'Blue Whaling'**

What is the Blue Whale online suicide game? The Blue Whale suicide game is believed to be a social media group which is encouraging people to kill themselves. There are hundreds of thousands of posts relating to the sick trend on Instagram. It's thought a group administrator assigns daily tasks to members, which they have to complete over 50 days. The horrific tasks include self-harming, watching horror movies and waking up at unusual hours, but these gradually get more extreme. On the 50th day, the controlling manipulators behind the game reportedly instruct the youngsters to commit suicide. The NSPCC say children should remember not to follow the crowd and not feel pressured into doing anything that makes them feel unsafe. A spokesperson said: "Children can find it difficult to stand up to peer pressure but they must know it's perfectly okay to refuse to take part in crazes that make them feel unsafe or scared. "Parents should talk with their children and emphasise that they can make their own choices and discuss ways of how to say no. Reassuring a child that they can still be accepted even if they don't go along with the crowd will help stop them doing something that could hurt them or make them uncomfortable." I share this information so that we can be as aware as we can be to keep our children safe



14. Trending Challenges or 'Dares' and Current Concerns

Most recently ...a programme on Netflix called 'Adolescence' highlighted potential issues that have grave consequences and it was so hard hitting that the Government issued a statement permitting and encouraging secondary schools to show it and discuss with both Pupils and Parents. The Guardian reports that 'Adolescence' is a 'cautionary tale about getting teenagers off screens and engaging with real life again ... a plea to support, talk and listen'. As a result On 31st March 2025 Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer published a statement which said:

- Prime Minister convenes conversation on rethinking adolescent safety and how to prevent young boys being dragged into "whirlpool of hatred and misogyny"
- Downing Street welcomes Adolescence creators, charities and young people to listen to experiences of children today
- Backed by the Prime Minister, students to watch Netflix drama Adolescence for free in secondary schools across the country

The Prime Minister said "As a father, watching this show with my teenage son and daughter, I can tell you it hit home hard"

and

"It's an important initiative to encourage as many pupils (Secondary age) as possible to watch the show. As I see from my own children, openly talking about changes in how they communicate, the content they're seeing, and exploring the conversations they're having with their peers is vital if we are to properly support them in navigating contemporary challenges, and deal with malign influences."

I share this information so that we can be as aware as we can be to keep our children safe. The Programme 'Adolescence', a four part Netflix mini series, raises issues many of us will not be aware of. I was also struck by how little I knew of some of the contemporary language as well as the meanings and use of phone emojis and how damaging and destructive they could be. An independent Government report was updated in May 2024 and content linked to this is found in the programme 'Adolescence'

' Predicting harm among INCELS (involuntary celibates): the roles of mental health, ideological belief and social networking (accessible)'

Full Government report:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/downing-street-opens-doors-to-adolescence-creators-for-vital-discussion-on-protecting-our-children>



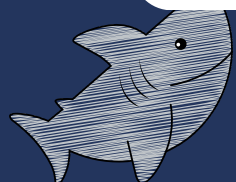
15. After School Care

For most working parents, After School Care is another headache to sort out and part of the changes of moving on to school. Most schools offer an After School Club where your child can be safely looked after until you finish work.

These clubs are regulated by Ofsted and are normally independently run as a business. Some parents join forces with other parents as after school child minders, taking it in turns. Some employ an after school child minder who collects your child at the end of the day, along with a few other children often. Some may choose to have a Nanny to take children home and cook them an evening meal. Some even bring their children back to nursery for the remainder of the day which works well especially when there are younger siblings there. Whatever your choice....

1. Make sure you know where your child is and with whom. That sounds a bit of an obvious one but do check where your child is being taken if another parent is sharing the care. Make sure you know who will be there with your children. Set good ground rules for the shared 'helpful' after school care. It would be really ideal to make sure a DBS check is sought even if it is only for a couple of after school hours.

2. After School Club... This is another time when very young children are with older children and the topics of discussion are not easily censored so make sure your child feels comfortable to talk about anything that might be worrying them.





16. Smoking and vaping

This is just a reminder to all parents to be aware that even the slightest passive smoking is harmful. A reminder, too, that Mummy and Daddy are the most impressive role models for children...they will naturally aspire to be like you. This means that if they see you smoking they will automatically see that as a behaviour likely to aspire to. Please try at all costs never to smoke in front of your children. If you smoke at home never smoke inside where there is an enclosed space and where the smoke lingers. Rather smoke outside and make sure you wear some outer clothing so that you do not bring the smokiness into the house.

Wash your hands and brush your teeth afterwards so that none of the toxins are transferred to your child. Also if other family members are smokers, be brave enough to set house rules to safeguard your child. Similarly, vaping is a relatively new concern. Treat vaping exactly as smoking and something that is done away from your child. I was recently really disturbed to witness a mother asking her child at the kiosk which flavour to choose... "should Mummy get cherry or bubblegum?" Just remember that you are the ultimate role model and we always want the best for our children.

17. Medicines

As with nursery, children that have minor illness may attend school.

Antibiotics should be clearly labelled and never any medicines belonging to a sibling. Follow the school policy on medicines and always remember to inform the Office when your child last had a dose of medicine and how much, to avoid over dosing or missing a dose. Never give children any medicines to keep in their bag but always hand in any medicines to the school office.



18. School Attendance

It is a legal requirement that your child attends school and just as with nursery it is a legal requirement to inform the school of any absences and to give a reason for the absences. Holidays in term time are not permissible by law unless special permission is sought from the Head Teacher/Local Authority. It is a matter of safeguarding and child protection that both Nursery and Schools are required to know why a child is absent.

In England, school attendance is compulsory for children aged 5 to 16, with parents legally responsible for ensuring regular, full-time attendance. Children must attend all 10 sessions (5 days) per week, barring authorized absences like illness or approved exceptional circumstances. Failure to attend regularly can result in fines starting at £80, rising to £160.

Key Attendance Requirements & Rules

- **Compulsory Age:** Education is mandatory from the term after a child's 5th birthday until the last Friday in June of the school year they turn 16.
- **Regular Attendance:** Legally, "regular" means every day the school is open.
- **Authorized Absences:** Allowed only for illness (with evidence), approved religious observance, or exceptional circumstances authorized by the headteacher.
- **Term-Time Holidays:** Headteachers may not grant leave for holidays, which are treated as unauthorized, often leading to fines.
- **Penalty Notices:** Fines are £80 (paid within 21 days) or £160 (paid within 22-28 days). Persistent non-attendance can lead to court action.
- **Registration:** Schools take registers twice daily; arriving after the register closes (often 30 mins) is marked as an unauthorized absence.

Impact of Absence

- **90% Attendance:** Below 90% is considered persistent absence, often prompting support from the Oxfordshire County Council attendance services.
- **Data Impact:** Missing 5 days in a year equates to 97% attendance, while 20 days off drops attendance to 90%.

What to Do

- As with nursery, inform the school immediately of any absence.
- Request any planned leave in advance, providing details of the exceptional circumstances.
- Parents must ensure their child arrives before the register closes.
For more details, consult the [GOV.UK guide on school attendance and absence](https://www.gov.uk/guide-on-school-attendance-and-absence)

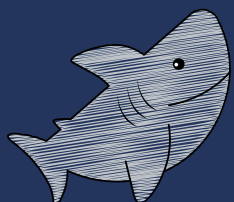


19. Homework, Book Bag, PE Kit

Children are encouraged to be independent and as organised as they can be. They will get homework most likely and there is an expectation that parents will help them get it done and submitted.

Much as we would like children to take responsibility for their things we know it's mummy and daddy who are stressing about the lost homework or forgotten book bag. Children are supposed to change into a full PE Kit to be able to safely participate in PE lessons involving the gym equipment.

1. If you can, get **two** sets of PE Kit, one to stay at school for the whole week and be brought home on the Friday.. Set two is ready to bring in on Monday morning and you have more time to get things washed for the next swap over.
2. Try to prioritise the homework the day it arrives ..your child will be much more clued in on day one than three days later when they will have forgotten what it's all about.
3. The Book Bag must come and go every day. Try to read with your child every day but we know that is the perfect world! Therefore, try to have other family members listen to the reading or have your child read the book aloud whilst you get dinner...don't be detached though, engage in the story and ask questions about what they have read. With all three of these 'must haves' try to encourage your child to take responsibility for bringing them to school for themselves.





20. Phonics, Letters and Sounds

The Phonics Screening Check is a short, 1-on-1 assessment for Year 1 pupils (age 5–6) in England, held in June to confirm they have learned decoding skills to an appropriate standard. Children read 40 words—a mix of real and "alien" (pseudo) words—to test their ability to blend sounds, usually taking 2–5 minutes.

It is a good idea to find out what scheme or pathway of learning that your child's new school is currently following. There are some popular learning toolkits such as 'Read Write Inc', 'Letters and Sounds', 'Jolly Phonics' to name a few. It is really critical to make sure you are supporting your child with the correct letter sounds and names. You can find the phonetic alphabet sounded out on the internet... 'Read, write inc' has very good clips to watch.

Key Information for Parents

- **What it covers:** Children sound out and blend graphemes (letters) to read words, such as 'dog' or 'play', and non-words to ensure they are using decoding skills rather than memory.
- **The "Alien" Words:** Pseudo-words (nonsense words) are used to test pure decoding skills. They are accompanied by a picture of an imaginary creature to show they are not real words.
- **The Threshold:** Typically, children need to read at least 32 out of 40 words correctly, though this threshold can vary annually.
- **Results:** Schools report the results to parents by the end of the summer term. If a child does not meet the standard, they will receive extra support and retake the check in Year 2.
- **No Pressure:** It is designed as a low-stakes, 1-on-1 check with their teacher to identify needed support.

How to Support Your Child at Home

- **Encourage Sounding Out:** If your child is stuck, encourage them to say each sound in the word from left to right (e.g., /c/ /a/ /t/) and then blend them together.
- **Play Phonics Games:** Practice with online tools or flashcards to blend sounds.
- **Read Regularly:** Read books together to build confidence.
- **Use Sound Buttons:** Encourage your child to spot digraphs (two letters making one sound, e.g., 'sh') and trigraphs (three letters, e.g., 'igh') in words.

The check ensures that your child is making sufficient progress in phonics, which is the foundational building block for reading.



21. Early Writing: Key starting points

Correct letter formation for young children focuses on starting letters at the top, consistent, top-to-bottom/left-to-right movements, and grouping letters into "families" based on motion. Essential tips include using multisensory, playful activities (sand trays, air writing) and teaching lowercase letters first to aid reading development and reduce confusion.

Key Letter Formation Advice

- **Use Letter Families:** Group letters with similar movements, such as "curly c" letters
- **Start at the Top:** Almost all letters should start at the top, not the bottom.
- **Lowercase First:** While capitals are easier to draw, lowercase letters are used in the majority of reading material.
- **Directionality:** Focus on left-to-right, top-to-bottom strokes to prevent reversals.
- **Consistent Cues:** Use simple, consistent language like "curve around and stop" for 'c', rather than changing cues, recommends this school advice sheet.

Supporting Development at Home

- **Pre-writing Patterns:** Practice drawing vertical lines, horizontal lines, circles, and diagonal lines before focusing on specific letters.
- **Tactile Activities:** Use salt trays, whiteboards, playdough, or shaving foam to make letter formation fun, as suggested by this school resource and [Devon NHS](#).
- **Improve Fine Motor Skills:** Encourage drawing, painting, using scissors, and playing with clay to strengthen hand muscles.
- **Check Pencil Grip:** Encourage a relaxed, three-finger "tripod" grip, though it takes time to develop.



21. Early Writing: Key starting points

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Reversals:** It is common for children to reverse letters like 'b' and 'd' or 'p' and 'q'. Focus on the starting point (e.g., 'd' starts like a 'c' and goes up).
- **Rushing:** Focus on accurate formation rather than speed or size in the early stages.
- **Ignoring School Policies:** Find out what handwriting style (e.g., cursive, pre-cursive) your child's school uses to ensure consistency, suggests this school advice sheet and this other school.

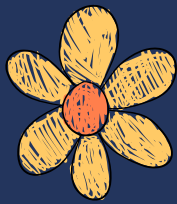
Early letter formation focuses on teaching children to start letters in the correct place, using lower-case letters, and building fine motor skills to ensure letters sit correctly on a line. Key strategies include practicing "letter families" (grouped by movement, like curly 'c' or long ladder 'l') and using sensory activities to build muscle memory, ideally practiced "little and often".

Key Components for Parents

- **Letter Families:** Letters are taught in groups based on shape and movement rather than alphabetically. This helps with memory and consistency:
 - Long Ladder Letters: Down and off: l, i, t, u, j.
 - One-Armed Robot Letters: Down and retrace up: r, b, h, k, m, n, p.
 - Curly Caterpillar Letters: Anti-clockwise: c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s.
 - Zigzag Letters: v, w, x, z.
- **Starting Points:** Most letters start at the top, except for 'c' and 'e'. Consistent starting points prevent common reversals like confusing 'b' and 'd'.
- **Fine Motor Development:** Before forming letters, children need strength in their fingers. Activities include playing with playdough, using pegs, cutting with scissors, and using tweezers.
- **"Little and Often" Practice:** 5–10 minutes of daily, fun practice is more effective than long, infrequent sessions.

Tips for Supporting at Home

- **Use Diverse Materials:** Practice writing shapes in sand, shaving foam, paint, or with chalk, rather than just paper and pencil.
- **Focus on Lowercase:** Ensure your child learns lower-case letters first, as these make up most of their writing.
- **Letter Formation Check:** Check that the pencil is held in a comfortable, functional grip.



22. The Continued Importance of Play for Language 'Rich' Development

There are current concerns that children are not experiencing enough opportunities to develop their language. Parents having heavy work schedules, children having ease of access to electronic devices such as smart phones and tablets, the appeal of television and multimedia in general can all be attributed to this worrying decline in children's language development. At nursery we consider 'language rich' play and environments in all that we do from nappy change times, simply lining up to go outside, setting the table for lunch or even creating a picnic for our tea time.

Recognising opportunities for early language acquisition is key and contributes to helping children manage emotions and communicate feelings and form and maintain relationships. Academically developing language helps symbolic thinking and supports the learning of reading and writing. It is well known that language difficulties predict problems in literacy and reading comprehension, but less well known that they may be indicative of problems in children's behaviour and mental health as well. Wherever possible build in opportunities for extending your child's language... Hands-on experiences give good opportunities for learning new words...a trip down the fruit and veg aisle at the supermarket naming and describing them is a great example of a simple every day learning opportunity where children are engaged... following this experience on with touching, smelling and tasting the produce encourages further learning and provides a context for new words to be explored.

Further language learning opportunities include: Songs, Rhymes, Poems and Limericks which are fun ways to explore rhythm and patterns of words and introducing actions, repetition, pace and volume adds extra interest and excitement.

Reading stories aloud and sharing books supports children in language development and helps them understand new concepts. Encouraging your child to notice pictures and understand words, will strengthen their language skills and widen their vocabulary.



23. Grown Up Talking

From time to time grown ups need to have discussions about topics that are inappropriate for little ears to hear...sometimes the subject matter is too worrying for them. Try not to discuss adult issues in front of your child as they take the anxiety straight to school and their work performance invariably suffers.

Adult matters might be relationship issues, money matters or health issues of a family member. I have even seen how a child's diagnosis of ADHD was shared with him and openly referred to regularly and I saw first hand how he worried about his 'disability' so much as if he bore the news that he had a disease. There is always a time to share certain information with children but it must be carefully and thoughtfully considered.

24. Useful contacts and websites

The National Sleep Foundation
sleepfoundation.org

The Lullaby Trust
lullabytrust.org.uk

The Children's Food Trust
Childrensfoodtrust.org.uk

Food-a-fact-of-life
foodafactoflife.org.uk

The walk to School Campaign
livingstreets.org saferinternet.org.uk internetmatters.org internet.org
childnet.com

gov.uk (For Prevent Duty and Safeguarding documents)

Pacey.org (Preparing your child for starting school)

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board
oscb.org.uk



If you have concerns about a child...

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

MASH is a multi-agency team which identifies risks to vulnerable adults and children

What is MASH?

Contact the Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to report concerns about a child or vulnerable adult.

For immediate danger, call 999. For non-immediate safeguarding concerns, call **0345 050 7666** or submit an online form. MASH is available Mon–Thu 8:30am–5pm and Fri 8:30am–4pm.

Contact Methods

- **Urgent Safeguarding (Child/Adult):** Call 0345 050 7666.
- **Alternative Urgent/General Enquiries:** 01865 519 800.
- **Online Reporting:**
myehmportal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/mopsafeguard#h1
- **Email:** mash-children@oxfordshire.gov.uk.
- **Out of Hours (Emergency Duty Team):** 0800 833 408.

When to Contact MASH

Contact MASH if a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.

- **Concerns include:** Suspected abuse, severe neglect, or a child living in unsafe conditions.
- **Other Concerns:** Concerns regarding child sexual exploitation (CSE) or radicalisation (PREVENT).
- **Immediate Danger:** Call 999 immediately.

If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on 0345 050 7666.



25. Finally....

There's a lot of worrying information in this booklet and it's not there to cause concern, just help parents be as informed and prepared as possible so that the natural transition to school can be a wonderful fun experience. It's exciting, and opens up a world of new opportunities and friend making. I'm very excited for you all ...when the time comes for your child to move on we hope that we have set them up for huge success and confidence to take the next steps in their learning journey.

Good luck and when it is time to leave us please do come back and visit and if you ever have any questions or concerns that are unanswered do get in touch as we are sure to know where to refer you for support!

Best wishes from Dawn and The Oxford Nursery Team.