Jiaying
Hello and welcome to The English We Speak with me Jiaying...

Neil
... and me, Neil.

Jiaying
Have you started working on your act for this year's BBC Learning English's talent show?

Neil
No, I've been too busy writing a presentation for you, and doing your shopping. Why are you asking me to do everything for you?

Jiaying
Because you're so good at it! Plus, I need time to perfect my act for the talent show. I have made a flying start!

Neil
What? For your act you're starting to learn how to fly?

Jiaying
No, Neil. I didn't say I was starting to fly, I said 'a flying start'. I'm actually learning how to juggle umbrellas. We use the expression 'a flying start' to mean 'an excellent beginning'. We often use it to talk about competitions or races in which someone makes a strong or quick start.

Neil
Oh, OK. Well done on making a flying start on your umbrella juggling act! I can't wait to see it!

Jiaying
I've already juggled seven umbrellas! I'll show you my skills while we listen to these examples.
Examples
Your son has made a flying start in the class. He's a brilliant student.

The athlete got off to a flying start. She set a record in the swimming event.

A flying start on a diet and losing a few kilos early on can really boost someone's confidence.

Jiaying
This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. We're talking about the expression 'a flying start' which means a strong or good beginning. We often use it with the words 'have', 'make' or 'get off to'.

Neil
I can't believe you juggled all seven umbrellas. How long did it take you to learn?

Jiaying
About an hour. Like I said, I got off to a flying start.

Neil
You really did. That was amazing. I need a flying start for my act. I'm learning to say the alphabet backwards!

Jiaying
Well, good luck with that boring act.

Neil
Thanks.

Jiaying
Right! I need to go and train harder. I want to win this! Bye!

Neil
Bye.