



Wild Things - Droitwich

School readiness policy

Rationale

It is a big step for your child to start school, after being in a solely early-years aged environment. Your child will experience a number of differences, which we will help to prepare them for.

As your child approaches being one year away from starting Reception (so the September after their third birthday, with school starting the September after their fourth birthday), we will work with you to continue to increasingly support your child's independence and school readiness.

Procedure

We follow 'The Road to School' map (see Appendix A) to make sure your child has the opportunity to be as prepared as possible for starting school. In reality, the path to being ready to start school starts on your child's first day with us – we are constantly working to help your child to develop, grow, gain independence and master essential life skills such as:

- putting on and removing their shoes and clothing
- using cutlery and scissors
- being a good friend and citizen
- gaining the necessary strength throughout their core, shoulders, arms, wrists and hands to be able to comfortably hold a pencil for extended periods of time without experiencing pain
- to be able to toilet independently
- holding fun, engaging two-way conversations with peers and adults

This list is far from exhaustive, but just gives some examples of what we are working towards from your child's very first day.

Options as your child approaches school age

There are a number of options open to you as your child approaches school age.

Your child can:

- remain with Wild Things - Droitwich
- go to a nursery preschool room or dedicated standalone preschool
- go to a preschool attached to a local school

All Ofsted-registered Early Years settings are obliged to prepare your child fully for school and follow the EYFS to build a curriculum that will prepare your child emotionally, physically and educationally for starting school. Your child's personality and your own preferences will form the basis for your decision.

We would advise visiting as many different settings as you can in order to get a true feel for what they offer and to make sure that the setting will be right for you and your child. Childcare places are in very high demand, locally, so be sure to allow plenty of time to make your decision.

Questions you may wish to ask a setting

It can be hard to know what to ask when considering or viewing a setting, so here is a list of questions you may wish to consider:

- How many children will each staff member look after?
- How will my child's independence with eating and drinking be supported?
- How will my child's independence with toileting be supported?
- How much time will my child spend outside?
- What is your teaching style (otherwise known as a pedagogy)?
- What mark-making opportunities will my child have?
- How do you prepare my child for school?
- How do you reward positive behaviour and help a child when they are finding it more challenging?
- Will my child have an opportunity for a nap or downtime each day?

To get you started, our answers to these questions are given in Appendix B.

Things you may wish to consider

All children are different, as are all settings and there is no one-size-fits-all. It is important to choose a setting that will be right for your child, that they will thrive in and that will engage and challenge them.

Consider things such as:

- Staff to child ratio
- Your child's own personal learning style
- Whether your child is more comfortable in large groups or smaller settings
- The level of training of the staff
- Whether the setting will suit your child's activity levels throughout the day – some children still benefit from a nap at 4 years old, others need active stimulation throughout the day

And finally...

Remember that there is no right or wrong answer, and each child is different. What is right for one child might not be right for another.

There is a huge demand for childcare in the local area so if you do decide to move your child to a different setting please give us as much notice as possible so that we can confirm an offer of a space to another family for when your child moves on.

Signature: Meg Hearne

Date: 06 February 2024

Appendix A – School Readiness Policy

The Road To School

This tracker helps you and your child prepare for school.

Everyone starts school with different abilities - your teacher will help you progress at your own level.

Speaking & literacy

- I like to read stories & look at picture books
- I am able to talk about myself, my needs & feelings
- I am practising recognising my name when it's written down

Listening & understanding

- I am able to sit still and listen for a short while
- I can follow instructions
- I understand the need to follow rules

Writing skills

- I like tracing patterns & colouring in
- I enjoy making marks
- I am practising holding a pencil

Sharing & turn taking

- I can share toys & take turns
- I like playing games with others
- I like interacting with other children

Counting skills

- I enjoy practising counting objects
- I like saying number rhymes & playing counting games
- I can recognise some numbers when they are written down

Going to the toilet

- I can go to the toilet on my own, wipe myself properly & flush
- I can wash & dry my hands without any help

Routines

- I have practised putting on my uniform & getting ready to leave on time
- I have a good bedtime routine so I'm not feeling tired for school
- I'm learning to eat at the times I will on school days

What are you looking forward to the most? Is there anything you're unsure of?

Interest in the world & new activities

- I enjoy learning about the world around me
- I am interested in exploring new activities or environments
- I like asking questions

Eating

- I can use a knife & fork
- I can open my packed lunch on my own
- I am confident at opening wrappers & packaging

Self-care

- I know when to wash my hands
- I can wipe my nose
- I can ask for help if I don't feel well

Getting dressed & undressed on my own

- I can button & unbutton my shirt & use a zip
- I can put my own shoes & socks on
- I can change into my PE kit & put my coat on

Independence

- I am happy to be away from my mummy, daddy or my main carer
- I am happy to tidy my belongings & look after my things
- I am feeling confident about starting school

School bus

School

Nursery Resources
www.nurseryresources.org

Remember - learning is not a competition, children learn at different rates. For more ideas to help prepare your child for school, talk to your childcare practitioner.

Appendix B – School Readiness Policy

- How many children will each staff member look after?
 - One member of staff will generally look after three children of mixed ages. This may occasionally rise to four under certain circumstances and following a thorough risk assessment.
- How will my child's independence with eating and drinking be supported?
 - Your child will be encouraged and supported to use a spoon, fork and knife; to butter their own toast; to eat independently; to drink from an open cup at mealtimes; to eat a wide range and variety of healthy food; to talk positively about tastes, textures, scents and be open to trying new flavours and foods without any pressure.
 - Children are free to eat their food in whichever order they wish. No food is used as a reward, incentive or put on a pedestal. Children are encouraged to 'listen to their body' and to stop eating when they feel full.
- How will my child's independence with toileting be supported?
 - We will work with you to support your child's independence with toileting once your child is showing the signs of readiness as stated on the Eric website.
 - Your child will be supported and encouraged to pull their own clothing up and down, and will progress from the potty to the toilet when they are confident to take this step.
 - Your child will always be respected and spoken to in a positive way regarding toileting. Accidents will be handled with kindness and sensitivity.
 - Your child's privacy and dignity will be preserved at all times to the best of our abilities.
- How much time will my child spend outside?
 - As much as possible! We believe your child can learn so much from experiencing the outdoors – resilience, empathy, their place in the world, an understanding and love for nature, and a connection to our environment.
 - Many of our therapy animals are based outside, so increasing the amount of time your child spends outside will increase their opportunities for interacting with them.

- What is your teaching style (otherwise known as a pedagogy)?
 - I do not subscribe to one style of teaching as all children are different and some respond better to one way, and others to another.
 - I am influenced by Montessori, a self-directed form of teaching involving hands-on learning and collaborative play, and the original Forest School concept developed in Scandinavia where children are encouraged to explore and create their own relationship with nature.
 - I have a loose theme that lasts four or five weeks, but weave in children's interests as they arise.
- What mark-making opportunities will my child have?
 - There are lots of opportunities throughout the day to explore mark making, both inside and out.
 - The children are free to explore mark making at any point in their play.
 - We have a chalk board that can be used inside or out, and big pavement chinks for drawing on the ground outside. We make our own paint from mud and plants, which we use on our washable canvas outside. We use paint, crayons and felt pens on a regular basis.
- How do you prepare my child for school?
 - We follow the 'Road to School' map and encourage your child to develop independence with toileting, exploring friendships, using cutlery, putting their clothes, shoes and coats on and taking them off by themselves, understanding their place in the community and learning something of the local town. We encourage good road sense and walking safely together on pavements.
 - We work with you to address any concerns, and to make the transition to school as smooth as possible.
 - We introduce your child to larger groups of children by regularly meeting up with other childminders and their children and going to parks, play groups and organised activities such as Debutots and Nature Makers.
- How do you reward positive behaviour and help a child when they are finding it more challenging?
 - We nurture intrinsic motivation, meaning your child will do something (and continue to do it) because they feel good inside when they do it. Extrinsic motivation can fade over time, or the child may cease to

continue the desired activity when the external reward is no longer present so we try to avoid this.

- We celebrate a child's successes with high fives, congratulations and observations such as 'that must have felt really good when you did x'.
- We point out positive observations such as 'I noticed you took turns really nicely when you and x were playing with the trains'.
- When children are finding it more challenging we will look for moments of success to build upon. We will offer more direct suggestions and will model the expected behaviour.
- We work on the principles of restorative justice. We do not force any child to say sorry. We state what has happened, observe how both children are feeling ("I can see you are frustrated because x has the toy you want. X is sad because you took it before he had finished playing"). We then work with the child in an age appropriate way to come up with a solution ("Let's give X the toy back until he has finished, and we'll play with this great toy while we are waiting"). If a child (A) has been hurt or upset by the actions of another child (B), we will comfort child A, then use the same process to help child B to understand their own and child A's feelings and to think about what might help child A to feel better. They can then take that action or we can model it for them.
- Will my child have an opportunity for a nap or downtime each day?
 - Yes, we will always provide an opportunity in the afternoon for your child to sleep or to have quiet time.
 - A child's need for afternoon naps will decrease as they get older but many children will continue to need a nap of some length until between the ages of 3 and 4 years.
 - Even after the nap has been dropped, your child will benefit from having a period of low stimulation and activity for a time in the afternoon. We use this time to encourage sharing of books, mindfulness, quiet conversation, and listening to calming music.