



Early Years Foundation Stage

Preparing your child for school – a guide for parents and carers

How can I best help my child prepare for school?

It can be a daunting time sending your child to school, but here are some ways in which you can best prepare your child for their transition.

Promoting independence

Your child will really benefit from being as independent as possible when they start school. Of course, teaching staff will always be on hand to help but children feel a real sense of achievement when doing things for themselves!

Examples include:

- Being able to dress and undress independently will really help. If your child is currently unable to tie shoelaces, explore different types of fastenings for shoes, such as Velcro.*
- Children have frequent access to the outdoor area in all weathers so independently putting on a coat and zipping it up is very important. In addition, being able to take off their own shoes and put wellies on independently will mean they have more time to play and explore instead of waiting for an adult to help them.*
- Another part of being independent is being able to toilet independently. This includes the washing and drying of hands (using hand soap). It is also helpful if they can blow their nose into a tissue and put it in the bin.*
- Having lunch independently may also be new to your child. If having hot dinners, promote using a knife and fork to cut and eat food. If your child is having a packed lunch, ensure they know how to open wrappers and packets independently and ensure they are going to enjoy what is in their healthy lunch.*
- Your child will need to feel comfortable leaving you for short periods of time. This is to ensure their transition into school and the classroom is a positive experience as it will stand them in good stead for the rest of the day.*

Social skills

- Being able to interact appropriately with others and share resources is a key skill that will help your child when they start school. Modelling good language such as 'my turn please' or 'let's share' will help develop vocabulary to aid these skills.

- Listening and following instructions is very important when starting school. There will be many spoken instructions throughout the school day and your child will need to learn to shift their attention from what they are doing to what is being said by the teacher.

- Try a listening walk or an activity where your child has to guess different sounds that they hear. This helps build and maintain attention and improves listening skills.

Maths

- Being able to count verbally to 20 and back will benefit your child starting school. One to one counting can be done incidentally such as counting steps or objects as you put them in the shopping trolley.
- Encourage shape recognition by spotting shapes in the environment such as circle plates and rectangular windows. Talk about objects being different sizes and lengths and colours, "Can you pass me the red shoes? Which is bigger, the car or the lorry?"
- Try spotting numbers in the environment – number plates, clocks, remote controls to help build number recognition.

Reading and writing

Please do not feel like your child needs to start school knowing how to read and write – that's our job! Here are some suggested ways in which you can help facilitate their learning:

- Share many books with your child and ask them questions, "Why is the monkey feeling sad?" "What do you think is going to happen next, why?"
- Read and share different types of texts with your child; a non-fiction book about animals, a book of silly poems, a newspaper article from the local area.
- A very important thing your child needs to do is to be able to recognise their name. Your child will need to recognise it from the minute they start school as it is on their peg and book bag box. They will also need to be able to recognise the name label in their items of clothing.

- Make sure your child can recognise all their belongings; their cardigans/jumpers, their water bottle, their name labels, their own shoes (this can be quite tricky as a lot of them are similar), their lunch box and many other items! Asking your child to help name their belongings will aid recognition and really prevent items from getting lost.
- Encourage lots of mark-making and drawing to build up the strength in their hands. Do not worry about writing letters as this is something we work very hard on in school. Drawing and colouring lovely pictures and being able to talk about them is helping them become school-ready.

All these suggestions will help make your child's transition into school be as seamless as possible. We work hard to promote independence in school and we encourage the children to have a sense of self responsibility. If you have any questions, or are unsure about anything, please contact:

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The Foundation Stage Team