

What is 'school readiness'?

It's easy to say what it's NOT ... it's not about reading and writing!

It's more about being able to ...

- ✓ Cope with daily routines
- ✓ Go to the toilet and wipe independently
- ✓ Wash hands properly
- ✓ Get dressed and undressed for PE
- ✓ Tell someone how you are feeling
- ✓ Work with others
- ✓ Wiping their own nose and putting the tissue in a bin
- ✓ Listen to and follow instructions
- ✓ Explain what you are doing
- ✓ Open lids and drinks containers for lunch
- ✓ Take care of belongings and put them in a bag...

It's about having a good daily routine and promoting play

A good daily routine is important for children of all ages, but especially if they are preparing for starting school. Some children respond really well to visual routines – especially children who struggle to structure the day or recognise the passing of time. You will find lots of free examples on the internet or you could make a routine using photos of your child.

Bear in mind: experts advise that a lot of children find it difficult to track horizontally because they have poor peripheral vision (especially boys) and display a visual routine vertically.

Knowing a routine means knowing that every day they need to –

****Sleep and then get up when a certain number is at the start of the clock**

...Teach your child what the number '7' looks like and explain that they can get up when the number 7 is at the start of their clock.

They might like to learn the number that represents their age as well.

****Wash themselves and brush their teeth**

...Provide a flannel and soap for your child to use independently ... and when they are brushing their teeth put a blob of toothpaste on their brush and push it into the bristles so they can spread it round all their teeth.

You might want to provide a small mirror so your child can watch themselves and check they have covered their face with soap before rinsing.

****Choose their own clothes to wear and get dressed**

...Explain to your child that they will soon be wearing a uniform every day ... but not in the holidays!

If you find your child choosing to wear inappropriate clothes for the weather, you might want to limit the selection to start with until they more fully understand the health implications of wearing, for example, jumpers on a hot day.

****Help to prepare and eat healthy food and drink lots of water from an open cup**

...Involve your child in cooking activities so they learn about food from shop to plate and beyond. Chat about –

- Where the food comes from
- The food journey from field to plate
- How to prepare food safely
- Kitchen dangers etc...

Prepare food your child enjoys eating and aim to widen their tastes before they start school.

****Have regular meal times with their family**

...Regular mealtimes help prepare your child for lunch break at school. Sit together with your child where possible and chat about their day.

Bear in mind your child won't be able to snack at school and might find that hard if they are used to accessing food throughout the day.

****Have fun playing**

...Encourage your child to run around – sit and listen – play independently – do some family activities – relax through the day...

The more movement you can encourage during your child's play the better!

We all need to work together and introduce flexible daily routines that allow children to:

Communication and language:

**Read exciting, interesting books and sing songs and rhymes together every day.

**Introduce and repeat new words – lots of new vocabulary – in context.

Personal, social and emotional development:

**Ensure behaviour boundaries are secure so children can get on with their learning.

**Support children's social skills – talk about emotions and how you are feeling.

**Support independence skills – don't do anything for a child that they can reasonably do for themselves.

Physical development:

**Move in big and small ways through the day – dance, crawl, run and jump together.

**Encourage the child to develop their fine motor skills through play.

Literacy:

**Support pre-reading with lots of books, storytelling and conversations.

**Encourage pre-writing with lots of mark making, hand-eye coordination and big movement games.

Mathematics:

**Develop number awareness through games and counting songs and rhymes.

**Experiment with shapes, play with patterns, build with blocks and make mathematical connections.

Understanding the world:

**Talk about changes in the world around you through the seasons.

**Have fun exploring simple science together – baking and making playdough.

Expressive arts and design:

**Encourage the child to join in with sensory play.

**Play imaginatively together – what does the child want to play with today?

Most importantly: start from the child's current interests and scaffold their learning so they are keen to find out new things and explore in new ways.