

Support your child's independence

The most useful thing you can do to get your child ready for school is to make sure they are comfortable doing simple tasks by themselves. This includes:

- **Going to the toilet.**

Resist the temptation to pop your child onto the loo and wipe their bottom. It is better to get your child into the habit of doing this for themselves.

- **Getting dressed.**

Avoid clothing with fiddly buckles and buttons. It is also a good idea to have a few dry runs with the PE Kit!

- **Putting on 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, opening their lunchbox, and being able to open everything in the lunchbox (some yoghurt tubes and drink cartons can be tricky).

- **Solving simple problems.**

Encourage your child to resolve problems by talking when they don't understand or something isn't going well. It is important that they also learn when to ask an adult for help.



Build up your child's social skills

Learning in a classroom is a social activity. Children learn and develop by playing alongside their peers, and they will make better progress if they are happy mixing with other children and adults. You can encourage this by:

- **Organising play dates.**

Play dates with children from your child's new class help improve their social skills and makes the leap to primary school less scary - they will like knowing one or two of their classmates before school begins. Virtual meet-ups can be useful too.

- **Practising greetings.**

Your child should know how to start a conversation with their new classmates. You can use dolls and soft toys to practise saying "hello"!

- **Practising conversations.**

Giving your child time to talk - and also having time when they have to *listen* - teaches vital speaking and listening skills. You could take turns to talk about the best part of your day during dinner. Can they ask questions to find out more? Can they remember their sibling's favourite part of the day?

- **Encouraging sharing and tolerance.**

Sharing 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'.



Make a start on early literacy and numeracy skills

Your child is not expected to have amazing literacy or numeracy skills when they start school – that's what school is for!

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 space in the cloakroom, and can keep track of labelled clothes and other belongings.

- **Share stories.**

Reading to your child improves their vocabulary and listening skills, and acting out stories is a great way to practise communication. Seeing you enjoy stories also primes your child to be an enthusiastic reader.

- **Hone fine motor skills.**

Building hand strength, fine motor skills, and hand-eye co-ordination helps prepare your child for writing. Making Lego models, using scissors, and threading beads onto string are fun ways to develop hand strength. Drawing and colouring activities introduce your child to mark-making tools.

- **Introduce them to numbers.**

Why not go on a number hunt around your local area and take pictures of any numbers you find? You could also share counting songs together or count objects as you set the table for dinner. Can your child get five forks or three cups out? Can they share them between members of the family?



Help your child learn to concentrate

Being able to concentrate in 10-15 minute bursts will be really useful at school. Here are some ways to practise:

- **Enjoy extended play together.**

Building kits like Lego are great for encouraging your child's resilience, especially if they can finish the activity in one sitting. Race-the-clock games are good for improving concentration (and are helpful when you need your child to get their socks and shoes on quickly!).

- **Follow instructions.**

Giving your child simple instructions to follow helps build their concentration.

Why not have a go at some of these [child-friendly recipes](#)?

Talk to your child about school

Curiosity builds Connection and Trust

Talking to children about school gives you a really wonderful opportunity to discover how your child is doing, adjusting and learning.

Taking this time to be together also helps you build a special bond of trust.

Listening to your child in these early years is a great way to make sure your child feels comfortable and ready to talk to you about important things as they grow up.

If for some reason your child doesn't feel like talking, that's alright too.

Some children need time to relax after school before they are ready to get chatty.

Follow your child's lead, strive to stay curious and willing to connect.