

Activities to do with your child before starting School



Dear Parents

We know that starting school can feel scary for you and your child. These are also different times and the uncertainty of lockdown means you might be worrying that your child won't be ready for reception. Don't panic!

Here are some things you can do with your child at home over the coming weeks to help make sure they are just as ready to start reception as they would otherwise have been.

We're not expecting you to be teachers and we understand that not everyone will find the time to do all of these activities – that's fine. Try to fit them where possible into your daily routines.

To help your child develop independence, get them used to doing the following at home:

- **Getting dressed independently every day** – practise closing buttons, putting on socks and shoes on the right feet, putting coat on and zipping up
- **Going to the toilet** and wiping their bottom on their own – simple clothing like elasticated waistbands are easier to get on and off
- **Cutting food using a 'real' knife** and fork (make sure this is supervised)
- **Tidying up** their toys and helping with simple **household jobs** – giving them responsibilities will help them to become more independent
- Help them to **recognise their name** in writing eg create a coat and shoe peg at home with their name on it to help get them used to having something similar at school – it seems like a simple thing but it'll help when we ask your child to go and fetch their coat!

You can practise some of the activities your child would have done in early years in your own home to help make sure they develop social skills and feel more ready when reception starts:

- Do **turn-taking** activities such as playing with a toy – this helps them to get used to taking turns and also to understand the concept of sharing; board games
- Get your child used to **eating with others** even if it's just a snack
- Lots of the learning in reception happens through play. Get down onto the carpet so you're **at their level** and enjoy some play with your child.
- **Follow their lead** with what they're doing or how they're playing.
- Then, try to **get them to follow your lead** and also create games together. This will help them to get used to playing and engaging with other children.

Routines and consistency helps children to adapt and this will help ease the transition into reception. About 4 weeks before the start of reception, try to set a morning routine with your child. You can start with small steps and gradually add to the routine:

- Get up at the **same time every day**.
- **Have a full breakfast**.
- **Get dressed up in the school uniform** and put on 'school' shoes.
- Prepare a '**school bag**' and/or '**school lunch box**' – you can choose one together if you don't have one yet.
- **Visit the school** - look up the route to school and if it's walking distance try it out – point to the school and tell your child they'll be going there soon.
- **Talk about starting school** - look at photos/videos of the teacher if virtual tours are available on school websites.
- Be **positive** and reassure your child by discussing any worries they may have.
- Watch videos about starting school and play the starting school games.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1>

Help your child to learn at home by spending time with them



- Have everyday **conversations**
- Play lots of **games with numbers or letters**
- Share stories and **read together** - reading to your child improves their vocabulary and listening skills, and acting out stories is a great way to practise communication.
- Play **I spy**
- Sing lots of **nursery rhymes** including number rhymes and learn new ones
- Enjoy the **outdoors** and go for lots of **walks** - every day if you can.
- Go on number hunts and look for letters and words around your local area.
- Take **pictures** and make memories.