

4th September 2018

Is it a Good Idea to Arrange a Meeting with their Teacher? If so, What Should I Ask?

It is a really good idea and *absolutely essential* to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher, before your child starts school or when your child is moving onto another stream in the school. Building positive and open communication with your child's school is important. Communication is a two-way street and sharing information with your child's school will make you and your child's experience of primary school more positive, enriching and beneficial.

There is no one list of questions that every parent should ask, as each child and family are different, and so will have different questions to ask. The questions listed below therefore are suggestions only to guide you.

Sharing Information with your Child's School

Preparing an *All About Me* booklet with your child before they starts school and sharing the booklet with the teacher can be a really helpful thing to do. There are several different templates available online that you can have a look at.

Remember that there is no one best in the world *All About Me* booklet. Each child is different and the *All About Me* booklet, that you put together with your child will be unique and special to your child. The booklet can be written from the child's perspective and include photographs and/or drawings, whichever your child prefers. For example, the booklet could include the following:

My name is...; I live at...; I live with...; I have a dog...; My dog's name is...; I like to eat...; I like to drink...; I like quiet spaces...; I like playing with lego; I like to wear my socks indoors.... or any other important information unique to your child.

It is a good idea to write the booklet in positive language and for example to state "*I like quiet spaces*" rather than "*I don't like noise*". An age-appropriate version of the *All About Me* booklet can be compiled for your child's new teacher, where your child is moving onto another stream in the school.

It is also very important that you continue to communicate with your child's teacher throughout the year. Schools have different ways of communicating with parents, some now use technology and others use a daily communication journal. You need to find out what method of communication your school uses and become familiar with this.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is working on providing a range of supports and materials to support children in transitioning to primary school (Keep an eye on the website for updates on when these materials will be available).

Adapted from: <https://asiam.ie/is-it-a-good-idea-to-arrange-a-meeting-with-their-teacher-if-so-what-should-i-ask/>

Suggested Questions to Ask My Child's Teacher

Remember the questions below are suggestions only as each child and family are different and as communication is a two-way street, other questions will emerge as you engage in dialogue with your child's teacher.

- What can I do to support my child's learning at home?
- What will my child be learning at school this year?
- How much homework will my child have?
- What should my child have in her/his school bag each day?
- What is the best way that I can communicate with you about my child on a daily basis?
- How will you get in touch with me if you need to?
- What kind of approaches do you use to keep children interested and engaged in learning so I can use these approaches at home also.
- I am worried that my child might be bullied – how is bullying managed if it occurs?
- Will my child have an individual education plan and how can I help with this?
- How is my child's progress tracked and how can I help?
- What questions do you have for me in relation to my child that might help you?

Your involvement in your child's education is critical to your child's learning and development and being involved right from the start is important.

Dr Emer Ring is the Head of the Department of Reflective Pedacology and Early Childhood Studies at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. As part of our *#BackToRoutine* series for beginning the new school term, she's answered a number of commonly asked questions and concerns families have when starting school.