



Getting school ready

Starting school is an exciting time for young children and their parents. At times, it may seem like there is a lot to think about but with a little preparation and encouragement, children will quickly adapt and settle in really well.

Don't worry

Your child doesn't need to be able to read, write or do sums before they start school. Children start school with a wide range of abilities and their teacher will be skilled at helping children progress at their own level. What's most important is that you and your child have fun together in those preschool months and years – sharing stories, singing songs, playing games and talking about anything and everything.

There are some great ideas to support your child's communication and language skills below

<https://family.co/blog/inspiration/10-simple-communication-and-language-activities/>

It will make school life easier for your child if the following skills are mastered before they start school:

Going to the toilet

Support your child to be confident about getting to the toilet in time and wiping properly, using toilet paper rather than moist wipes. Do you have a different phrase for going to the toilet at home? Letting the class teacher know what this is will ensure they understand what your child is trying to ask.

Washing their hands

Talk about the importance of good hand washing with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet and before eating. A good way of showing how germs can linger is to let your child cover their hands in paint (pretend germs!) and then try to wash it all off.

Dressing and undressing

Let your child practice putting on their school clothes, taking them off and folding them neatly in preparation for PE lessons, especially if there are fiddly fastenings such as shirt buttons and zips. Clothes with elastic waist and shoes with velcro are easier for young children to handle. Teach your child tricks such as putting labels at the back, holding cuffs to stop sleeves riding up, and wrinkling tights to put toes in first. Children also need to practise putting their coat on and off and zipping it up independently.

Feeding themselves

Children should be able to feed themselves when they start school. They need to be able to use a full-sized knife and fork and carry a plate or tray. If your child is taking a lunchbox, make sure they can open it as well as any containers and packets inside.

Using a tissue

Introduce your child to the routine of 'catch it, bin it, kill it' – catching their sneeze or runny nose in a tissue, putting it in the bin straight away, then washing hands to kill germs. Some children find nose-blowing difficult, so play games to practise nose control – blowing a feather into the air, for example.

Tidying up

Get your child into the habit of hanging their coat up, putting their toys away, clearing the table, and so on, to prepare them for doing these things at school. Why not turn it into a game?

Names

Please put your child's name on everything! This includes clothes, coats, bags, shoes and water bottles. Help your child to recognise their own name by playing matching games to ensure they will be able to find their own things at school. You can also encourage your child to write their own name. This could be by using glitter trays or paint before moving on to a pencil.