**Settling in at school**

By mid October most children should have settled in well at school. The new school year can be a worrying time for parents with many changes in the lives of their children. New teachers, new faces and friends, new books and that’s just the start! To help your child adapt to school life here are a few tips:

1. Talk to your child each day about what they did in school. If your child is asking for attention, give it to him/her. Encourage communicating clearly and speaking in a pleasant voice. Do not listen to whining and children will soon learn it is ineffective. If your home is loud (TV, radio on) children will naturally raise their voices to be heard. Discourage this practice and gradually your child will feel that she can talk to you without competition.

2. The school day is very structured. If children don’t have a structured home-life, this can be very difficult for them to accept. Set up a regular routine before and after school. For instance, be prepared for the morning. Have a healthy breakfast and have your child in time in the line so he/she can walk in with the other children. It is also important that children have a structured routine after school. For example, home, quick snack, homework, play, dinner, play, bed. It is not a good idea to have a big meal before homework as children (and adults) can get sluggish and tired after a big meal.

3. Reward good behaviour with praise. Make sure your child understands you won’t accept anything but civilized behaviour. Teach them also that they can’t always get what they want no matter how good they are. Part of life is learning that all things are not possible. In the long term you are teaching your child a very important lesson in life.

4. Make sure there is a quiet place to do work at home. Make homework time a ‘silent time’ where only you and your child talk. Focus on creating this ‘one on one’ quality time for at least 10 minutes per day in infants and gradually more as your child grows older.

5. Use whatever Irish words you have when at home, out shopping and in the car.

6. In infant classes, make sure you put the letters that get sent home up on the fridge or on display somewhere in the house so you can point them out and ask your child to make the sound they make and to identify them regularly. Remember, all this work reinforces the work in school.

7. Now that the weather is getting cold, bring a coat every day.

8. Always remain positive and if you have any concern arrange a time to chat with your child’s teacher.