



GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

Tips to help prepare children for
starting primary school

Starting School

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.

Every child starts school being able to do different things and that's fine. Being able to do some of the following things is a great start.



Independence

- **Getting dressed.** Being able to dress themselves, including putting on their coat and 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, or opening their lunchbox. Remembering to drink water regularly.
- **Going to the toilet.** Work on getting your child to go to the toilet and wash their hands without help. They should be in pants, not pull-ups.

Social skills

- **Practise conversations.** Give your child time to talk as well as time to listen. You could take turns to talk about the best part of your day during dinner. At school they will need to be able to listen and follow simple instructions, talk about their needs and feelings as well as ask for help when they need it.
- **Encourage 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'. Why not arrange some play dates with friends to put this into practice.



Literacy and numeracy skills

Your child is not expected to have amazing literacy or numeracy skills when they start school. 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 peg, and can keep track of labelled clothes and other belongings.
- **Share stories.** Reading to your child improves their vocabulary and listening skills, plus 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. Mark making with different things such as flour or foam, making Lego models, using scissors, and threading beads onto string are fun ways to develop hand strength.
- **Introduce them to numbers.** You could sing counting songs together or count objects as you set the table for dinner. Encourage noticing groups of 1, 2 or 3 objects without counting and patterns such as red car, blue car, red car, etc.

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Ideas to help your child to learn

1. Paint and draw together. Do craft activities, play with water or food.
2. Visit places together. Go to the park, the library or visit friends.
3. Talk together at meal times. Share what you have done today.
4. Tell stories and share books together. Make up a story without a book.
5. Talk about numbers and letters that you see, for example play 'I spy', notice bus numbers, notice the letters in their name, count steps and objects - look out for patterns.
6. Sing nursery rhymes and songs with actions.