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**Learning to be independent.**

School is not far away for our older children. Throughout their time at playgroup, and especially now, we encourage our children to be independent as possible. A little bit of praise goes a long way!

Here are some points to think about which if encouraged, at home and Playgroup, will help make your child’s transition to school a little bit easier!

* select clothes that your child can manage to get on and off on their own (elastic waists, zips rather than button, velcro rather than laces). Give them a choice of two options rather than their whole wardrobe – this is very confusing and overwhelming at 4 (actually it’s not much better as you get older either!)
* encourage your child to manage their own hygiene when they go to the toilet, and to recognise when they need to go themselves. Wet or dirty pants at home are far less stressful and embarrassing for them than the same thing in front of their friends at school
* help your child recognise their own coat/wellies and to put them on and take them off themselves. Customize them with a badge etc for instant recognition (a lot of children wear the same school coat!)
* choose a lunch box that your child can open and close on their own and let them practise doing it.
* encourage your child to find toys on their own and tidy them away when they have finished playing. This will be asked of them at school!
* allow your child to make safe choices. Does it matter that the red trousers don’t go with the pink top?
* teach safe consequences. Your child will soon realise that they are cold without a coat in winter!
* encourage your child to carry all the things they need for the day themselves both when they come in and when they go home. If they don’t know what they’ve brought in they will not remember what to take home.

All these skills help your child develop a sense of their own self worth, and to organise themselves. This in turn lead to the development of all sorts of important skills needed for learning.

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