



School Ready:

A guide to help your child be ready for school



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School Ready

How do I help my child be ready for school?

The Portslade Partnership of Schools exists to improve achievement for all children who attend Portslade Schools. We believe we are 'stronger together' rather than working in isolation. Portslade schools have worked together to produce this booklet in order to best help you settle your child into school.

Starting school is an important milestone in a child's life, and one which may cause you to feel both excited and worried. We believe that an effective, positive partnership between school and home is vital to a child's success.



TOP TIPS

We hope the 'top tips' in this booklet, gathered from other parents, experts and professionals, will help you give your child the best start in September.

Routines

Starting school for the first time is a big change in your child's life, even if they have been used to attending a nursery or playgroup. There are many new demands for them to cope with such as the playground, changing for P.E. and lunchtime, all of which can take some getting used to.

Routines help give children a sense of security at home and at school. At school, children will be introduced to routines very quickly and this helps them settle in and enjoy school. Establishing routines at home can help your child feel safe and secure.





TOP TIPS

from parents on establishing a morning routine:

Make sure your child goes to bed at the same time each night. I find doing the same thing each night makes it much easier to settle children into bed. We always do: bath – teeth – story – lights out. (Most children aged four need at least 11 hours sleep a night.)

Lay out school uniform the night before; it is much less of a rush in the morning.

Have bags packed and water bottles ready the night before.

Make sure everyone knows the time you need to leave to get to school on time. Aim for 5 minutes earlier than this. It is much better walking to school when we are not in a rush.

I always make sure that my children get dressed before they come downstairs and have breakfast, if we do it the other way round we always seem to be late.

Only let them watch TV or play on screens if they are completely ready with shoes on, teeth cleaned and book bags ready.

Independence

Most children, as they grow, enjoy learning to do more things on their own and like to become increasingly independent. Families and schools can work together to encourage this, as it will give the children confidence in their abilities, and build their self esteem and pride in all that they can do.



TOP TIPS

to encourage your child to be more independent:

1. Encourage your child to **practise putting on their school uniform** before they start school. This will help feel more confident in getting ready for PE.
2. **Encourage them to use the toilet by themselves** and wash their hands. They will be expected to do this on their own at school.
3. **Help them to learn how to use a knife and fork.**
School staff can't cut up food for children like nursery staff as there are so many children having lunch at the same time.
4. Encourage your child to **pack their own bag** for school and look after their things.

Behaviour for learning

Children understanding how they need to behave at school can be the difference between a happy child who is learning and an unhappy child. The key to encouraging good behaviour is to praise positive behaviour, and to stay calm and explain how they can make better choices when the behaviour is not what is expected.



TOP TIPS

for managing challenging behaviour:

1. Stay calm and clearly explain the desired behaviour.
2. Be consistent - make sure the rules stay the same each day.
3. Encourage sharing.
4. Play games to show we are not always the winner.
5. Praise positive behaviour. All children respond to praise; try to make sure you praise specific behaviours or skills, not just say 'good girl' or 'good boy' – try saying 'that was good listening, well done' or 'I like the way you shared your toys with your friend, that's great sharing.'
6. Encourage respect between children and adults. Always ask politely, use good manners at all times and model a calm but firm voice when asking your child to do something.
7. Love learning. Be inquisitive, ask questions, share information and find out facts.

Speaking and listening

Being able to communicate is the most important skill of all. Research has shown that talking with young children helps them become good communicators, which is essential if they are to do well at school and lead happy, fulfilled and successful lives.

Parents/Carers can help children be ready for school by encouraging speaking & listening at home.





1. Time for talk. Allow time throughout the day for talk, whether you are talking about the birds at the park, the noisy bus outside or sharing ideas about a story at bedtime. When talking with your children you are modelling good talking skills, making eye contact, taking turns in speaking and showing that you are interested in their talk.

2. Speak clearly, naturally and most importantly of all, correctly. Establish and make eye contact and say sounds, words and sentences precisely.

3. Try to give your child some individual time and encourage them to express themselves clearly and to talk about things they have seen or done.

4. Model the correct way to say a word. If your child says a word incorrectly rather than ask them to repeat it say the word yourself clearly and loudly. Continue talking and make the tricky word a natural part of your conversation.

5. Make a list of words they find tricky and try and incorporate these into games and conversation.

6. Expect your child to speak clearly. Be patient and also give praise when they try their best. If your child uses 'baby talk' for example 'me do this', try to model the correct way to speak.

7. Expect your child to listen. Model good listening skills by stopping, and making eye contact as they speak to you. When they stop, look and listen, praise them.

8. Help your child to understand and make sense of new words around them. Take time to explain new words, allow your child to explain what they mean and share their knowledge with you. If your child hasn't understood the meaning of something or a new word, explain the correct meaning and give an example which they can relate to.

Reading and writing

TOP TIPS

to help your child prepare for reading and writing in reception:

1. Read stories to your child every day.

Talk to them about the characters and pictures in books. Encourage them to guess what the story might be about from the pictures. Try to use different voices and encourage them to help turn the pages carefully. Make sure your child sees you reading, whether it's the newspaper, a book, a sign or a label, or a recipe.





2. Sing nursery rhymes and do the actions.

3. Visit the local library and borrow books.

4. Put their name up on the wall at home and help them to recognise it.

5. Always have pens and paper available at home. If they want to try and write their name, encourage them to put a capital letter at the beginning and the rest lower case. It's important to use lower case rather than capitals to model writing. Talk about the sounds of the letters that are in their name. How many letters are in their name?

6. Look at letters on signs and tell children what they are when you are walking around outside.

Maths



TOP TIPS

to help your child prepare for learning maths in school:

1. Hunt for numbers inside and outside of the home.

Help them to find out about numbers in everyday environments.

2. Sing counting songs.

3. Count items in daily life for example as you put them into the trolley at the supermarket, counting the steps as you walk up the stairs to bed or how many plates on the dinner table. Always model accurate counting (clearly saying one number name for each object that you count) and help the child to match the quantity to a numeral (when counting three apples, '1 2 3 = 3 apples' the final number in the count is the actual amount or total)

4. Recite numbers. Daily and anywhere possible. Counting forwards and backwards, always saying the number names in the correct order.

5. Teach them to recognise money and coins.

6. Talk about colours and shapes. Can they fetch a red pepper from the supermarket shelf? What shape are the wheels on their bike?

7. Sing the days of the week and the months of the year.

8. Teach your child when their birthday is and how old they are. Can they help find birthday cards for friends, with the correct number on?



Technology

The use of technology by young children has increased rapidly in the last few years. Technology provides an amazing learning and entertainment resource for both children and parents. However, there is some good guidance about how much exposure children should have with technology.



TOP TIPS

for technology for four year olds:

1. Four year olds are at a very impressionable stage in their life, they are just learning to develop their social skills and learning to communicate with the people around them. It is really important that they spend lots of time interacting with people to develop these skills and not just screens. Try not to replace the bedtime story with a film, an episode of their favourite program or a game. This will over stimulate their brain and interfere with 'winding down' bedtime routines.
2. Games can be lots of fun and can help hand-eye coordination and reasoning but because they are so immediately responsive they can also shorten attention spans and affect mood and behaviour. Limit game playing time to a reasonable period.
3. Make sure you keep to the age restrictions on games. These are imposed for good reasons and children playing games that are not suitable can be distressing for young children.

E-safety

TOP TIPS

for keeping your child safe on-line:

1. Always know what your child is looking on-line.
2. Have computers and tablets in communal spaces in the home and not bedrooms.
3. Encourage your child to speak to you about what they have seen on-line.
4. Limit screen time to a reasonable period each day.
5. Encourage children to do non-screen activities.



And finally...

Tell me about your day

Lots of children can find it difficult talking about their school day. Try these questions that can encourage conversations about what has happened at school:

- **What was the best thing that happened at school today?**
- **Tell me something that made you laugh.**
- **Tell me one thing that you learned today.**
- **What made you happy today?**
- **Who did you play with today?**
- **If you could be the teacher tomorrow what would you do?**



Working with school

Research shows getting involved in school life really helps your child. Try and attend any workshops, parents' evenings or events put on by the school.



Portslade schools

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