



School Readiness



To all parents and carers,

We were planning to hold a parents session regarding starting school and school readiness.

The aims of the session were

- To establish what is expected of children starting reception
- Share ideas and strategies to gain the skills required
- To share what we do at nursery and why we do it, to gain a better understanding.

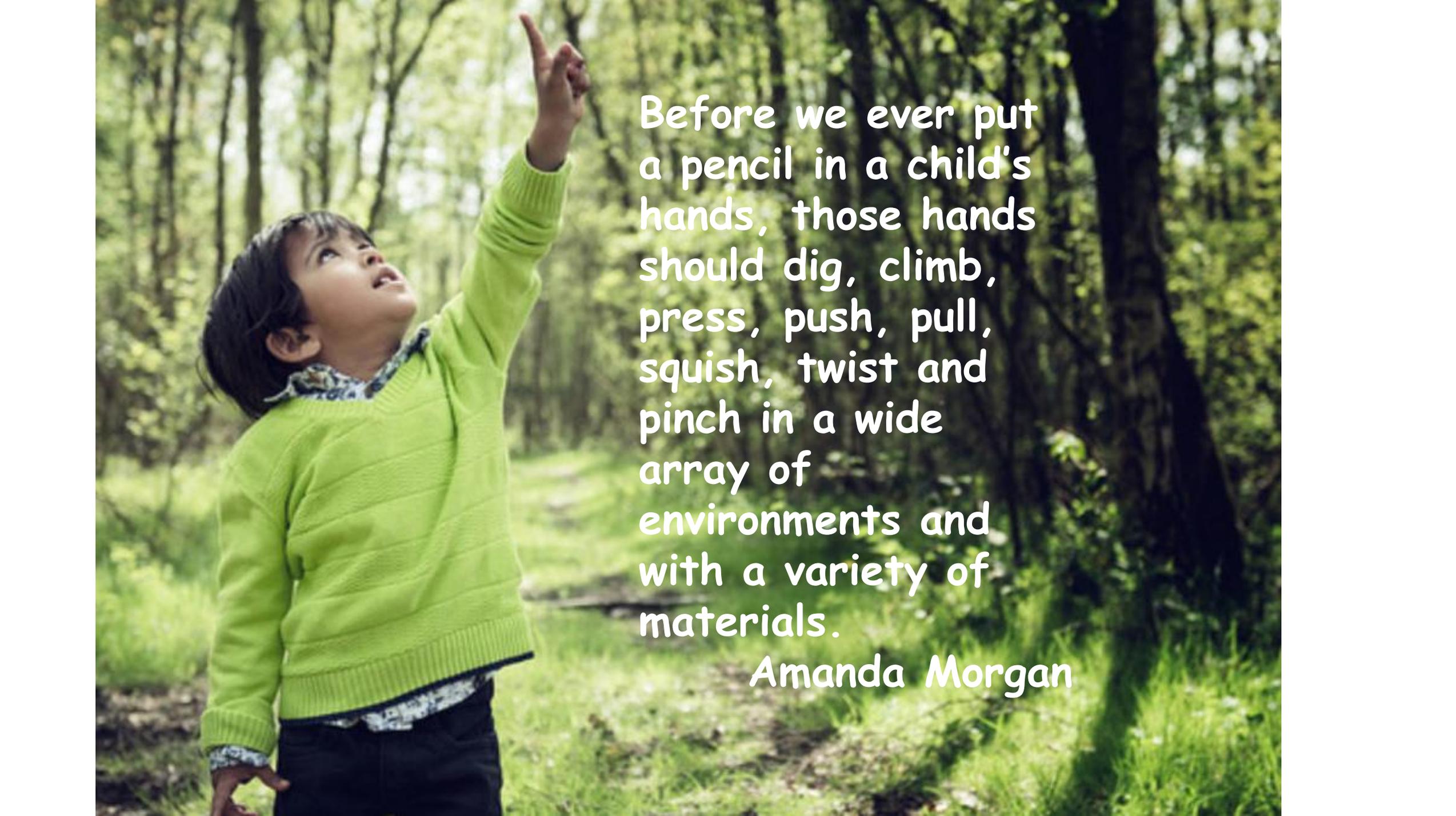
Unfortunately, due to the circumstances this meeting is not possible, however we would still like to share the information with you in preparation for your child starting Reception class in September.

We hope you find the information useful and gives you more understanding of the learning that takes place in both Nursery and Reception.

If you have any questions or queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Looking forward to seeing you as soon as we can.

Mrs Craig and Miss Atkinson

A young child with dark hair, wearing a bright green sweater, stands in a lush green forest. The child is looking upwards and pointing their right index finger towards the sky. The background is filled with tall trees and vibrant green foliage, creating a natural and serene setting.

Before we ever put
a pencil in a child's
hands, those hands
should dig, climb,
press, push, pull,
squish, twist and
pinch in a wide
array of
environments and
with a variety of
materials.

Amanda Morgan



- Within Reception class we continue to work on building up the child's strength in their shoulders and wrists.
- We participate in 'Dough Disco' and 'Squiggle while you Wiggle' where we use large movements to move.
- We practice our pincer grip skills to get children ready to hold a pencil by using tweezers to pick up small objects, use pegs, thread, sorting small objects.
- Children can access the outside area daily and here they can develop their large movements and gross muscle strength eg by digging, climbing.
- We have a range of mark making resources; chalk, pencils, coloured pens and paint brushes where children can experiment with both large gross movements as well as fine (smaller scale) movements.



School Readiness

Some things you can help your child to get ready to start school are:

- Eating
- Self care
- Getting dressed and undressed on their own
- Independence
- Routines
- Going to the toilet
- Counting skills
- Interest in the world and new activities
- Sharing and taking turns
- Speaking and literacy
- Listening and understanding
- Writing skills



School Readiness

There are a number of differences that children will experience when starting school as well as some skills you can help them to develop before they start.

Eating - children will eat alongside their friends in the hall. If having a school dinner, this will be pre-decided by you and your child and offered on a tray which the children carry to their table. The children will be encouraged to use a knife and fork to hold and cut their food. After finishing their lunch, children are encouraged to take their tray to the cleaning station. If eating a packed lunch, children are encouraged to open their own packages.

You can help by encouraging your child to carry their own plate to the table, use a knife and fork independently, pour their own drink and scrape their left over food into the bin.

Self care - within our setting we have easy access to sinks where children are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting, before eating and after being outdoors. There are also tissues accessible where children are encouraged to wipe their own nose.

You can help at home by teaching these skills and the importance of hand washing.

Getting dressed and undressed on their own - Being able to get a jumper off or undo the buttons on a cardigan can be quite tricky when you are young. Within our PE lessons, we practise getting changed from our uniform into our PE kit and changed again after the lesson. We encourage children to be as independent as possible when getting changed and lots of praise is given for trying.

You can help at home by encouraging your child to get dressed by themselves, giving them experiences to undo buttons and zips, as well as putting on and taking off socks and shoes and their coat. Remember to give plenty of time to practise as it is a tricky skill. When taking off jumpers and t-shirts encourage child to use one hand to pull sleeve down and pull up other arm, then repeat with other arm before taking over head.



Independence - within Reception, we try to develop independence and resilience by allowing children to have a go and experiment. For some children, coming to school all day, every day is a huge change.

You can help by preparing your child for a change in routine. Letting them know who is picking them up at the end of the school day.

Routines - Within Reception class we have a daily routine.

At home, it is a good idea to practise having a routine, such as eating at the same time we will at school, having a bedtime routine. Practising putting on school uniform and having it out ready in a specific place the night before allows your child to grow an understanding of the days they will be attending school.

Going to the toilet - within Reception, children are encouraged to go to the toilet independently, although staff are always on hand to offer help and support if needed.

You can help at home by encouraging children to go to the toilet and use toilet roll, flush the toilet after use and wash their hands.

Counting skills - within Reception we play lots of games and learn about number. We like to sing number rhymes and songs.

At home, you can sing songs, practice counting up and back, count objects and play games with numbers. Practice recognising numbers; on doors, buses, car registration plates, objects around the house.

Interest in the world and new activities - Children are encouraged to explore and experiment, as well as, finding out things for themselves within Reception class.

At home, let them think about why things happen, what is happening, investigate for themselves.

Sharing and turn taking - These skills are encouraged within Reception class.

At home, encourage your child to share with siblings. Share fruit or take turns when playing games.



Speaking and literacy – Within Reception, children develop the skills to read. This starts with listening to stories and telling a story using pictures. They develop skills to use speech to talk about themselves; their strengths, abilities, needs and feelings.

At home, you can help by looking at stories and talking about what could be happening in the picture, what might happen at the end of the story? Talk with your family about their feelings, how they relate to them and what makes them happy, sad, worried, scared.

Listening and understanding – Within the school day in Reception class, children are encouraged to sit and listen for short periods of time. We encourage children to follow instructions and to learn and follow rules and boundaries.

At home, you can encourage this by offering instructions.

Writing skills – Within Reception, children develop the skills needed to write. To begin with, we concentrate on building up muscles in the shoulders and wrists. We encourage children to hold pencils in the correct 'pincer grip' position and write letters in the correct formation. We make writing fun and offer mark making resources in a variety of areas in the classroom.

At home, you can help your child by demonstrating writing, such as shopping lists, letters and encourage children to make their own (remember all marks made are writing). You can also plan pretend parties, designs for a model or construction. Use a variety of mark making equipment; chinks, brushes, pens, pencils. They could try tracing over or copying their own name (use a capital letter for the first letter only).

Play based learning:
making learning fun.

Exploring and investigating together:
alongside peers and adults, taking risks and
learning new things.

**Encouragement to keep trying
if encounter difficulties:**
develop resilience and a have a go
attitude.

Encourage independence:
small stepped achievable approach;
start by putting on coat
independently, then zipping it up.

Effective
Practice

Focus on process over outcome:
Encourage children to enjoy what they
are doing, not the end goal of what
they are doing. Encourage them to tell
you the process of what they are
doing.

Praise and believing in children:
Offer praise for achievements, no
matter how small.

**Taking time to support
children to celebrate own
achievements:**
Really celebrate all achievements.



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

To develop personal, social and emotional development, you can practice these skills

- Sharing and taking turns
- Playing games with others
- Enjoy interactions with others
- Ability to talk about self, needs and feelings
- Starting to show sensitivity towards others needs and feelings
- Enjoy learning, are interested and enjoy asking questions
- Understand the need to follow rules and boundaries
- Able to ask for help
- Happy to be away from parents/carers
- Feeling confident about starting school
- Making friends

Mental Health and Well-Being

Starting school is an exciting experience but can often be a worrying time for children.

- Observe, understand and listen to your child's anxieties, worries and concerns. Talk to your child about starting school.
- Be aware of signs: cues, habits, changes in behaviour. These could be not sleeping, bed wetting
- Expressing emotions and feelings: use a mirror to explore emotions
- Coping mechanisms and skills: talk with your child about what they are worried about, how they can cope when at school and at home



Physical Development

To develop physical development, you can practice these skills:

- Can use a knife and fork. Can open packets, lids etc of packed lunch
- Can wash hands and dry without help
- Can wipe own nose
- Can button/unbutton t-shirt and use a zip
- Can put on own shoes and socks
- Can change into PE kit
- Can put on own coat
- Can go to the toilet on own, wipe own bottom and flush the toilet

Communication and Language

To develop communication and language, you can practice these skills:

- Communicating choices
- Likes to listen to stories and explore books and pictures
- Can listen to others and respond
- Able to talk in a small group
- Negotiating and beginning to problem solve
- Can sit and listen for short periods
- Understands rules and can follow instructions
- Can respond to an adult's request
- Asking and answering questions
- Having a two-way conversation

To develop reading and writing, you can practice these skills:

- Have an enjoyment of books
 - Can turn the pages of a book, hold it the correct way up
 - Starting to recognise name when it is written down
 - Enjoys making marks in different ways, with a variety of tools
 - Practicing holding a pencil
 - Notice the marks they make with their bodies
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- To be able to handle a pencil and form letters, it is important that children strengthen their fine motor skills. This can be done with fun activities such as jigsaws, making marks in paint with hands and fingers, using tweezers, turning pages of a book, dough disco, using chunky pencils, highlighters, little notepads.
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- Large motor skills are important too. Large movements with arms such as making marks with paint brushes and water, music and movement, making shapes and movements in the air.
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- To encourage and strengthen pincer grip when holding a pencil encourage picking up small items such as cheerios, moving items from one bowl to another using finger and thumb, squeezing and pinching playdoh with finger and thumb. Use tweezers to pick up beads, pegs on a washing line, tearing paper to make collages, small construction such as Lego, rotating pencil between finger and thumb, finger rhymes, flicking paper balls into a goal.

Modelling writing

- Shared writing gives children opportunities to see an adult write and make connections between spoken language and the written word. It can help them to develop vocabulary, an awareness of sentences composition and phonic knowledge.
- Share writing together by scribing a child's caption for a picture, write a shopping list, birthday cards.
- You could write a story or a song together; adult writes child's words
- Talk about why you are writing, where to start your writing on paper. Say each word as you write it, point put spaces, highlight what sound the words begin with
- Sometimes a deliberate mistake can demonstrate children's awareness of what is being written and show that even adults make mistakes in writing and they can be corrected.

Most importantly...make it fun!

- Organise a pretend party, write and design invitations.
- Send messages to each other
- Follow their interest. If they love building, ask they to design and write a plan
- Write what they would like to do tomorrow, at the weekend
- Breath and draw on glass, on the shower glass, with water on paving
- Use writing implements that are exciting; fluffy pink pen, marvel pencil, stick pencils in sand/mud

For further information please explore the BBC Bitesize website and look at the parent resources and children's games and videos about "Starting School":

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1>