

School readiness

Is my child ready for school?

The phrase 'readiness for school', seems to be cropping up all over the place. Part of the problem is that there is no clear definition of the term, and it can be difficult for parents to understand what their child will be expected to know and do. School readiness is more than just about children. It involves children, families, early environments (like nurseries and playgroups), schools and communities.

The earliest years in a child's life provide the foundation for everything that follows. We must all make sure that children are supported and encouraged to achieve their full potential as inquisitive, confident and secure individuals. This isn't just about making sure they can hold a pencil - children need the resilience, confidence and personal skills to be able to learn. If children lack the tools to benefit from education before they even get to the school gate it makes their chances of learning more difficult.

One of the best ways to prepare children for school is to read to them. Not only does story reading offer a one-to-one quiet time, it helps develop children's listening and language skills.

The key areas are: personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language.

How can I get my child school ready?

- Make sure they are toilet trained.
- Help them understand how to follow simple tasks.
- Help them to answer to their name.
- Encourage them to share and understand turn-taking.

Basic skills like toilet training, communications skills, being able to understand and follow simple tasks, taking turns and having some social skills all prepare a child to be ready for learning. Teachers and classroom assistants are then freed up to teach rather than spend time toileting, feeding children and helping them with the most basic social skills.

Ages & Stages Questionnaire

is the most accurate, family-friendly way to screen children for developmental delays between one month and 5 1/2 years.

Its benefits are:

- Takes just 10-15 minutes for parents to complete and 2-3 minutes for professionals to score.
- Captures parents' in-depth knowledge.
- Highlights a child's strengths as well as concerns.
- Teaches parents about child development and their child's skills.
- Highlights results that fall in a 'monitoring zone', to make it easier to keep track of children at risk.
- Can be completed at home, in a group session, during a home visit, or at child health review sessions.