

WISE OWLS CHILDCARE



GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

SPREAD YOUR WINGS

AND GROW



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WHAT IS SCHOOL READINESS?

“School readiness is the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2014)

School readiness refers to children who are about to start formal education, otherwise known as primary school.

This resource is designed for parents and early years educators of children in their early years, with a specific focus on getting children ready for the school years ahead.



WHY IS SCHOOL READINESS IMPORTANT?

How prepared a child is for school impacts their performance, development, and well-being.

Developing school readiness skills enables early years educators to enhance a child's abilities in social interaction, play, language, emotional growth, physical skills, literacy, and fine motor skills.

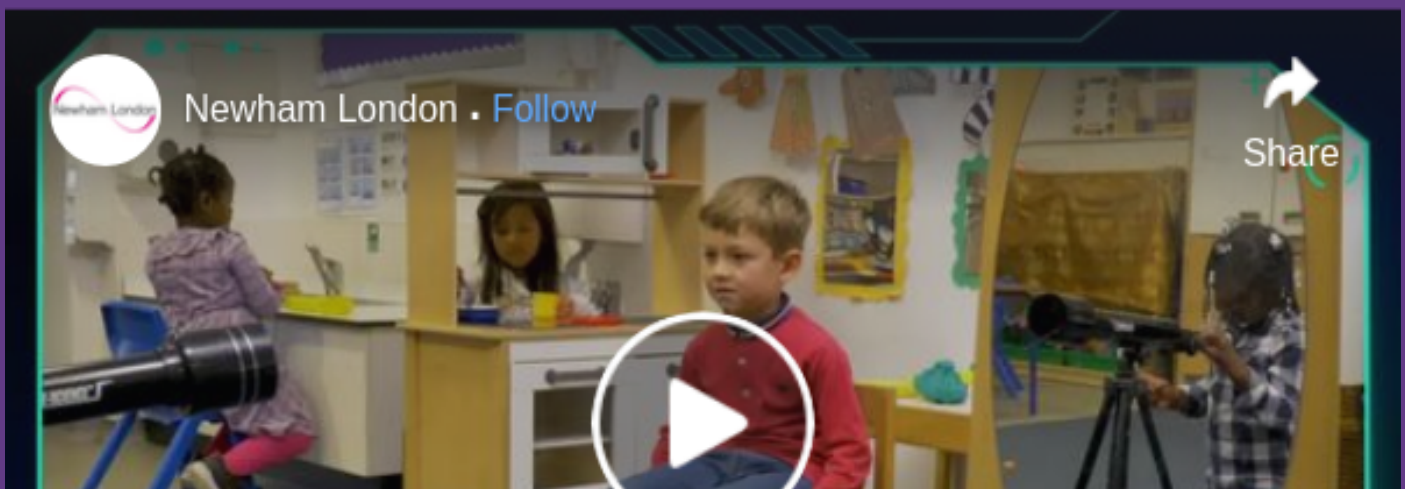
School readiness is important as it encompasses the standards of intellectual, physical, and social development that enable children to meet academic demands and navigate the school curriculum effectively.



WHAT DOES SCHOOL READINESS LOOK LIKE?

Here is a fun video that explains some of the fundamental skills children should aim to have achieved by the time they start school.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=762717691339382>



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING A CHILD BECOME SCHOOL READY?

School readiness not only assists parents, keyworkers, and children but also plays a crucial role in fostering strong parent partnerships to help families with their children. Assessing a child's readiness for school enables parents and educators to pinpoint areas where they can support the child throughout their educational journey.



SELF CARE AND INDEPENDENCE

There are many things that parents and practitioners can do to help prepare children for school. Please be aware that these are only intended as a guide to aid development and not to be used as a checklist. It is important to remember that all children are unique and may develop at different stages.

Encouraging independence nurtures self-reliance in your child, empowering them to feel in charge of their own life. This sense of autonomy and belonging is important for developing social connections.

- ✓ I can use a knife and fork
- ✓ I can open my own packed lunch
- ✓ I can button and unbutton my own clothes
- ✓ I can put my shoes and socks on and take them off independently
- ✓ I can be away from my parents
- ✓ I can look after my belongings
- ✓ I can wash and dry my hands independently
- ✓ I can use the toilet independently
- ✓ I know when to wash my hands
- ✓ I can wipe my own nose



HOW CAN YOU HELP A CHILD DEVELOP INDEPENDENCE?

Independence: Encourage children to perform actions on their own, such as dressing themselves, going to the toilet, practising good hygiene, and serving and eating a meal independently.

Love of Learning: Pursue knowledge that interests them and provide praise for trying new things

Resilience: Build resilience and coping skills by having a routine where children can become comfortable saying goodbye to you.

Taking care of belongings: Teach children how to use and care for their toys and belongings and trust them to do so independently. Encourage them to take care of the belongings of others too.

Lunch boxes can be tricky: Give lots of opportunities for practice e.g practice opening their lunchbox and eating properly

Routine: Implement a structured routine at home for both morning and night





SOCIAL SKILLS

Children who have strong social skills tend to be more engaged in the learning process and perform better in school. They are also more confident and better able to work with others, which helps them achieve their goals more effectively.

- ✓ I can share toys and take turns
- ✓ I can play with others
- ✓ I can interact with other children
- ✓ I can be sensitive to others' feelings



HOW CAN YOU HELP A CHILD DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS?

Taking it in turns: Provide activities that promote turn taking for example board games, show & tell, baking

Diversity & Inclusion: Encourage children to play with other children from different backgrounds and be inclusive

Expressing emotions: Choose toys and books that will encourage children to express their feelings and question them on feelings of other people or characters.

Listening skills: Explain why it is important to listen when others are speaking



Play gives children an outlet to express their emotions and feelings and helps them to develop a sense of who they are.



“Early math is cognitively fundamental. It’s not just about numbers and shapes. There’s reasoning and thinking embedded in what we do in early mathematics that forms a foundation for years to come.”

DOUG CLEMENTS

MATHS AND COUNTING

Early maths sets the foundations for learning, as Mathematics gives children a range of transferable skills they can use in everyday life including problem solving, reasoning, explaining and justifying.

- ✓ I can practise counting with objects
- ✓ I can say number rhymes and play counting games
- ✓ I can recognise some numbers

HOW CAN YOU HELP A CHILD DEVELOP MATH SKILLS?

Teachable moments: Use number language in a variety of real life situations, such as counting dogs you come across on your walk or collecting and counting leaves or sticks.

Model language: Encourage the use of mathematical language by modelling it. For example ask children questions like how many toys will fit in this box?

Love of maths: Get children involved in activities that will require them to weigh & measure, such as baking.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Speech, language, and communication are critical areas of development for children. They play a vital role throughout our lives, helping us to understand what is going on around us, communicate our basic needs and feelings, hold conversations, think and learn, develop relationships, solve problems, and more.

- ✓ I can experiment with different shaped scribbles
- ✓ I can practice holding a pencil correctly
- ✓ I can recognise my own name when written down
- ✓ I am looking at picture books and engaging in stories
- ✓ I can follow instructions
- ✓ I can ask for help when I am unsure
- ✓ I can communicate with adults with words and feelings

HOW CAN YOU HELP A CHILD DEVELOP LANGUAGE SKILLS?

Mark making: Notice and encourage the marks children make

Opportunities for learning: Include opportunities for writing during other activities

Writing for purpose: Model writing for a purpose e.g. writing a shopping list, to do lists on the fridge, rotas.

Point out special letters: Focus on meaningful text such as your child's name or letters

Love of reading: Read stories that children already know and pause frequently to give them the opportunity to read and associate the words they know with the text





BEHAVIOUR AND RESPECT

Listening underpins all language development and social interaction. Children need appropriate opportunities and experiences to ensure that they develop their listening skills securely. Good listening skills enable children to learn, play and develop friendships.

- ✓ I can ask questions
- ✓ I can sit still for short periods of time
- ✓ I can talk about myself, my needs and my feelings
- ✓ I can listen to others and follow simple instructions

HOW CAN YOU HELP A CHILD DEVELOP THESE SKILLS?

Practice concentration: Try using sand timers to help extend concentration for children who find this tricky

Express yourself: Name and talk about a wide range of feelings and emotions and model how you label and manage your feelings

Listening skills: Plan regular listening activities into your week including reading and group time, show & tell, conversations with family over dinner.



*Children should
be taught how to
think, not what to
think.*

MARGARET MEAD

THE PATH TO SCHOOL READINESS



Encourage maths skills with pouring, measuring using different materials and **talk** about weight and volume



Provide activities that build hand and finger strength to help with pen and pencil coordination, and cutting and pasting skills

Enjoy physical play
Offer activities that teach children to wait their turn and help others.



Develop an interest in stories, sounds and numbers (explore rhyming words).



Practice reading and writing their name with mark making using sticks, chalk, conkers etc. to **develop** writing skills and new ways to communicate



Read often and provide books that **discuss** school and help build an understanding of what school will be like



Provide opportunities to learn how to use cutlery at meal times

Count, sort and measure in every day activities and begin to recognise colours and numbers



Encourage independence with activities such as going to the toilet, flushing the toilet and washing hands on their own.



Follow a child's interests and discover teachable moments. Discuss what they see, hear, smell, feel and taste.



Promote group time activities to encourage children to sit quietly and listen and to respond and contribute to discussions.



Pretend play using school as the theme to help build confidence and expectations.



PRE SCHOOL



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A photograph showing children's hands at a wooden table. One child is using a blue-handled tool to stir something in a red bowl. Another child is holding a green object. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor setting like a classroom or playroom.

READING, WRITING & COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES

Working on gross motor skills prepares your child for bilateral coordination tasks needed for writing like holding the paper down with one hand and writing with the other.

- *Dancing with pegs and ribbons*
- *Making big bubbles using hoops and tennis rackets (secret ingredient for stronger bubbles is liquid glucose)*
- *Balloon volleyball*
- *Yoga*
- *Building with large boxes*
- *Jumping and popping bubble wrap balloons*

FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES

These activities build the strength and dexterity required for proper pencil grip and controlled hand movements. These skills are essential for letter formation, line tracing, and eventually, writing words and sentences.

- *Making letters with playdough*
- *Painting with cotton swabs*
- *Threading - make your own threading template of the children's favourite characters using string, ribbons, pipe cleaners etc.*
- *Thread pipe cleaners through beads or pasta*
- *Cutting practice using playdough, material, ribbon, card etc.*
- *Writing/Mark Making in flour, glitter, foam, paint or even with water.*
- *Use tweezers or pegs to pick up small objects*
- *Scrunching paper - make it a game, scrunch and throw in a bucket*

PHONICS ACTIVITIES

Foundation stages of phonics focuses on developing crucial listening and sound discrimination skills, laying the groundwork for future reading and writing proficiency.

- *Listening and comparing the sounds of different toys or musical instruments.*
- *Making sounds a part of your storytelling.*
- *Singing songs and rhymes.*
- *Clapping along to words or songs.*
- *Introducing rhyming words.*
- *Changing the dynamics and pitch (loud/quiet of high/low)*
- *Creating a rhythm or song using body parts*
- *Make a 'junk band' with pots & pans*



MATHS ACTIVITIES

COUNTING

The key to how to help your child with maths skills is to help them get the basics grounded and ensure that learning remains fun and exciting.

- *Enlist your child to help set up for meal times. Place numbers on each of the places at the table or have number cards out with 1-10 and say I need 3 forks and point to the number 3. Using the language and showing the numbers daily, will begin to build up essential number recognition.*
- *Maths can be incorporated into every aspect of your day. Count as you go up and down the stairs, while you wash your hands, during tidy up time, i.e. 'can you pick up three toys and put them away. Introduce the numbers for them to begin to recognise them by displaying numbers in their play.*
- *Sing counting songs and rhymes*

SHAPES

- *Take advantage of the shapes we see in our every day lives and talk about shapes and sizes, for example, leaves, clouds, buildings, pebbles and so on. This can help to build up the basic mathematical vocabulary that will help children at school.*
- *Ask children to sort objects into different shapes and colour groups. Use household items, toys, buttons, lego etc. "Let's find all of the objects that are blue and put them in the basket. Let's group all of the objects that are square." "Let's put all the toy cars in this bin and all the toy mini-figures in this bin. Which bin has more?" Give children lots of opportunities to look at, find, and sort objects based on different attributes – shape, colour, size, type, etc.*
- *Make collages or books of objects that are different shapes and colours. Example: "My Circle Book" – cut out pictures of things that are circular and put one on each page and name it. Make your own counting book. Each page can have a number and that number of objects. Use drawings, photographs, magazine clippings, or actual objects (buttons, small toys, etc.).*

WEIGHING AND MEASURING

Making a meal or even a batch of cookies or banana bread together shows children that we use maths in everyday activities. As you measure individual ingredients, talk out loud to your child about what and how you are measuring, show them what the quantities look like, and get them actively involved.

Example: "This recipe calls for 2 eggs. Can you get 2 eggs out of the carton? Let's crack and add them to the bowl. We also need 1 and a half cups of milk. Let's measure that amount in this measuring cup. First let's find the 1-cup mark...now let's find/ add another half." As you talk through the recipe, show them the markers and measures and let them pour and stir.



PERSONAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

SELF CONFIDENCE AND SELF AWARENESS

- *Negotiate when and how they will do things, and who with.*
- *Try to give children lots of opportunities to explore the world of nature – in the garden, the park or the woods,*
- *Be enthusiastic about rain, mud, worms and spiders – children will pick up their attitude to the world from you*
- *Praise children for learning new skills such as using scissors or tying laces*
- *Managing feelings and behaviour:*
- *Give positive feedback*
- *Set clear boundaries which are fairly and consistently applied by all*
- *Use positive language*

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- *Help children to see how important it is to be aware of other people's feelings*
- *Do some simple household chores together to show the value of teamwork and cooperation*
- *Play games that involve turn taking and following simple rules*

DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE

- *At mealtimes, encourage independent choices, and ask children to evaluate their own likes and dislikes*
- *At mealtimes, trust children to pour drinks for themselves and others by taking care*
- *Include children in the task of setting the tables and preparing snacks*
- *Encourage tidying up after themselves after mealtimes and tidying up toys/equipment*

OTHER WAYS TO PROMOTE SCHOOL READINESS

- *Talk to the children about what it might be like and if they have any worries*
- *Find some pictures of family or friends at school and talk about them*
- *Visit the school and take a walk around to see all the exciting areas and spaces*
- *Practice the school run so they are familiar with the journey – risk assessment required*
- *Try the school uniform and shoes on so they get to feel what it is like*

TOILETING

Children should be able to master several skills to become independent in going to the toilet. Once they have gained control over their bladder and bowel they need to learn how to clean themselves. This involves being able to reach behind themselves, being able to turn their hand, and knowing where to wipe.

HOW CAN YOU HELP A CHILD WITH TOILETING?

Routine: Have a simple routine for toileting that provides some visual cues for children to follow (see next page).

Practice makes perfect: We all fall into the trap of doing things for children because it is often quicker or cleaner. Toileting is one of those skills that benefits from a lot of practice. Be patient, be prepared for a little mess, and remain calm and encouraging. Take time to go through the routine with children when they go to the toilet. This will help embed these important skills.

Visual cues: Provide visual cues in the form of posters in the toilet area and on the back of toilet doors.



Going to the toilet



1

Pull down
pants



2

Go to potty
or toilet



3

Wipe with
toilet paper



4

Pull up
pants



5

Close
toilet lid



6

Flush toilet



7

Wash your
hands



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FINAL TIPS FOR PARENTS

Before preparing your child for school, consider these important points:

- Going to school for the first time is a significant event for child. Visiting the school beforehand can help make the first day less daunting.
- A child's behaviour may change when they start school, swinging between dependence and independence. Be patient, show understanding, and offer comfort.
- Establish a morning routine to reduce stress. Ensure your child has breakfast and allow enough time for getting ready, especially if they are learning to dress themselves.
- Show genuine interest in your child's activities, both at school and home. Encourage them to express their feelings without pressure.
- Encourage and support your child without excessive praise. Showing interest and providing encouragement will boost their confidence.
- After a long day at school, allow your child time to relax when they get home. Children need ongoing love, support, and encouragement.
- Spend quality time with your child daily, even if it's watching their favourite TV show together and discussing it.
- Starting school can be anxiety-inducing, so having fun and playing with your child can help ease their worries and enhance their social skills.
- Parents have a challenging role, but it's important to take care of yourself and have a support system. Reflect on your own life and priorities.

Finally, remember, take care of yourself and seek support when needed.