

Rainbow Pack - Starting School



Preparing for School

Starting school can be an exciting time for the whole family but you might have lots of questions. What will primary school life be like? What can you do to prepare yourself and your child for the very best start?

There are lots of websites to go to for help and advice.

The Oxford Owl website has lots of information about what children will do at school.

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/starting-school/getting-ready-for-primary-school/>

Pacey has developed a 'Starting School Together' toolkit.

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/starting-school/>

BBC Bitesize have also produced information and games to help parents and children prepare for this new beginning. Games for children to play include a number game and a game about starting school.

There are also information videos for families about helping your child to become independent, bedtime routines and toilet training.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/starting-primary-school/1>



The Virtual School put together a bag of resources for children starting school each year.

The resources in the pack, along with the information provided, should help you to have fun as you prepare for school together.

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Starting School

Your Starting School Pack includes:



- ★ A **bag** - which you may choose to use as a PE bag in school.
- ★ A **pencil case**
- ★ **Scissors** - these are plastic safety scissors. Cutting out is a skill that many children struggle with in school. Find some old paper or magazines and practise your cutting skills.
- ★ A **glue stick** - learn how to turn the glue stick up and down and how to put the top on again so it doesn't dry out.
- ★ **Pens and crayons** - Drawing and mark making are ideal preparations for learning to write in Reception Class.
- ★ **Coloured pencils and a pencil sharpener** - so you can keep your pencils sharp and ready for action.
- ★ **Sketch pad** - Use the paper for drawing, cutting, or for sticking in things that you have cut out.
- ★ **Playdough & cutting tools** - Playdough can be used for so many things. You can make pretend cakes, monsters, letters and numbers.
- ★ A **story** - Read the book 'The Colour Monster Goes to School.' Talk about what happens in the story. Will your school be like that? Is there something you are worried about? What will be the best thing about going to school?
- ★ A **game** - Play 'The Little Bus' lotto game together. This focuses on observation and matching skills as well as sharing and taking turns.
- ★ A **photo frame** - for the very important first day at school photograph!



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Here are some suggestions taken from the Oxford Owls website.

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/starting-school/getting-ready-for-primary-school/>

Getting ready for primary school

Starting primary school can be daunting for you and your child, but it marks the start of an exciting new chapter. Before you know it, your child will be making friends, learning new skills and becoming increasingly independent. But how can you help them prepare for this big first step? Here are our five top tips.

1. Support your child's independence

The most useful thing you can do to get your child ready for school is to make sure they are comfortable doing simple tasks by themselves. This includes:

- ★ Going to the toilet on their own - Being able to use the toilet and wash their hands afterwards will help your child to feel independent and reduce the chances of an accident.
- ★ Getting dressed - Avoid clothing with fiddly buckles and buttons. It is also a good idea to have a few dry runs with the PE Kit!
- ★ Putting on shoes. Tie-up shoes might be a bit difficult. Go for shoes with Velcro fasteners if possible.
- ★ Eating. This includes using a knife and fork, opening their lunchbox and being able to open everything in the lunchbox - some yoghurt tubes and drink cartons can be tricky.
- ★ Solving simple problems. Encourage your child to resolve problems by talking when they don't understand or something isn't going well. It is important that they also learn when to ask an adult for help.



2. Build up your child's social skills

Learning in a classroom is a social activity. Children learn and develop by playing alongside their peers, and they will make better progress if they are happy mixing with other children and adults. You can encourage this by:

- ★ Organising play dates. Play dates with children from your child's new class help improve their social skills and makes the leap to primary school less scary - they will like knowing one or two of their classmates before school begins. Maybe you could arrange to meet up with another family in the park.
- ★ Practising greetings. Your child should know how to start a conversation with their new classmates. You can use dolls and soft toys to practise saying "hello"!
- ★ Practising conversations. Giving your child time to talk - and also time when they have to listen - teaches vital speaking and listening skills. You could take turns to talk about the best part of your day over the dinner table. Can they ask questions to find out more? Can they remember what their sibling's favourite part of the day was?
- ★ Encouraging sharing and tolerance. Sharing games such as Snakes and Ladders let children practise social skills and turn-taking. Be sure to use the language of turn-taking, like 'Whose turn is it next?' and 'Thank you for waiting.'



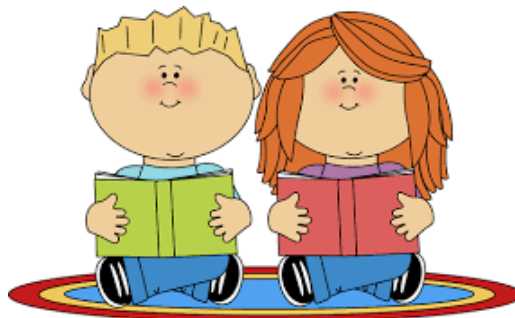


3. Early literacy and numeracy skills

Your child is not expected to have amazing literacy or numeracy skills at this age - that's what school is for! However, there are some ways you can get your child ready for learning:

★ **Help them recognise their name.** It's handy if your child can find their space in the cloakroom and can keep track of labelled clothes and other belongings.

★ **Share stories.** Reading to your child improves their vocabulary and listening skills and acting out stories is a great way to practise communication. Reading and talking about stories will help to stimulate children's imaginations. Sharing stories helps to develop the skills that children will need as they learn to read and write.



★ **Practise fine motor skills.** Developing hand strength, fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination all helps prepare your child for writing. Making Lego models, using scissors, and threading beads or pasta onto string are fun ways to develop hand strength. Drawing and colouring activities are good for introducing children to mark-making tools.

★ **Introduce them to numbers.** Why not go on a number hunt around your local area and take pictures of any numbers you find? You could also share counting songs together or count objects as you set the table for dinner. Can your child get five forks or three cups out? Can they share them between members of the family?

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4. Help your child learn to concentrate

Your child being able to concentrate in 10-15 minute bursts will really help in school. Here are some ways to practise:

★ **Enjoy extended play together.** Building kits like Lego are great for encouraging your child's resilience, especially if they can finish the activity in one sitting. Race-the-clock games are good for improving concentration (and are helpful when you need to be somewhere on time and need your child to get their socks and shoes on quickly!).

★ **Follow instructions.** Giving your child simple instructions to follow helps build their concentration. Why not try a simple recipe? Or follow instructions to plant a seed.

5. Talk to your child about school

Talking about the exciting things your child is going to do at school helps them get over any nerves. You could:

★ **Visit the school.** Usually, schools have induction visits for children to meet their new teacher and spend time in the classroom. Lots of schools also have information and pictures on their website that you can look at together. Walking or driving past the school at the end of the school day and watching children come out in uniform can also help.

★ **Talk about how fun school is.** If your child has previously visited school there might be something they particularly enjoyed playing with (the dinosaurs, the paints, the climbing frame). Older siblings and friends could share all the things they enjoy about school. Giving your child time to talk also lets them raise any concerns or questions.

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★ **Practise the school routine.** It can be helpful to do a practice journey before the big day, looking for interesting things on the way. It is also a good idea to make sure your child has school-friendly bedtimes and getting-up times a few days in advance.



Starting school is a fantastic adventure. Have fun!

You're off to great
places! Today is your
day! Your mountain
is waiting, So get
on your way!

- Dr. Seuss, *Oh the Places*

You'll Go!

