

What can I do to help my child before starting school?

Before starting school, you can support your child's learning and development in many ways.

When starting school your child will be encouraged to be personally independent. You can help by:

- Encouraging your child to dress and undress. Try to allow a reasonable amount of time to do this. Creating a dressing up box at home will help by making dressing and undressing fun;
- Encouraging your child to tidy up toys, books and games after using them.

You can help your child's social and emotional development by:

- Talking with your child and encouraging your child to talk with other children and other adults;
- Encouraging and supporting your child to play co-operatively with other children.

You can help your child with the early stages of reading, writing and mathematics by:

- Encouraging an enjoyment of books and stories; visiting the local library and sharing stories with your child;
- Encouraging your child to join in with rhymes and songs;
- Providing your child with a variety of writing equipment to encourage drawing and writing skills, labelling your child's pictures with his or her name and perhaps some writing. Your child may want to copy your writing if he or she is ready;
- Do some handwriting at home so your child is comfortable with letter formation and style when he or she begins school. Try to avoid writing with capital letters;
- Helping your child with simple mathematical skills, e.g. matching and sorting everyday objects, counting objects or playing with water at bath time; pouring, filling and emptying.

What can I do to help my child in the Reception Year?

In Reception children are encouraged to have a positive approach to learning and to believe that learning is fun and enjoyable. We have high expectations of our children and believe in the 'can do' approach to learning by always encouraging them to 'have a go' and do their best.

Once your child has started school, your involvement and support remains vital to his or her development. Your encouragement will help your child to settle into school happily and confidently and show that home and school are working together.

In order for your child to get the best from their education we need to work together to promote the right approach to learning. To do this we would like you to encourage:

- High self-esteem
- Confidence
- Fun/enjoyment
- The 'can do', 'have a go' approach
- A positive attitude
- High expectations



Other ways in which you can help

Continue to encourage independence for example explaining to your child why he or she needs to change for PE. Your child's teacher will reinforce this at school but sometimes may be the only adult available when your child changes for PE. This is one of the reasons why it is essential that *all* clothing is marked.

Please bear in mind that if you are considering lots of out of school activities, your child may well be tired after a busy time at school!

Please communicate with us. Come and tell us if something is worrying you or your child, so we can help to sort it out quickly.

Encourage your child to develop an awareness of safety. This covers such things as looking where they are going when they run around and learning the importance of road safety.

Helping your child to become a Writer

In order to write, children need well developed hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills. We will provide a variety of activities to help to develop these skills; for example, tracing in sand, big patterns in paint, felt-tip pen, chalk, threading cutting, etc.

Children may also be encouraged to play at being writers by having an office, travel agent or other play area that encourages writing. As their confidence and interest develops they will be taught to form letters correctly and to write simple words.

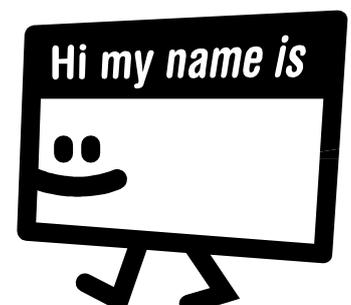
Your child will bring home a Sounds Book each day and this will show them how to form their letters correctly. They will also be taught the sound the letter makes with an action to help them remember it. It would be very helpful if you went over this work with your child as it will develop their reading skills as well.



As the year progresses, we also encourage the children to write labels for the models they might make in class and to write about their feelings and experiences in simple sentences.

Here are a few suggestions as to how you can help your child to write

- Encourage writing while they play
- Value their contribution
- Ask them to read what they have written
- Write with them, especially their name
- Show examples of writing e.g. lists, letters, addresses
- Always use lower case letters as you would normally



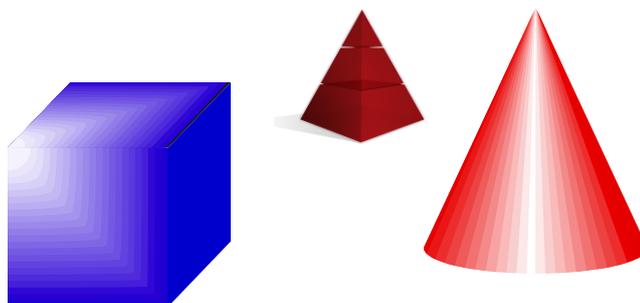
Helping your child with Mathematics

Early mathematical experiences are not only just "sums" or number sentences, they include the following areas and concepts:

Weight	Length	Volume and capacity	Money
Time - e.g. seasons, days and weeks, yesterday and tomorrow			Data Handling
Sorting and classifying and sequencing shape and space			Patterning
Number counting, recognition and formation		Estimating	Shape

To help children understand these concepts, they need plenty of practical, first-hand experience such as:

- Sorting and classifying objects which relate to their everyday experiences and their environment
- Introducing and encouraging use of appropriate maths language such as "more than", "less than", "the same as"
- Comparing and contrasting
- Songs and rhymes



The activities offered in the Reception class will help to give secure building blocks for future mathematical development.

Here are a few suggestions as to how you can help your child with early mathematics

- Look at numbers around the home and outside
- Encourage recognition of numerals and name them
- Write the numerals down
- Count things around the home
- Talk about size and shape of things
- Let them see you using money; allow buying of items when you are together
- Let them help to measure ingredients when you are cooking.
- Talk about numbers; which number is largest/what is the next number/what numbers comes after 9, before 4 ?

