

School Readiness - What does School Ready mean?

Starting school is an exciting time for children and their parents, but it can be worrying too. As parents you will want to make sure that your child starts school with the skills they need.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up." - *(Taken from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014).*

What does it mean for my child to be School Ready?

R is for Resilient, adaptable and always willing to try.

- Supporting your child's self-help skills so that they learn to do things for themselves
- Encourage your child to put on and take off their own clothes. When you have got your child's school uniform, don't wait until the first day of school to put it on, give them time to practice putting it on and taking it off. Don't forget to also practice with P.E kit and coats and shoes. Make it fun, encourage your child to get faster each time. If your child struggles with something e.g buttons give them more time to practice, maybe by dressing toys in an old shirt.
- Free school meals are available to all children from Reception to Year 2 from September 2014, but many schools will offer the option of packed lunches as well. Help your child to use a knife and fork and carry a plate or tray. If your child is taking a lunchbox, practice with this before they start school, by taking their lunchbox on a picnic. Make sure they can open it themselves and are able to open packets or boxes inside. Encourage them to tidy away afterwards.
- Support your child's confidence in getting to the toilet in time, wiping themselves properly, flushing the toilet and washing their hands. Children can get so involved with their play that they forget to go to the toilet and accidents do happen, so talk to your child about what to do if this happens in school. If you need further support with toilet training your health visitor will be able to help you.
- Encourage your child to blow their nose themselves, bin the tissue and then wash their hands, so it becomes something they do all the time.

E is for Enquiring, curious, asking questions and exploring

- Use everyday experiences as learning opportunities and giving your child opportunities to take the lead
- Encourage children to be involved in things around the home, ie. cooking, gardening or dusting. All of these help to develop the coordination and strength they will need to use a pencil at school.

- Let your child enjoy being creative, by using pencils, crayons, paint, sticks in the sand or water and paintbrushes on the ground. Building sandcastles or digging in the sand is another exciting way for children to develop their coordination.
- Sing number rhymes together to support your child's Maths skills, Five little ducks and Ten in the bed support children to count and order numbers. On walks to and from home, see how many numbers you can spot, on buses or on front doors. Count pieces of fruit or the stairs up to bed, making children aware that numbers are everywhere gives them meaning for young children.
- Find shapes at home or out and about, or have a shape hunt and see who can find the most circles at home.
- Encourage your child to try out their ideas and different ways of doing things.
- Be encouraging by giving feedback and showing an interest
- Read with and to your child, everyday if you can, encourage your child to talk about the story.

A is for assured, confident in their own abilities; independent in their self care

- When your child starts school they usually have a coat peg with their name on, so it is helpful if they can recognise their name when they start school. To help with this, support children to recognise their name by having it up at home, e.g on the fridge. You could play treasure hunt games to find their name in the house or garden.
- Talk to your child about school, they may not have been away from you for a whole day before and this can seem like a long time to a 4 year old, so talk to your child about the routines at school, schools will be happy to discuss what their day is like, and make sure they know that you will be there to collect them at the end of the day.
- Make sure your child knows the name of their class teacher and any teaching assistants, so that they become familiar with them before they start school. Once you know which school your child will be attending, there are often visits to the school, and you may have chance to meet other children and parents before your child starts school, so you may like to plan some playtimes together with other children.

D is for Determined, striving to improve and showing pride at success

- Provide opportunities for your child to meet and relate to others including adults beyond close family and friends so that they positively experience socialising, sharing toys and turn taking.
- Encourage your child to do simple things to help at home.

Y is for Young, eager to learn and full of potential

- Talk to your child every day, without distractions from TV, radio etc. Talking together will support your child's communication skills. Talk about days out or things you have seen or done together.
- Encourage children to listen to sounds around them e.g planes, birds.
- Sing songs and rhymes together.
- Children need to be able to listen and follow instructions at school, so play games like Simon Says to practice this. Encourage your child to follow simple instructions e.g put your bag on the table and wash your hands please. Give lots of praise to your child.
- Recognise and talk through your child's feelings and different emotions.