

## The Importance of Being 'School Ready'

Starting primary school can be daunting for you and your child, but it marks the start of an exciting new chapter. Before you know it, your child will be making friends, learning new skills, and becoming increasingly independent.

By encouraging your child to be an independent and curious learner, through talk and play, you are ensuring your child not only has the skills they need to be ready for school, but also for life.

Here are some ways in which you can support your child to become 'school ready' before starting in September.

### **Developing Independence**

The most useful thing you can do to get your child ready for school is to make sure they are comfortable doing simple tasks by themselves. This includes:

**Going to the toilet.** Resist the temptation to pop your child onto the loo and wipe their bottom. It is better to get your child into the habit of doing this for themselves.

**Getting dressed.** Avoid clothing with fiddly buckles and buttons. It is also a good idea to have a few dry runs with the uniform!

**Putting on shoes.** Tie-up shoes might be a bit difficult. Go for shoes with Velcro fasteners if possible.

**Eating.** This includes using a knife and fork, opening their lunchbox, and being able to open everything in the lunchbox (some yoghurt tubes and drink cartons can be tricky).



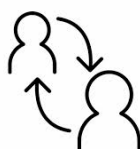
### **Developing Social Skills**

Learning in a classroom is a social activity. Children learn and develop by playing alongside their peers, and they will make better progress if they are happy mixing with other children and adults. You can encourage this by:

**Practising greetings.** Your child should know how to start a conversation with their new classmates. You can use dolls and soft toys to practise saying "hello"!

**Practising conversations.** Giving your child time to talk – and also having time when they have to listen – teaches vital speaking and listening skills. You could take turns to talk about the best part of your day during dinner. Can they ask questions to find out more? Can they remember their sibling's favourite part of the day?

**Encouraging sharing and tolerance.** Games such as Snakes and Ladders let children practise social skills and turn-taking. Be sure to use the language of turn-taking, like 'Whose turn is it next?' and 'Thank you for waiting'.



## Develop Concentration

Your child is not expected to have amazing literacy or numeracy skills at this age. However, there are some ways you can get your child ready for learning:

**Help them recognise their name.** It is handy if your child can find their space in the cloakroom, and can keep track of labelled clothes and other belongings.

**Share stories.** Reading to your child improves their vocabulary and listening skills, and acting out stories is a great way to practise communication.

**Hone fine motor skills.** Building hand strength, fine motor skills, and hand-eye coordination helps prepare your child for writing. Making Lego models, using scissors, and threading beads onto string are fun ways to develop hand strength.

**Introduce them to numbers.** Why not go on a number hunt around your local area and take pictures of any numbers you find? You could also sing counting songs together or count objects as you set the table for dinner.



## Talk to your child about school

Talking about the exciting things your child is going to do at school helps them get over any nerves. You could:

**Visit the school.** We offer Stay and Play sessions so that your child can spend time in the learning environment and get to know the reception staff. Walking or driving past the school at the end of the school day and watching children come out in uniform can also be very exciting!

**Talk about how fun school is!** Once you have visited, take time to talk about what your child enjoyed, the people they met and what they enjoyed playing with. Giving your child time to talk also lets them raise any concerns or questions.

**Practise the school routine.** It can be helpful to do a practice journey before the big day, looking for interesting things on the way. It might be a good idea to make sure your child has school-friendly bedtimes and getting-up times a few days in advance.

