

Ready Steady School

During this time of challenge and uncertainty many families will have just received notification about which primary school their child is going to in September. Although this will be an exciting new experience for them, it could also be an anxious time for you and possibly your child especially during this lockdown period.

The following information is designed to help you with some basic advice that you may find useful in the following days, weeks and months to help your child be as ready as possible for starting at primary school.

It will hopefully help you understand what being 'school ready' looks like.

I enjoy learning about and exploring new things

School will be full of new, exciting and unfamiliar toys, people and experiences for them to explore. To encourage your child's confidence to explore by:

- **Talk** to your child about anything and everything they show an interest in.
- **Go on a walk** and talk about what you can see, hear, smell, taste and feel.
- **Asking questions** - Encourage your child to do this. It doesn't matter if you don't know the answer... you can investigate it together!
- **Give your child time** to engage in and focus on activities, give their minds time to process what they are seeing/feeling etc. Wait for them to respond to you or ask them open questions (not yes/no questions).
- **Messy play** – use things you have in the cupboard – children love shaving foam or spaghetti hoops!!
- **Interest table** – place to collect new and unusual items you find around the home and garden to explore. What can you see? How does it feel? What do you think you can use it for? Help to expand your child's interest in new things and extend their language.



- **Memory game** – put several items on a tray, let your child study it, then cover with a cloth and remove an item. Can they spot what's missing? Too easy? Remove two items! This is an activity that can promote taking turns if they are playing with you or a sibling.

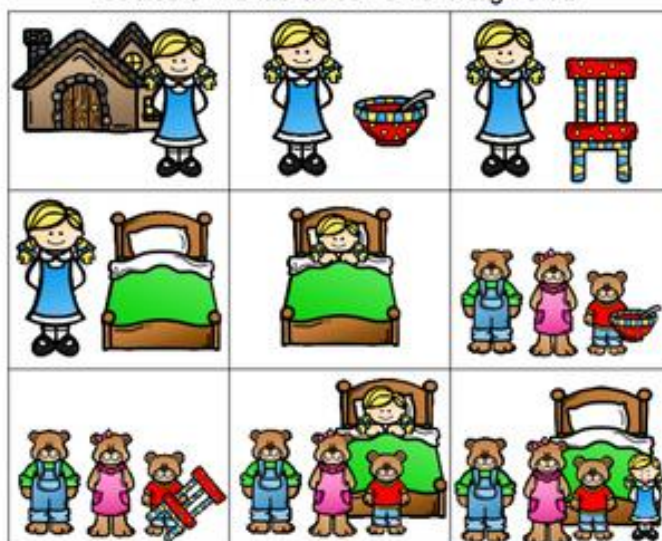
I like to read stories and look at picture books

Reading is one of the most valuable skills to master which will help them enormously throughout school and beyond. Any interest shown in reading should be embraced. *REMEMBER... THERE ISNT AN APP TO REPLACE YOUR LAP...reading together is a time to connect and comfort your child.*

- **Create a book corner** or quiet area where books are easily found. Set aside time each day to sit and read with your child. A bedtime story is a great opportunity, but any time they show an interest is also great.
- **Picture books** are just as important without words. Can your child tell a story just from pictures? Use language such as 'first, next, after that and finally' when retelling a story.
- **Sequencing pictures** from a story book and telling it their own words is a fun activity to do together. See if your child can predict what might happen next in the story, asks questions such as "What do you think might happen next?" or "Who's porridge do you think Goldilocks will eat?"



Goldilocks and the Three Bears Story Board



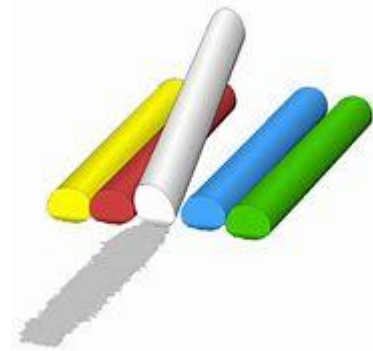
[LINK - TWINKLE READING LIST](#)

I enjoy mark making and have practised holding a pencil

- **Set up a drawing table** - provide pencils/crayons/pens/sponges and a variety of paper (plain paper, rough textured paper etc)
- **Good pencil grip** – show this by joining in. You could draw, write or do some colouring in.



- **Use their preferred hand of choice** - this may change as they become more confident with mark making.
- **Mark making** - Use a tray with shaving foam, sand or gloop and encourage mark making with fingers, utensils or toys.
- **Use tweezers** to pick up and move dried pasta/cheerios from one bowl to another.
- **Chalk drawing** - on a pavement/patio. It will wash off!
- **Paint the outside of the house** with water using different sized paintbrushes.



All these activities will promote strength of the fingers and wrists.

I can follow instructions and understand the need to follow rules



School has many rules that need to be followed to ensure your child's safety and well-being. It's good to start talking about why we have rules and to put some into practice at home.

- **Give simple tasks** such as telling them to put away the toys before each mealtime or before they get another activity out, hanging their coat up, putting their shoes away etc.
- **Play games** that require your child to follow simple instructions such as Simon Says.
- **'House Rules'**. Write these as a family so everyone has an input. This could include jobs such as children putting their washing in the wash basket, taking their plate to the kitchen after mealtimes etc. This will encourage independence and show them that everyone has rules to follow.



- **Introduce a reward system** ... For example - a pebble in a jar each time they complete a job. When the jar is full they can choose a reward. This could include a movie night, baking cakes, extra story etc.

Ready Steady School

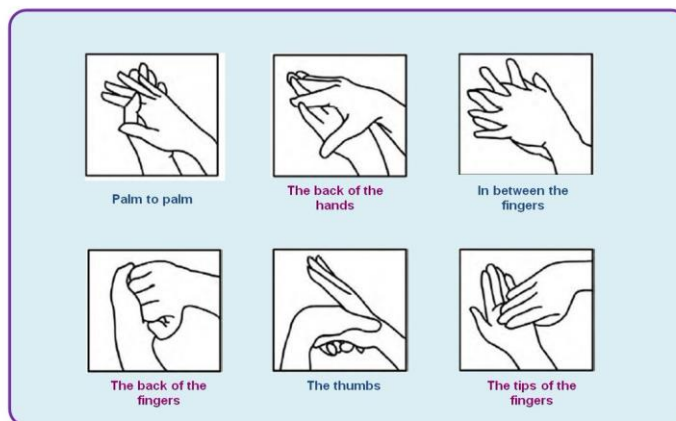
I know when to wash my hands and when to wipe my nose



This is currently a very important task for children to master and we all should be following government guidelines for this.

- **Promote handwashing** before mealtimes, after using the toilet and after messy play or after being outside. Clean hands can help reduce the spread of germs and illnesses. It is important to dry hands as well; wet or damp hands are a breeding ground for germs!
- **Model the action yourself.** If your child sees you doing it, they will be more inclined to do it.
- **Sensory/role play opportunities** with water and soap – Could help with washing up, bathe their babies, wash their cars etc.
- **Follow a handwashing poster.** School toilets either provide paper towels or automatic hand driers. The driers can be noisy so using a hairdryer at home to dry their hands can help your child adjust to the noise and the sensation.

The 6 Steps of Hand Washing



- Prompt your child to **use a tissue** to clean their nose. Ensure they know how to blow! Keep a box or pack of tissues handy.
- Remember **CATCH IT, KILL IT, BIN IT!!!**

CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.



BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.



KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



Ready Steady School

I can go to the toilet, wipe myself and flush unaided

Using the toilet independently is good practise and they will be expected to go on their own at school. Use this time to teach the skills required.



- **Use the toilet on their own**, assisting them to start off with. Then move onto supervising. Once they have mastered going for a poo, and wiping themselves properly then you can allow them to go on their own to build their confidence ahead of doing this at school.
- Ensure they are **wiping themselves correctly**, especially girls. They need to wipe front to back.
- **Going to the toilet process** - they need reminding to follow steps including the simple things such as closing the bathroom door, pulling up their underwear BEFORE leaving the bathroom, flushing the toilet, washing their hands afterwards.
- **LOTS of praise** during this time to encourage their confidence.
- You can use the **ERIC booklet** and the sequencing cards to help.

<https://www.eric.org.uk/poo-and-wee>



I can use a knife and fork and open my lunch on my own



All children currently have access to a hot cooked meal for the first three years at school. All schools have a different system of picking meal options. Most schools will have a healthy eating policy which you should be made aware of.

- **Practice sitting at the table** or at a separate place from where they watch TV or play at all mealtimes.
- **Eat with them** where possible to model using a knife and fork and mealtime etiquette. No throwing food etc!
- **Cutting their own food** -

Assist where necessary to start off with.

Praise if they give it a good attempt to build confidence.

- **Provide play activities** such as playdough that can help develop their utensil skills. They could help you prepare meals, butter their sandwich etc.
- **Opening things themselves** such as individually wrapped biscuits, peeling bananas and satsumas etc. Again, assist initially.
- **Encourage having a cooked school dinner** - It will be a good social opportunity and they might have foods they have not tried before. If your child can be fussy, seeing a lot of other children eating the same food will encourage them to at least try it.



- **Home packed lunches** could include: a sandwich/wrap/bagel/pitta filled with a filling such as ham, cheese, chicken or egg (you could opt for cooked pasta if preferred, some fresh fruit, fresh vegetables such as carrot sticks, peppers or cucumber slices, a treat such as yogurt popcorn, raisins or flapjack pieces. Provide a drink of water.

IF PROVIDING GRAPES PLEASE CUT THEM LONGWAYS INTO 4 PIECES TO AVOID CHOKING HAZARD.

I can button and unbutton my shirt, use a zip and put on my own shoes and socks

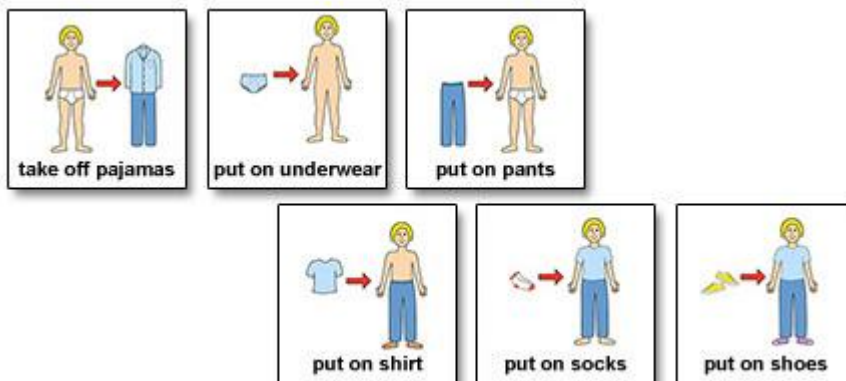


Getting dressed and undressed on their own will help your child prepare for PE lessons and other activities when they go to school. They will be expected to do this independently.

- **Put out clothes the night before** and encourage them to dress themselves in the morning. When at school, this will save time and help the morning routine run smoothly. Assist where necessary and build confidence through praise.
- **Keep their clothes together**, when

getting undressed either in a pile or using the 'dress the chair' technique. When at school, this will help them locate their clothes easily when changing back into their uniform.

- **Practice their actual uniform before starting school** - provide lots of opportunities to including buttons, zips and tights.



- **Fine motor activities** such as threading etc are extra practice.
- **Put on their own coat** and to do it up. This will save staff time when children are going outside and ensure your child stays warm.

IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO AVOID SCHOOL SHOES WITH LACES AT THIS STAGE, VELCRO STRAPS ARE GREAT!



I am happy to be away from my parents or main carer



- **Talk to your child** about the expectations of starting school and what school will be like. Playing, singing, assembly, eating with friends etc.
- **Attend any pre visits** (if possible) that the school may have arranged. This is usually a very positive experience and well supported by staff in school.
- **Encourage independent activity daily** such as a puzzle or craft activity. Start with short activities and gradually build up the time.
- **Talk positively** about being apart from them – they are spending time at school to learn and play with their friends etc. Make it a positive experience so they can look forward to starting school with a positive mindset. If they see you emotional, this could have a negative impact on how they view school and cause them to worry in your absence.
- **Do not linger at drop-off times.** This can be difficult but will help them to settle into their new class much easier and is good practise for their independent skills.



I can share toys and take turns

- **Turn taking games** - with you, siblings or friends. Use language such as "I have had a turn, now it's yours", "I need to wait to have a go."



- **Use a sand timer or stopwatch** to show them when their time comes to an end and that it's someone else's turn.

- **Circle games** these require physical turn taking such as the parachute games, musical chairs, Farmers in his den etc

- **Praise encourages good behaviour** to be repeated. Provide opportunities for them to do something nice for other household members. Ensure their efforts are noticed and praise is given. What you notice more of you will see more of.



- **Stay positive and notice** the good things they do, no matter how big or small. Use comments like "I noticed how you helped your friend build that tower, that was a kind thing to do"



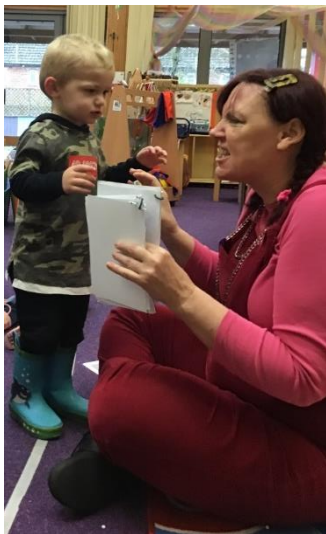
- **Empathise with your child** as sharing can be challenging. Tell them you recognise how hard it can be to share and acknowledge their feeling.

I can ask for help if I don't feel well

Being able to communicate with other adults outside of their family and in a new setting can be daunting especially if it is not something they are familiar with. To be able to communicate their needs is important - if they are thirsty, feeling unwell, need the toilet or are hurt.



- **Take time and pause frequently** when talking with your child to give them time to respond.
- **Reduce the number of questions** you ask them; children tend to speak more freely if they are expressing themselves rather than answering an adult's questions.
- **Show you are listening** by repeating back to them what they have said. This will provide them with the chance to correct you if you have not understood correctly.



- **Give your child undivided attention** during each day to. Turn to them, get down to their level and give them eye contact. This will show them you are interested in what they are saying and help increase their confidence.
- **Say their teacher's and teaching assistance names** with your child, noting they are there to help them.
- **Recognising different feelings and emotions** using the picture lotto game. Discuss what each emotion might look like and why the

person is feeling that way, for example "I'm wondering why this person looks sad, maybe he has lost his football?". Encourage your child to share their ideas with you



Ready Steady School

I have a good bedtime routine, so I am not tired for school



A good bedtime routine will ensure your child is getting enough sleep so they can face the school day feeling well rested and refreshed. Remember school will be so full of new experiences and learning new things so your child may be more tired than normal. Most children this age need around 11 hours sleep.

- **Develop a good routine** now so it won't be a shock to you and your children in September! Keep it going!
- **Ensure children are going to bed calm and ready for sleep.** Allow some time to share a book and talk with your child. Your child talking at this time could be deemed as a delaying tactic from going to bed, but it could be your child wants to reflect on their day or share their worries.



- **Wake up at a similar time each morning,** allowing enough time for your child to wake up gently, enjoy breakfast, get washed and dressed ready to leave the house. You'll find that the transition into school, and the rest of the day, will be much more of a positive experience. What happens at home can have a significant impact on the rest of the day and vice versa

- **AVOID SCREEN TIME FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR BEFORE BEDTIME TO ENCOURAGE A RESTFUL SLEEP.**

My morning routine	
	Use the toilet
	Brush my teeth
	Eat breakfast
	Get dressed
	Brush or comb hair
	Make my bed
	Pack my bag for pre-school or school
	Leave home for my day

Ready Steady School



I am able to sit still and listen for a short while

The average school day will require your child to follow a routine which will include several short periods of sitting still and listening. This could be about the learning they are about to do, circle time or assembly time.



- **Practice conversation skills**
– allow time for your child to talk while you listen and vice versa. Encourage them to avoid interrupting until you have stopped talking. This can be practiced in a bigger group too.
- **Roleplay aspects of school** such as circle time and assembly. This can help to demonstrate the sitting and listening aspect. When you see positive behaviour such as sitting still, waiting for their turn to talk, give praise. Comments such as “I love how you were sitting still” or “I could tell you were listening really well just then” will mimic the positive language they use in school and provide consistency between home and school.



Ready Steady School

I am happy to tidy up after myself and can look after my things

- **Play a chosen tidy up song** and aim to be finished by the end of the song. This will help them focus on the task given.
- **Looking after their belongings** will encourage them to do the same with the resources in school, putting puzzles back into the right box, the building bricks back in the container, tidying when they have been playing outside etc. This will not only help keep your belongings in good condition but mean they are accessible the next time you, or anyone else wants to use them.



- **Avoid taking in any toys from home** if you can. Schools tend to discourage you bringing in precious items in from home. They want to avoid the panic of losing items or squabbles amongst the children about what belongs to who!

REMEMBER: LABEL EVERYTHING!!!! UNIFORM, PE KITS, LUNCH BOXES, WATER BOTTLES, BAGS, SUN HATS, COATS.... ANYTHING YOUR CHILD TAKES INTO SCHOOL! TEACHERS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LOCATE THAT MISSING SHOE OR CARDIGAN IF IT DOESN'T HAVE YOUR CHILD'S NAME IN IT.



YOU CAN USE SEW IN OR IRON ON LABELS.



THERE IS ALSO A COMPANY THAT PROVIDES AN INK STAMP WHICH GOES DIRECTLY ONTO UNIFORMS, PLASTIC ITEMS, BOOKS ETC AND IS SUPER EASY TO USE - AND QUICK!!!