



Helping to get your child ready for school



Achieve Belong Participate

Starting school is an exciting time for young children and their parents. We know that it can be an anxious time too as there are a lot of changes ahead. Parents often ask us how they can help their child get ready for school. We have written this guide to help.

Communicating

Being able to talk to adults and other children, in school, is vital for every child as they settle into school. You child will want to talk to their friends as they play, to explain their ideas and to create storylines. They will also need to be able to ask for help if they feel they want some. At home, encourage your child to talk clearly and confidently about the world around them, especially when exploring new situations



Scissors and Pencils

Using pencils and scissors can be really tricky for little hands and it requires lots of practise. In school we will do lots of activities to strengthen large and small motor skills but there are lots of fun things you can do at home to help too. Why not play games such as Operation or Buckeroo? Or try threading games, using tweezers, playing with dough and using pegs!

Reading and Writing

Share books with your child every day. Encourage a love of stories and show them how to look after books. Ask them questions about the story, talk about what is familiar about the story and say any repeated phrases together. Sing nursery rhymes together. Have fun making silly and animal noises. Name objects and things that start with the same sound. Sound out words and see if your child knows what the word is e.g. b-i-n bin!

It is great if they can but - we do not expect any child to be able to recognise or draw any letters.

Toileting

At school, it will be very helpful if your child is able to manage their own toileting and personal hygiene or is willing to have a go on their own. They should be able to wipe themselves and flush the toilet when they have finished as well as being able to wash and dry their hands. If your child does not usually do this by themselves, help them practise before they start school. We will be there to help if needed, but this is an important step to independence for them and we do recommend some practising at home before starting school.



Eating

At school, the children will eat lunch with their friends and will be supervised by mealtime assistants. Your child can have a hot school dinner and so practising sitting at a table and using a knife and fork is a great skill. You can try cutting dough with your knife and fork – just don't eat it! It would also be helpful if your child can be independent in opening their own packets and eating tidily.



Being Independent

At school your child will be encouraged to have a go at lots of things for themselves, especially in terms of organising their own things! Help your child to remember what their belongings look like and get them to have a go at being responsible for carrying them into school! Encourage your child to have an 'I can try' attitude at home by giving them things to try and to complete tasks themselves such as , tidying away their toys.

I can't believe how quickly my son has settled into school! Thank you so much for developing his independence.

Parent from Reception class.

Numbers and counting

Being able to count is a fundamental skill. Sing counting rhymes together. Develop a love of numbers by playing games such as counting objects and actions such as chairs, cars, jumps and steps.

It is great if they can but – we do not expect any child to be able to recognise or write any numbers.



Positive Attitudes Towards Learning with Others

Your child will interact with lots of other children at school, in many different situations. We will do lots of work on sharing, empathy, cooperation and taking turns. Learning how to share and take turns is really important so that children can be happy playing and learning together. Encourage your child to take turns and share. Playing games with your children with help you to model and promote turn-taking. When you see your child trying to share or take turns, make sure you give them lots of praise.



Dressing and Undressing

At school we will often be changing into PE kit, pulling on coats and waterproofs, swapping into wellies and even trying on dressing-up clothes! Zips, buttons, Velcro, socks, tights and getting clothes the right way around can all be tricky for children so praise your child at home when they have a go! Help them to practise getting dressed independently – even though it might take some time!

Separating from carers

Settling into the school environment can be tricky for some children and they may feel unhappy when you drop them off. You can prepare your child for this when talking about school by reassuring them you will be back to pick them up soon and by keeping drop off times brief.