QUEEN'S
COLLEGE

STARTING SCHOOL
PARENT BOOKLET

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents

We are very much looking forward to your child joining Queen's College Reception. To ensure a relaxed and happy transition to school, please read through the information in this booklet which I hope will answer any questions that you may have. If you are still unsure of anything or have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Starting school is a very exciting time for your child; our aim at Queen's is to make it as calm and smooth as possible.

Yours sincerely

Sam Horner (Miss)
Head of Pre-Prep

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

From Home to School

Children develop faster in the first years of their lives than at any other time.

Our aim at Queen's College Pre-Prep is to ensure a smooth, happy and successful transition from pre-school to full-time education. We aim to develop the children personally, socially and emotionally by providing a safe, happy, stimulating environment.

Planned, structured, tailored play activities form a very important part in the Reception year and are the key way for children to learn with enjoyment and challenge.

You are your child's first teacher and your support throughout their school life is an invaluable part of their continued learning.

How can you help?

Give your child **time:**

Time to talk to them

Time to listen to them

Time to go out together

Let your child **help** you to do everyday tasks. It may be quicker to do it yourself but your child will learn by **doing** things.

Whatever the activity, have **fun** doing it.

Don't force your child to play a game or take part in an activity if they don't want to, and never do things just because they are "educational".

Talking and Listening

Talk to your child all the time and join in with their games.

Talk about television and their play.

Encourage imagination as they act out situations or dress up.

Sing songs and *share* Nursery Rhymes together.

Play "I Spy" and other favourites.

Listen to what your child has to say.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

Sharing

- No child is too young to share a book.
- Let your child have books everywhere and see the whole family enjoying them.
- Join the library as a family.
- Encourage your child to handle books and demonstrate how to turn pages carefully.
- Show them the cover and encourage them to anticipate what the story may be about.
- Talk about the pictures and the story.
- Let your fingers travel along the words. Show that the words go from left to right and from top to bottom.

Words All Around

- Look out for words wherever you go; on signs, labels, in shops, at home.
- Although it is great if your child can recognise, or even write their own name, never push them into reading or writing.
- If they are starting to read let them, but check that you are doing it the same way as we do it at school.
- Use sounds (phonics), not letter names.
- If your child wants to write, use the letter formation sheets in their phonics folder. Help them to hold their pencil correctly (froggy leg fingers).
- Always use small letters – not capitals.

Grandparents and other family members are often keen to be involved in your child's early learning, and your child will be keen to show them what they have learned. Encourage family members to use the same method as at school to avoid confusion.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

The best way to help your child's early learning is through play.

- Encourage matching and sorting games. Help your child to see similarities and differences. Teach them the colours.
- Route or track games help children follow print correctly. Make sure movements are from left to right, top to bottom.
- Encourage fine motor control by helping your child thread beads. You can use macaroni and wool. Give them a reason for doing this – e.g. make a necklace for someone.
- Help them to use scissors to cut out.

Paints and Play-dough

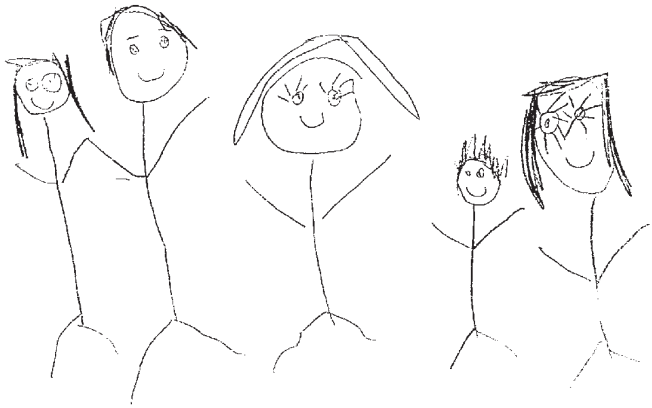
- Let your child play with paints and crayons.
- Don't show them how to draw – allow them to make marks and squiggles.
- Use play-dough.

Play-dough Recipe

HEAT UP: 2 cups flour; 1 cup salt; 2 cups water; 2 tbs oil; 2 tsps cream of tartar.

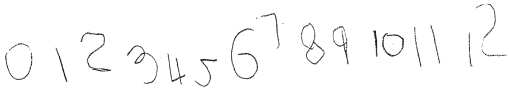
Mix well and leave to cool.

Should last for up to 6 weeks in an air-tight container.



MATHS & SCIENCE

- Many play activities will help your child's mathematical and scientific development.
- Even if maths is not your strong point, avoid saying "I was hopeless at maths". Encourage your child to approach maths/ science positively.
- Use bath-time to full advantage. Fill and empty containers of all sizes.
- Let your child help you cook. Weigh and use numbers.
- After shopping let your child count and sort items (touch the items as they count).
- Let them study their reflection in shiny cans.
- Sing counting songs and rhymes together.
- Look out for numbers everywhere, on telephones, houses, buses, pages, packets.



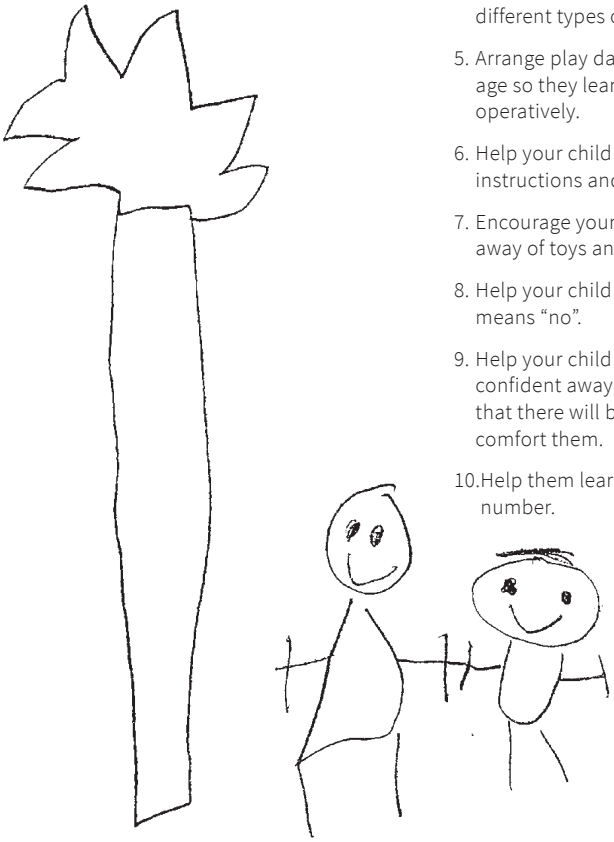
Value your child's efforts

- Whatever your child makes, be it a picture, a model or a scribble – always encourage and praise them.
- Make sure each activity is done only when your child is interested and willing.
- Display your child's efforts around the house.
- Mount pictures or put them in scrap-books.
- Encourage, support and ensure your child's success.
- Value their talk.

STARTING SCHOOL

Starting school is a big step for your child to take, and you can help make it a happy, exciting one by encouraging your child to look forward to it and preparing them in different ways.

Helping your child develop the following skills will make the transition to school a smooth one.



Top Ten Tips

1. Encourage your child to dress/undress independently – practising with uniform and PE kit.
2. Encourage your child to go to the toilet, wash and dry hands independently.
3. Teach them how to blow their own nose with a tissue.
4. Encourage them to sit at the table properly and use a knife and fork – try to introduce different types of food.
5. Arrange play dates with children of the same age so they learn to share toys and play co-operatively.
6. Help your child learn how to carry out simple instructions and tasks.
7. Encourage your child to help with the tidying away of toys and clothes.
8. Help your child to understand that “no” means “no”.
9. Help your child become comfortable and confident away from you. Reassure them that there will be other adults to support and comfort them.
10. Help them learn their address and telephone number.

STARTING SCHOOL

The start of the school day

The school day starts at 8.30am. Pre-school care is available in our hall from 7.45am for those parents who have to drop their children early.

Parents may also wait with their child in our entrance hall. The bell is rung at 8.30am and you can take your child to class to settle him/her in. It is advisable, however, not to prolong the 'goodbyes'.

A Week in Reception

A typical week's programme may include:

- Daily School assembly and singing.
- Early language and literacy work using Synthetic Phonics with high emphasis on phonic teaching.
- Practical and recorded mathematics sessions.
- Understanding of the world – half termly topics (including a weekly Forest School session).
- Two PE sessions – games/gymnastics/dance.
- Swimming – lessons in the school pool start in the Autumn term and continue weekly throughout the year
- Expressive Arts and Design which includes: Imagination and role play, movement and dance, a music session, art and design activities.
- Computing, ipads and interactive white boards are used each day in the Reception classrooms. The children also visit the Junior School computer suite for specific computer lessons and have the opportunity to use programmable toys and resources.
- A fun French session is taught each week.
- At 10.15am each day the children have a drink of milk or water and sliced fruit, before their playtime.
- A daily rest time between 12.20 – 12.45pm when we share stories or watch educational programmes.

STARTING SCHOOL

The end of the school day

School ends at 3.30pm each day. After-school care is available for children whose parents are unable to collect them at 3.30pm. Where possible we encourage you to collect your child at 3.30pm – they get very tired after a long school day.

Final Note

You have already helped your child achieve so much, encouraging and teaching them to walk, to talk, to eat...don't stop now!

If you have a concern – no matter how minor it may seem, please come in and talk to us. We want your child to feel safe, happy and confident about coming to school.

Enjoy sharing your child's school experiences. Talk to them, listen to them, join in with them and most importantly of all have fun together!

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