

Westacre Montessori.

Preparing your child for starting at our school .

We know it can be a big change for both you and your child when she/he starts with us and we thought you might find it useful to have some tips and ideas on ways in which you can begin to prepare your child for starting with us . These are of course just a few suggestions but we hope that you find them helpful.

Getting used to being left.

If your child isn't used to being left without you ,begin to introduce short periods of time where he/she is left with another adult. If possible make it someone who they are not too familiar with. Remember it's perfectly natural for a young child to get upset when you leave them initially . You mustn't assume that because they are distressed you are doing something that is going to harm them. It's all part of a child's development to understand that you will leave them sometimes ,but always return and when they are left they can have a good time .

Learning social skills

It's also a good idea to begin socialising your child with other children of the same age .

If your child isn't used to this they might find it a bit daunting in a classroom with lots of other children .

We don't encourage the use of dummies or comforters at school for a number of reasons.

Firstly they invariably get lost ,dropped or another child make even take it, which can cause all sorts of problems.

More importantly as children get older they need to move their mouths in a different way to talk ,consider also a child with a dummy can't smile!

We don't recommend blankets to be brought in as they are usually discarded by the child in the classroom or even in the loo. It will also prevent the child from accessing the materials from the shelves to use on their mats or at the table .

Eating and drinking

We provide milk and water for drinking at snack and lunchtime . We encourage and promote independence by allowing children to pour their own drinks. We help children to do this by our practical life materials for dry and wet pouring . We encourage the use of real crockery and glasses to use at snack /lunch times so please help us by getting your child used to using a real cup /glass .

At snack / lunch time children are expected to sit at a table with their friends whilst they eat .

If a child isn't use to this experience it is an idea to practice this with them so they know what to expect.

We offer a range of healthy snacks ,that are supplied by parents on a rota basis , fruit , raw vegs, cheese , breadsticks ,hummus etc., we encourage the children to try a little amount of everything.

We don't recommend your child stays to lunch until they are completely settled and happy to be left.

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Saying goodbye to your child .

When your child joins us we will discuss with you a settling in procedure . Some parents prefer to leave their child straight away although for the first few visits we like you stay in the car park within easy distance of being reached . We ask you to leave your child with us from the outset even if it is only for a short period of time (one hour) and that you trust us to work with you and your child to separate . We have many years experience in this and can offer practical suggestions that really do work.

Of course each child is an individual and you can work with your child's key worker for your child's needs at this most important time .

Coming into school

Please don't carry your child in, allow them to walk in independently .

We will greet your child with a "Good Morning " and will invariably expect them to say "Good Morning" back .

It is something we practice in the group enabling your child to get used to it .

When your child leaves we do shake their hands in a goodbye and say "Thank-you for coming " and the expected reply is "Thank-you for having me ". We do encourage lots on eye contact when doing this as it is only good manners to look at the person to whom you are speaking !

Helping your child independently.

Please send them to school in clothes they can easily manage themselves .

Wellies that are the right size . Slippers that they can get on easily by themselves. (ones that do up with Velcro are quite suitable as they enable your child to have enough room to get their feet in and then tighten them up afterwards.) If your child wears trousers please make sure they are loose fitting ones they can easily pull up themselves . If they need to go to the loo nothing can be more distressing for them than to have an accident if they can't get their zip ,buttons undo quickly enough, this can make a lot of difference between them being upset because they've not be able to get there in time and feeling proud and independent that they did it all themselves!

Clothing

Please ensure that you name all your child's clothes , sometimes we have several pairs of identical Peppa Pig or Thomas the tank engine slippers even just first names are great .

The school bag on your child's peg is for slippers , spare change of clothes etc., please don't overburden these by bringing in big jumpers / large books etc or backpacks that are too big for the peg.

With this help I hope it will work towards your child starting at our school happily and working with us on their Montessori journey.

Rosie Reynolds .

West Acre Montessori .

