



Skills to Practise Before September



In order to help your child get off to a flying start in September, we would be grateful if you could help your child by practising the following:

1. **Teach your child to listen.** Listening is as important as speaking at school. A teacher may need to explain something, your child may want to ask a question, or a group of children may have to work together. Develop key skills by talking to your child about anything and everything, leaving plenty of pauses for them to respond. Get them to describe their games by asking ‘What.....?’ and ‘What happened when?’ questions.
2. **Be inquisitive.** There are heaps of new things to learn about at school, so get your child into the discovery habit early. Take trips on a bus or train or visit a zoo, castle or farm to encourage a sense of curiosity, or make collections of shells, leaves or stones.
3. **Encourage creativity.** Reception classes usually do lots of fun, but focused, artwork. Prepare your child with pencils, crayons, paints, scissors and glue at home. Try modelling with playdough or clay, building imaginary worlds with constructions toys, and acting out ‘plays’ with dolls, soft toys and puppets.
4. **Stay focused.** If your child has the ability to concentrate, he’ll have a huge head start in school. Encourage concentration at home by offering activities that have a beginning, middle and end, such as doing jigsaws, building a brick tower, or colouring in a picture. Keep each activity short, make sure it is not too easy or too hard and encourage your child to finish it.
5. **Enjoy Books.** To be able to learn to read, your child needs to be familiar not only with spoken language, but also with written language, with rhythms and pace that are different from speech. Read to them regularly, give your child story and song tapes to listen to, and ask them to retell stories back to you. Show them how books work, explaining how the pages turn in sequence, the words run from left to right and from top to bottom, and how the pictures add to the story.
6. **Get physical.** A child who can move easily and confidently and is aware of the space around him will cope well in PE sessions and enjoy them all the more. Encourage your child to practise balancing and climbing, using a bat and ball, and running about in a controlled way (ie stopping and turning when you ask).