

What does it mean to be 'School Ready'?

Don't worry. Your child doesn't need to be able to read, write or do sums before they start school. Children start school with a wide range of abilities and their teacher will be skilled at helping children progress at their own level.

The initial objective is to help your child be happy to come to school.

Chat with your child about starting school. What do they think it will be like? What are they most looking forward to? Is there anything they're unsure of or worried about?

- Look at our school's brochure, prospectus or website together and talk about the pictures.
- Find photos of you and other family members at school, and chat about happy memories from your own school days.
- Read books together about starting school – see link.
- If your child seems anxious about school, try focusing on the things they'll like best – maybe the sandpit, playhouse or new friends. Perhaps they have some friends from preschool who will be starting reception at the same time...
- ...and some things to avoid, try not to make comments such as "I hated school" or "I was rubbish at school", which might give your child a negative attitude.
- If your child has already spent time in a childcare or preschool setting, they're probably already well on the way to having the social and practical skills they need to succeed at school.
- It is helpful for your child if they're used to spending time apart from you.
- School readiness means that your child is happy to be mixing with other children, taking instructions from and communicating with other adults, taking some responsibility for tidying up after themselves and looking after their own belongings.

Don't worry if your child hasn't attended a childcare setting or preschool. Playing with other children, whether friends and family members, or other children at the park or soft play area, is all good practice for forming

friendships with classmates at school. Often children who don't know one another will make friends very easily, but if your child struggles, teach them some useful phrases such as "can I join in?" or "do you want to share?"

As the start of term approaches, try to get into the school routine, so your child gets used to getting up, going to bed, and having meals and snacks at the times they will on school days. Bath time and stories instead of TV and tablet games all help children to wind down before bedtime.

Tidying up: Get your child into the habit of hanging their coat up, putting their toys away, clearing the table, and so on, to prepare them for doing these things at school.

Feeding themselves: Free school meals will be available to all children from reception to year 2, but children also have the option of packed lunches, too. Children having school dinners need to be able to use a full-sized knife and fork and carry a plate. If your child is taking a lunchbox, make sure they can open it as well as any containers and packets inside.

Dressing and undressing: Let your child practise putting on their school clothes, taking them off and folding them. Clothes with elastic bands and shoes with Velcro® are easier to handle for young children. Teach your child tricks such as putting labels at the back, holding cuffs to stop sleeves riding up, and wrinkling tights to put toes in first.

Going to the toilet: Support your child to be confident about getting to the loo in time and wiping properly, using toilet paper and washing hands carefully.