

How can I help prepare my child for school?

In Early Years Foundation Stage we spend a great deal of time developing the whole child. This means that alongside helping them learn academic skills, such as reading and writing, we also help them to develop their social, personal and physical skills too. The more a child can do for themselves before they start school, the better position they will be in to concentrate on their learning.

Here are a few suggestions to help your child be ready for school:

<p>Dressing</p> 	<p>At school children will need to take their coat on and off at least three times a day and get changed for PE. They will be expected to hang up their own clothes and organise their belongings, with help from us when needed.</p> <p>At home try hard to stand back and give your child verbal encouragement to dress and undress. Give them time to practise with zips and buttons, removing and replacing shoes. It will take longer at first but will help them out when they have to do it themselves.</p> <p><i>Please make sure all clothes are clearly labelled with your child's name.</i></p>
<p>Going to the toilet</p> 	<p>At school children will go off to the toilet alone and then go back to class.</p> <p>At home give your child the opportunity to use the toilet independently. Teach them how to lower only the clothing that they need to remove (i.e. just trousers and pants rather than getting completely naked!). Teach your child how to wipe themselves with toilet paper, how to flush and the importance of good handwashing. Expect some accidents and please put spare underwear in your child's bag for these occasions.</p>
<p>Eating</p> 	<p>At school children will sit at a table to eat their lunch and will be expected to try and use a knife and fork for hot meals. They will stay at their table until they are given permission to leave and will not be allowed to wander around during meal times. Lunchtime staff will help children cut up food if they are unable to manage alone.</p> <p>At home please try to encourage some good mealtime routines and use of cutlery.</p>

<p>Writing</p> 	<p>At school children will learn to write by listening to the sounds words make and then transferring these sounds to paper. We will also be teaching children how to hold a pencil correctly and how to form their letters.</p> <p>At home start off by encouraging good finger muscles, play with plasticine or playdough and help your child to use scissors. All writing and mark making counts so using chalk on the patio, painting and bath crayons are great too. Drawing and colouring is just as important for developing pencil control and good pressure.</p>
<p>Reading</p> 	<p>At school children will read with adults and other children and take part in daily phonics lessons. We will also read lots of stories to the children.</p> <p>At home read to your child lots! Share books, talking about the characters and the pictures. Point to the words as you read. Allow your child to hold the books and pretend to read to you or their toys, making up the story. Encourage them to make sure they have the book up the right way and turn pages over one by one, starting at the front. Expose them to their written first name so that they can recognise their name from among other words or names. Magnetic letters or sponge letters in the bath are good for this too.</p>
<p>Maths</p> 	<p>At school we will be teaching counting and number recognition alongside shapes and problem solving.</p> <p>At home count things in real life (steps as you climb, each red door you pass etc), look out for numbers in the environment, count out sets of objects and play number games.</p>
<p>Physical Activities</p> 	<p>At school children will have playtimes, PE lessons and lots of time in our outside area. They will develop confidence with climbing, running, crawling, skipping, throwing and catching.</p> <p>At home give your child the opportunity to go to the park or play in the garden. Encourage them to use climbing frames, swings and balls. Teach your child to take care of themselves near roads and in car parks.</p>

As parents, please aim to help your child to be as independent as possible – this in turn will enable them to help themselves and will make school a fun and positive experience.