

What is 'School Ready'?

In a report by OFSTED, a teacher summarised school readiness in a child as,

'By four we would expect children to be ready to be separated from their parent or carer, to be able to demonstrate listening skills in being able to show interest and pay attention to a subject or stimulus. To have enough language to be able to express themselves if they need something and be able to communicate something about what makes them who they are, such as name, age and something about family or relevant factors in their life. To be able to interact with an adult and/or a peer. For example, during play to be able to take turns and take some responsibility for their actions. We think that children should be able to focus on, and show interest in, their work and the world around them. To make observations, notice things and ask questions. To be able to hold a book, understand some aspects of narrative and respond to some boundary setting.' (April 2014)



Helping Your Child Be 'School Ready'

School readiness is about being socially and emotionally prepared, as well as having personal care, language and motor skills. So while being able to read and count is a bonus, it is not a necessity for starting school.

You can help your child prepare for school in the following ways:

- Encourage them to sit and listen/join in with stories and rhymes, talking about what they see in the pictures, who they like and what might happen next
- Encourage your child to dress themselves, put shoes on and manage own hygiene (wiping own nose, washing hands when dirty, managing the toilet independently)
- Help them to play, share, take turns and adapt to doing things in a variety of ways
- Help them to develop the fine motor muscles that will help them to draw, write and use scissors – this can be helped by using pegs, playing with play dough, colouring and so on
- Talking to them about the school they will be going to, sound happy for them, talk about uniform, friends they will make, their teacher, classroom and what to expect. Most schools hold an opening time for children to visit – ensure your child attends this.



Helping Your Child Be 'School Ready'

Social & Emotional Skills

'I need to feel comfortable and excited about starting school!'

You Can:

- Let me know that you are excited about me starting school
- Give me a chance to visit my school before I start
- Listen to my thoughts and ideas about school

'I need to know what school will be like'

You Can:

- Teach me to follow directions by giving me simple steps to follow
- Help me to share and play with others, wait my turn, listen and sit still for a story

'I need to feel good about myself and get along with others'

You Can:

- Pay attention to me and listen to my ideas
- Help me feel good about all the things I can do and praise
- Be patient with me, let me develop at my own pace
- Teach me ways to make new friends and encourage me



Helping Your Child Be 'School Ready'

Using Books, Sounds and Words

'I need to be familiar with books'

You Can:

- Read to me regularly, encourage me to point to the words and the pictures
- Ask me questions about the story – what can I see in the pictures? What did I like/not like? What might happen next?
- Encourage me to check the book is up the right way and turn the pages carefully

'I will be learning sounds to use'

You Can:

- Encourage me to listen to and identify different sounds in the environment around me
- Get me to copy sounds that I hear
- Help me to identify sounds that I hear at the start of words

'I will have words to learn when I get to school'

You Can:

- Help me have a 'print rich environment' – join the library, have a variety of books, magazines, papers around
- Encourage me to show you where the words are in my book/magazine
- Play matching games with me – they help build my memory skills which will help me when I learn to read!



Helping Your Child Be 'School Ready'

Maths

'I will need to name colours, shapes and sizes'

You Can:

- Encourage me to identify colours of toys, clothing and things around me
- Get me to tell you 'which is big? And which is small?'

'I need to learn to count and understand that numbers have a meaning'

You Can:

- Sing number songs and rhymes with me
- Play games when we are out – finding numbers on car number plates, houses and in the supermarket
- Count on rote (just counting for counting!), count objects, toys, people

'I will need problem solving skills'

You Can:

- Let me set the table
- Get me to match socks together
- Play 'snap', 'pairs' and other matching or memory games



Learning to Write

Learning to write is a long process that encompasses many phases and is not merely 'holding a pencil to form letters'.

In helping your child to become a future writer they will need:

- Good verbal communication and comprehension
- Good fine and gross motor movement
- To see 'print' around them and know it can be used to communicate a range of things (lists, letters, notes, etc)
- To be able to experiment with 'mark making', in a variety of forms (pen, paint, chalks, type print, etc)

Helping Your Child At Home:

A child can't put pen to paper without having good fine and gross motor skills. Fine motor skills are the coordination of small muscle movements, so in order for a child to write they will need good muscle strength in their hands and fingers. At home children could:

- Play with playdough
- Do up coat buttons, dress/undress independently
- Play threading or dice and counter games and with puppets
- Help peg washing out or with cooking

Gross motor skills are to do with the larger movements your child makes with their arms, legs and body. A child's ability to maintain upper body support, coordination and strength in their arms will affect their ability to write. Activities such as, throwing, rolling and catching a ball; doing actions to nursery rhymes; visiting the play park – balance beams, climbing frames and swings, will all help develop your child's core stability.

