

# Understanding School Readiness

*A Guide for Parents and Carers*



**Everything you need to know about  
preparing your child for school**

# Your Guide to School Readiness

**For children and parents, starting school can be a daunting yet exciting time.**

All children are individuals and while some children will quickly settle in to their new school environment, others may find the change more challenging.

This guide provides information on how you, the parent or carer, can help your child prepare for school.

Also, to help with your practical preparation we have included a checklist of all the things that you are likely to need when your child starts school and a checklist of ideas for when your child has started school like **creating a quiet homework area**.

**FACT:** Research has shown that preparing children for school in a positive manner has an impact, not only on their happiness throughout their time at the setting, but also on how they then view transitions in the future.





# What can I do to support my child's journey to school?

## Visting the new school together

Being shown around their new school is a really important part of the transition to school. You could go to pre-planned settling in sessions or more informal events such as summer fetes or other open day events.

## Meeting the Teacher

Some schools now offer a home visit. See if this is available to you as this allows your child to meet their new teacher in an environment which is most comfortable to them. It's also an opportunity for you to meet your child's teacher on a one to one basis.

## Plan more social activities

If your child has not spent much time within groups of children you could enrol them into a weekly class such as football or gymnastics. Alternatively going to regular play-dates or birthday parties is a good idea too.

## Reward Chart

Get set for school with Nursery Resources' progress sticker chart. The A3 chart is a brilliant aid to help your child prepare for school as they can watch their progression and reward themselves with stickers.

We have included a free version on the inside back cover!



## **Go on a special 'starting school' shopping trip**

Make this shopping trip solely about getting ready for school. You can get your child to tick off the items on the checklist enclosed within this booklet as you go.

## **Visit your local library**

There are some fantastic books out there which offer valuable advice for preparing your child for school. These can be read over the holidays leading up to the big day and can be a great conversation starter as you can discuss what has happened in the book.

## **Ask questions like ...**

What is it you are most looking forward to about starting school?

What do you think school is going to be like?

Is there anything that you are unsure about school?



It is important to not make too much of a serious issue about the milestone your child is embarking on as this could lead to them feeling anxious.

Remember that preparing for school is ultimately about your child's emotions rather than their academic abilities, so keep it fun!



# How can I work with my child's new school?

Effective and efficient communication between yourself and the school is key.

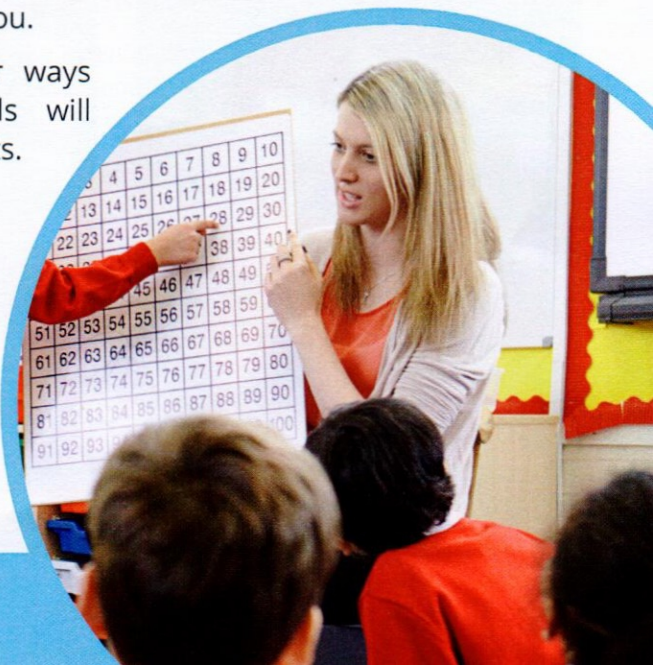
It is vital that you feel comfortable approaching your new school with questions and worries, and the school should help you to create effective lines of communication.

The teacher at your child's new school will have their own ways of communicating with you and will have advice and knowledge on how you can work together to support your child during this time.

There are many ways the school can engage and involve you.

Here are some popular ways in which some schools will communicate with parents.

- Communication Diaries
- Notice Boards
- Newsletters - emailed and hard copies
- Daily Updates - text/email
- Parent forums
- Open days where parents are invited into the school with their child
- Parents' evenings



# Checklists

This handy checklist has been created to make your life a little easier in the weeks leading up to your child's start date.

## To Do

- ☐ Make a list of school supplies needed
- ☐ Establish a morning routine
- ☐ Shop for clothes and shoes
- ☐ Label all of your child's belongings
- ☐ Make appointments: dentist, hairdresser's etc
- ☐ Update the family calendar with school dates
- ☐ Create an area in the fridge for packed lunches
- ☐ Make space for new books and reading material
- ☐ Read books to your child about the first day
- ☐ Create a quiet area for your child to complete any homework
- ☐ Establish a bedtime routine

## To Buy

- ☐ Shirts or polo shirts
- ☐ **Boys** – Trousers and shorts
- ☐ **Girls** – Pinafores, skirts or trousers
- ☐ Jumpers – one with school logo and one spare
- ☐ Shoes
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Lightweight waterproof coat (foldable)
- ☐ Coat
- ☐ Summer hat
- ☐ Woolly hat and gloves
- ☐ Plimsolls
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ Lunch box or bag
- ☐ Pencil case
- ☐
- ☐



# What will your child learn in Reception?

**Your child's development will be tracked against the 17 Early Learning Goals rather than the Seven Areas of Learning and Development that they would have been monitored against in their last setting.**

The reception staff will be using a Foundation Stage Profile to record evidence of your child achieving each of the 17 goals and working from the Profile Exemplification - a document produced to show the level of learning and development expected at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Reception Numeracy

- Children in Reception year will begin to learn about numbers and how to work with them.
- Your child might bring home a number line from the setting which will help them add, subtract and count.

## Reception Science

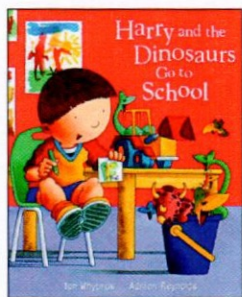
- Whilst your child is learning key listening and communications skills in their English lessons, they will also learn and begin to observe, reason and discuss in their science classes.
- They will often be asked to present information in charts, which is a simple activity to practise at home. They'll receive their first instructions in ICT as well.

## Reception Literacy

- Your child will build a foundation in literacy through communication and various language activities such as role play, listening exercises as well as show and tell.
- They will begin the process of learning the alphabet, high frequency words, and be taught phonics blends.

# Recommended Reads

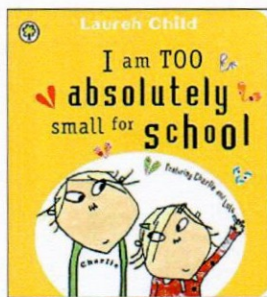
Here are some popular books to read with your child about going to school.



## Harry and the Dinosaurs Go to School

*Ian Whybrow*

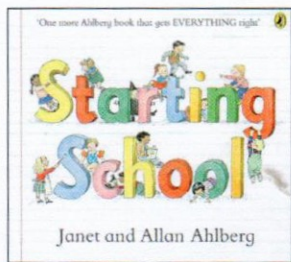
The ideal book for children to prevent first-day-at-school nerves.



## Charlie and Lola: I am too Absolutely Small for School

*Lauren Child*

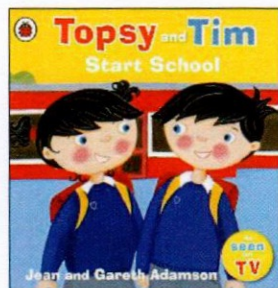
This classic tale of new-school worries addresses children's fears with warmth, humour and fun.



## Starting School

*Janet and Allan Ahlberg*

A classic picture book that offers advice and enjoyment for the whole family before school starts.



## Topsy and Tim Start School

*Jean and Gareth Adamson*

A perfect, reassuring picture book for children who are just about to start school.



# What skills will my child find useful when starting school?

All children learn and develop at different rates and in their own ways. However, encouraging your child to learn the following steps taken from the Developmental Matters will help them feel prepared and ready for school.

Please be aware that the following should be used as guidance to aid development rather than as a checklist.

An A3 poster of these skills with accompanying stickers and crib sheet is available at [www.nurseryresources.org](http://www.nurseryresources.org)

## Listening & understanding

- I am able to sit still and listen for a short while
- I can follow instructions
- I understand the need to follow rules

### How You Can Help

- Choose stories with repeated refrains, dances and action songs involving looking and pointing, and songs that require replies and turn-taking such as 'Tommy Thumb'.
- Use sand timers to help extend concentration for children who find it difficult to focus their attention on a task.
- Explain why it is important to pay attention when others are speaking.



## Eating

- I can use a knife & fork
- I can open my packed lunch on my own
- I am confident at opening wrappers & packaging

### How You Can Help

- Teach children skills of how to use tools and materials effectively and safely and give them lots of opportunities to practise.
- Allow children to pour their own drinks and serve their own food.
- Be aware of eating habits and of the different ways people eat their food (e.g. that eating with clean fingers is as skilled and equally valued as using cutlery.)

## Speaking & literacy

- I am interested in reading stories & looking at picture books
- I am able to talk about myself, my needs & feelings
- I am practising recognising my name when it's written down

### How You Can Help

- Read stories children already know, pausing at intervals to encourage them to 'read' the next word.
- Name and talk about a wide range of feelings and make it clear that all feelings are understandable and acceptable, including feeling angry, but that not all behaviours are.
- Model how you label and manage your own feelings (e.g. 'I'm feeling a bit angry and I need to calm down, so I'm going to...')
- Focus on meaningful print such as a child's name, words on a cereal packet or a book title, in order to discuss similarities and differences between symbols.



## Getting dressed & undressed on my own

- I can button & unbutton my clothes
- I can put my own shoes & socks on
- I can put my coat on & use a zip

### How You Can Help

- Encourage efforts such as when a child offers their arm to put in a coat sleeve.
- Support children's growing independence as they do things for themselves, such as pulling up their pants after toileting.
- Help children who are struggling with self-care by leaving a last small step for them to complete (e.g. pulling up their trousers from below the waist.)

## Sharing & turn taking

- I can share toys & take turns
- I can play games with others
- I can interact with other children

### How You Can Help

- Provide activities that involve turn-taking and sharing (e.g. board games).
- Choose books, puppets and dolls that help children explore their ideas about friends and friendship and to talk about feelings (e.g. someone saying 'You can't play'.)
- Encourage children to choose to play with a variety of friends from all backgrounds, so that everybody in the group experiences being included.



## Interest in the world & new activities

- I enjoy learning about the world around me
- I am interested in exploring new activities or environments
- I like asking questions

### How You Can Help

- Use your own knowledge to extend children's experiences of the world.
- Arouse awareness of features of the environment in the local area (e.g. make visits to shops or a park).
- Encourage children to talk about their community life and to find out about other children's experiences.
- Introduce vocabulary to enable children to talk about their observations and to ask questions.

## Independence

- I am happy to be away from my mummy, daddy or my main carer
- I am happy to tidy my belongings & look after my things
- I am feeling confident about starting school

### How You Can Help

- Encourage children to see other adults as a resource and as partners to their learning.
- Teach children to use and care for materials and then trust them to do so independently.
- Talk to your child about starting school and reassure them if they feel uncertain.



## Routines

- I can get ready for school on time.
- I have a good bedtime routine so I'm not tired for school.
- I am used to eating at the times I will on school days.

### How You Can Help

- Familiarise children with the morning routine they will need to follow, including getting up on time and putting on their school uniform.
- Put a structured bedtime routine in place to make sure children are well rested.
- Find out what time the school serves meals and try to mimic this at home.

## Self-care

- I know when to wash my hands
- I can wipe my nose
- I can ask for help if I don't feel well

### How You Can Help

- Talk with children about the importance of hand washing to prevent the spread of germs.
- Encourage children to notice changes in their bodies (feeling hot or cold, feeling full after eating, their heart beating faster after exercise).
- Respond to how children communicate when uncomfortable.

## Going to the toilet

- I can go to the toilet on my own, wipe myself properly & flush
- I can wash & dry my hands without any help

### How You Can Help

- Respond to how children communicate their need for toileting.
- Talk with children about the importance of good hygiene in relation to flushing and wiping.
- Create opportunities moving towards independence (e.g. provide toileting and hand washing facilities that they can use without assistance).



## Counting skills

- I enjoy practising counting objects
- I like saying number rhymes & playing counting games
- I can recognise some numbers when they are written down

### How You Can Help

- Use number language in a variety of situations (e.g. how many?)
- Provide number labels for children to use (e.g. by putting a number label on a toy car that corresponds with a parking space.)
- Model and encourage use of mathematical language (e.g. asking questions like 'How many saucepans will fit on the shelf?')

## Writing skills

- I like tracing patterns & colouring in
- I enjoy experimenting with different shaped scribbles
- I am practising holding a pencil

### How You Can Help

- Notice and encourage the marks children make and the meanings they give to them, such as when a child covers a whole piece of paper and says, 'I'm writing'.
- Include opportunities for writing during role play and other activities.
- Model writing for a purpose (e.g. a shopping list, message or reminder for ourselves).

For an A3 copy of this poster with accompanying stickers and crib sheet visit [www.nurseryresources.org](http://www.nurseryresources.org)



WRITE YOUR CHILD'S  
NAME HERE

# I'm ready for school



Self-care



Independence



Going to  
the toilet



Speaking  
& literacy



Listening &  
understanding



Interest in the  
world & new  
activities



Writing  
skills



Sharing &  
turn taking



Getting dressed  
& undressed  
on my own



Counting  
skills



Eating



Routines

