



Welcome to Walsh C of E Infant and Junior School

Ideas from your teachers.





Practical advice to give your child the best start

Starting Infant School is an exciting new chapter in your child's life. We are aware of the importance of this big step, and are dedicated to helping children settle in quickly and start enjoying school life.

At Walsh, we understand that it can feel daunting when your child starts 'big school'. But by the time your child reaches the end of EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), many parents are astonished at how much they have learned and developed in a year. So here are some helpful tips about the learning behaviours we try to foster in EYFS and some ideas to get your child off to a great start in developing these skills.

Social skills

Making friends in their new class can be very exciting for your children. It is lovely to see these friendships blossom in the classroom, and the shared learning experiences that take place with their new friends is something we really enjoy helping to develop.



Learning in a classroom is a social activity where children learn and develop through playing alongside their peers. Having the skills to make friends, empathise, understanding how others feel and negotiate, taking turns and considering others wants and opinions, are an important part of learning in the EYFS classroom. The classroom provide the best opportunities for these social skills to be practised; planning specific activities which use play as a way of modelling good social skills to the children. The social skills developed in these early years of school become a model for friendships, and will also play a vital role in future learning and development. You can support their developing social skills by arranging play dates with children from their new class arranging to go to a local park with some parents and children.



Turn-taking games such as snakes and ladders or snap are brilliant for developing social skills, and can be a great way give your child opportunities to practise negotiation and turn-taking. especially when the adults don't always let the children win!

Practise greetings

This is an important skill that can help children feel more confident when they start school. Showing them how to initiate a conversation with someone else, 'hello, my name is ...' or 'would you like to play with me?'.will help them to start building friendships. We always greet children and other adults and as we say hello we practise looking at the person, and develop eye contact. We also learn and practise greetings, asking to join others games or inviting others to join a game they are playing. Giving your child this language will support them when faced with lots of new friendly faces to play with and a welcome greeting when they see you at the end of the day.



Listening and communication

A large proportion of learning happens through listening in the classroom and we regularly talk with our class about being good listeners and communicators both with their friends and the teachers. To help them with their listening skills, you might like to try playing games and singing action songs such as Simon Says or Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes where your child has to listen and communicate to be able to join in successfully. Or, build funny and unusual instructions into routine events, such as: put your coat away and then come and sit at the table with your hands on your head — these all help to sharpen their listening skills and raise a smile. We use lots of these in the school day.



Finally, reading a story and stopping at different points to ask them what has just happened is a good way to hone listening and communication skills: Can they recall what has happened? What do they think might happen next? And of course, acting out the story together is a brilliant way to practice communication skills , especially if you then perform it to an audience. We will be inviting you into school for a bedtime story session, where we will model reading to groups of children.



Practise conversations

Giving your child opportunities where they have a turn to talk and then have to listen is a valuable way to teach them vital speaking and listening skills. One example of this is taking turns to talk about the best part of your day over the dinner table. Focus in on their listening skills: can they ask a question to find out more? Can they remember what their sibling's favourite part of the day was? Some children don't want to talk about their day at school and might say they played all day or say they can't remember and this is normal. They may say something at a different time maybe when they are playing.



Concentration

Maintaining concentration throughout the school day can be challenging and is a major reason children are so tired in their first weeks of school. Building kits like 'Lego' are excellent for encouraging your child's resilience – especially if they can finish the whole activity in one sitting, asking them to colour or draw a picture then extend it for 1 minute more than your child wants.





Race-the-clock games are also effective for improving concentration. We use a variety of timers in the classroom to challenge the children to complete activities within a time limit to develop focus and concentration. This can also be helpful when you need to be somewhere on time and you can encourage the children to race to get their socks and shoes on!

Independence

Independence is one of the most important skills initially as children get used to doing things for themselves without you there to help them all the time. It is a big transition but increasing your child's confidence to have a try and getting them used to doing things for themselves will set them up to

succeed. Ask your child to help you by giving them routine tasks which are achievable on their own. For example, whilst cooking dinner, ask them to wash vegetables or stack plastic dishes and praise them for doing it all on their own.

When your child asks for help, try giving them another opportunity to have a go themselves —perhaps breaking down the task for them, "Why don't you put on one shoe and I'll help with the other?" We always encourage the children to have a go and try themselves, and soon they are able to achieve what they wanted without help, they just needed encouragement from the adults around them to have another go.

Throughout the process of your child starting school please remember that we will have the same aim in mind —to help your child develop the all-important lifelong learning behaviours that are so helpful for a happy, successful EYFS year —and beyond!



Teach the language of feelings

Describing how you are feeling, as well as talking about emotions that your child may be experiencing (for example: I can see that you are cross that we have to leave the playground because you are having fun), can help increase your child's emotional literacy, which can in turn help them understand their own and others feelings in social situations. We have 'A box full of feelings' where we explore happy, sad, angry and frustrated, through stories, games, circle times – listening and talking, acting out scenarios. We teach them it is ok and normal to feel these feelings and teach them how to recognise how they are feeling.



Develop a love of books

We want all children to love books and reading. You can help your child to be excited, enthusiastic, curious and confident about reading and sharing books.



As you read with your children, keep them involved by asking questions about the story, and let them fill in the blanks. You can also create activities related to the stories you're reading.

Research has found that reading or sharing a books every day, even for 10 minutes can be vital in preparing children for school.

Reading aloud together can help a child grow into a confident learner and help them develop their language skills. Bedtime is the perfect time to relax and share a book, some children love reading the same book 'again and again', doing so helps children learn words which may be new to their vocabulary and consolidates their understanding of the words.

When your child starts they will chose a 'teddy bear' book that they will bring home to share with you. Ask them questions about the story, predict what will happen, how the characters were feeling, their favourite part

- **Set aside some time**

Find somewhere quiet without any distractions - turn off the TV/radio/computer.

- **Ask your child to choose a book**

Sharing books they have chosen shows you care what they think and that their opinion matters. This means they are more likely to engage with the book.

- **Sit close together**

Encourage your child to hold the book themselves and/or turn the pages.

- **Point to the pictures**

If there are illustrations, relate them to something your child knows. Ask them to describe the characters or situation or what will happen next. Encourage them to tell you the story by looking at the pictures.

- **Encourage your child to talk about the book**

Talking about the characters and their dilemmas helps children understand relationships and is an excellent way for you to get to know each other or discuss difficult issues. Give your child plenty of time to respond. Ask them what will happen next, how a character might be feeling or how the book makes them feel.

- **And lastly, above all - make it fun!**

It doesn't matter how you read with a child, as long as you both enjoy the time together. Don't be afraid to use funny voices - children love this!

Practical skills for school

There's a whole range of practical skills that will come in handy during a busy school day. If children have practised each of these before they start school, it can help them to be independent and feel confident:

- **Recognising their name** – it's handy if your child can find their space in the cloakroom (although their pegs will have a picture on it too) and their clothes and belongings. Labelling their clothes will help both your child and us to keep track of their belongings: iron on labels or a name written on the label in permanent marker work perfectly well. Don't forget to label bags, hats, scarfs, gloves and shoes. If it can be taken off please label it.
- **Going to the toilet on their own** – being able to use the toilet and wash their hands afterwards will help your child to feel independent. If they are having fun at school, children may leave going to the toilet to the last possible moment, so reminding them to pay attention to when they need to go can reduce the chances of an accident.
- **Putting their coat and shoes on** – this is an important skill all children need to be able to do. Show your child how to pull the arm the right way and how to zip up their coat. The quicker they are, the more time they'll have for learning and play. Distinguishing between left and right shoes can be tricky, so try drawing two halves of a smiley face in their shoes to make a complete smiley face when the shoes are placed together correctly.
- **Dressing** – this is another key skill that will really help us. Being able to dress and undress independently will help your child when it comes to changing in and out of their PE kit. When choosing shoes (velcro!) and clothes (easily washable!), try to make sure that they are easy to take off and put back on. We will help with fiddly zips or buttons but the more your child can do on their own, the more independent they'll be.
- **Eating** – whether having a school or a packed lunch, helping your child prepare for lunchtime is very beneficial. Useful lunchtime skills include: being able to use a knife and fork, opening their own lunchbox and being able to open everything in their lunchbox – some yoghurt tubes and drink cartons can be quite tricky so do check at home beforehand.

Tips to support maths at home

- **Playing games** : There are lots of ways games can be helpful in supporting children's maths, whether it's identifying the numbers on a card or counting their way round a board. Building things with bricks is a good way of developing maths skills through solving problems ('How many red bricks?', 'How many blue bricks?' and 'How many altogether?') and practising using the language of maths ('Hmm, I wonder which is the longest brick?' or 'Could you pass me the cube over there').
- **Time**: Talking about the time at which different things happen and looking at the clock together during the day is a great way of learning about time.
- **Using objects at home**: Finding the same number of different items can help your child to understand what numbers represent, for example finding six pegs, six spoons of paint powder or six segments of orange. It's also good to practise making patterns with objects too, putting things in order of size, height or weight.
- **Counting** – helping lay the table – how many forks have you got? Can you put 5 spoons on the table please. Or when playing counting out cars, dolls, bricks.

Out and about:

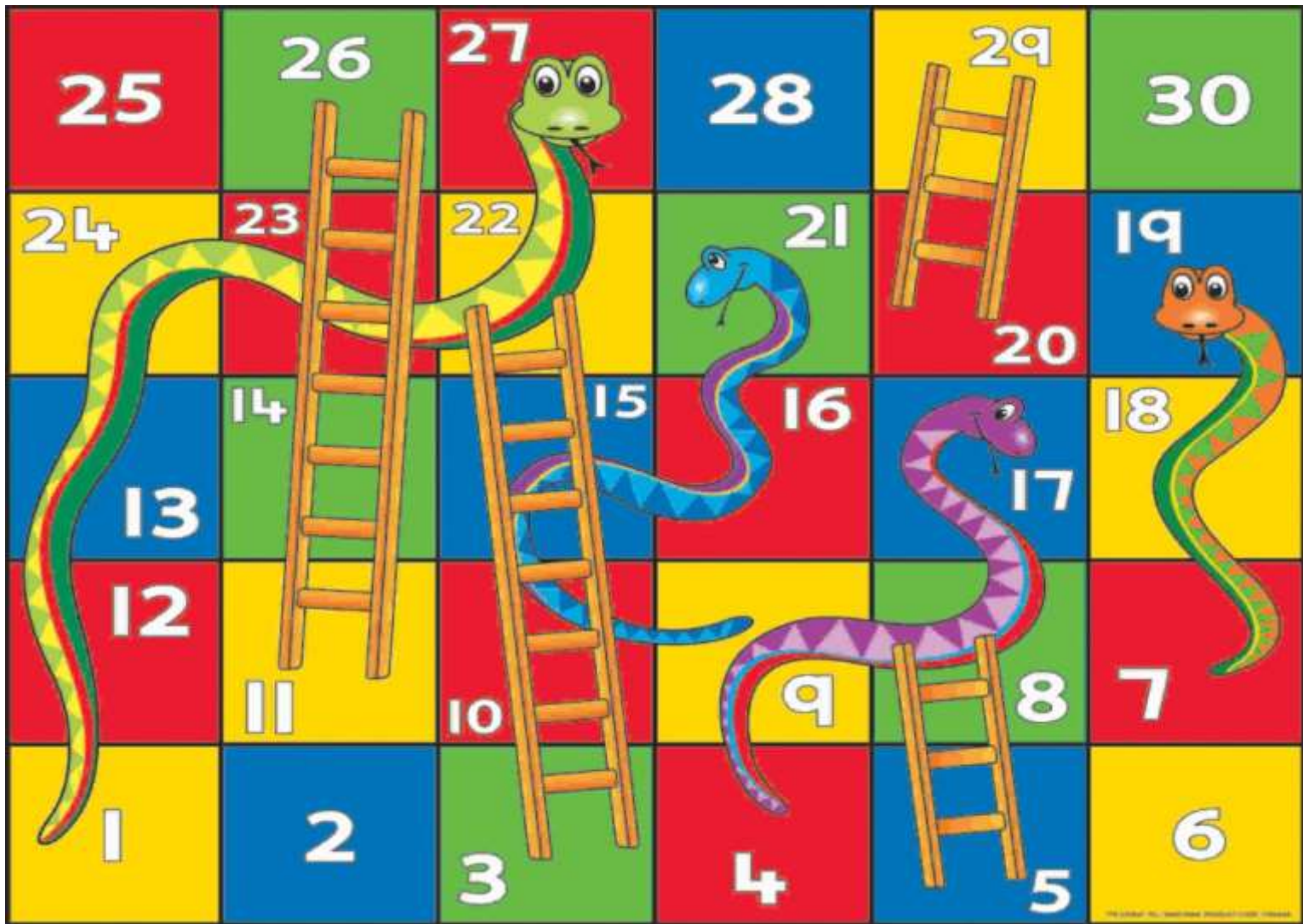
- **Money**: This is a useful way to introduce children to simple maths. At the shops, you could ask them to guess how much two items might cost. Give them small amounts and see what can they buy, or talk about the items you buy: which are cheaper and which are more expensive?
- **Counting everything**: 'How many buses / lamp posts / squirrels have we seen?'
- **Going on a shape hunt**: 'How many circles / triangles / squares / rectangles can you see between here and home?', 'Are they 2D or 3D?'

RM maths – at school, when they are secure in the basic concepts of counting and recognising numbers, we will set your child up with a login to our secure programme that is linking to their maths learning. We have a school challenge for completing 100 minutes, they earn rewards for a maths toolkit.

Ideas for games.

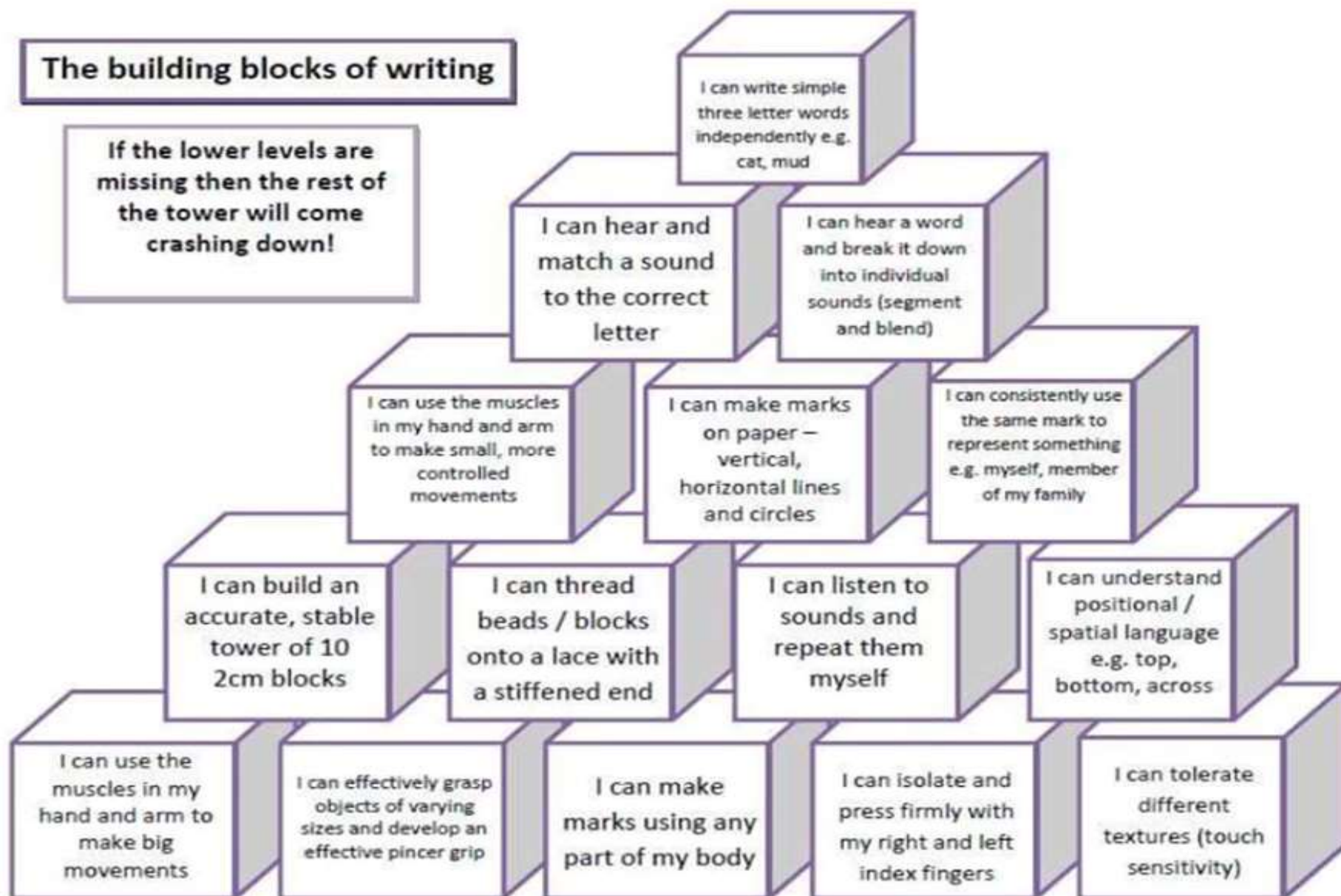


- Dominoes is a good game to play
- Play different versions of dominoes- the total of the whole domino, subtract the larger number.
Any of your ideas.
- Play lots of 'dice' game.
- Play the game normally.
- Then you could play backwards.
- Use 2 dice, use the total to move forwards/backwards.
- Any different ideas?



The building blocks of writing

If the lower levels are missing then the rest of the tower will come crashing down!



The Effective Characteristics of Learning

Superhero Happy!



Playing and Exploring

I am curious

I join in with open ended activities

I take part in make believe and pretend play

I engage in role play

I initiate activities

I learn by trial and error

Superhero Active!



Active Learning

I can maintain focus and not get distracted easily

I keep trying when challenges occur

I show satisfaction in meeting goals

I am proud of how I accomplish something

I enjoy meeting challenges

Superhero Thinker!



Creating and thinking critically

I think of ideas

I find ways to solve problems

I find new ways to do things

I make predictions

I develop grouping sequences, cause and effect

I check how well my activities are going

I plan and make decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem, reach a goal

I use language of thinking and learning - think, know, remember, idea, plan, learn, make sense, trying to do and figure things out.

Have a wonderful summer and we look forward to seeing you again in September.

