Starting Reception

Leicestershire County Council

Your child's journey to school starts at home.



startingreception.co.uk

Introduction

We understand that all children develop at their own pace, and that we're all learning from birth. When it's time to start school, some children will need more help than others.

There are key skills* that schools expect children to be learning before their first day. Practising these will make your child's journey to Reception as positive as possible.

If your child is already at nursery, in pre-school, or with a childminder, those professionals will work with you and your child to help get them ready.

There's lots you can do at home to build your child's confidence and independence, helping them feel emotionally and practically prepared to start school.

*We are calling this document the 'Starting Reception'. Some people/ organisations refer to this as 'school readiness'.

How can I help my child get ready?

Your child will have lots of new activities and routines to get used to when they start school. There are some things they'll need to do more independently than they might have before.

Research shows that a child's relationship with their parents is the most important factor in their development, and there's a lot you can do at home. When your child is at home with you or another caregiver, you can practise as a family with fun activities (we've included links at the end of this resource).

Some of these skills take time to master, so it's good to introduce them gradually in your daily routine.

What if my child has additional needs?

- If your child needs additional support to settle into Reception, make sure you share as much information as possible with their new teacher. They can work with you to find strategies to support your child.
- Summer born children, or those speaking English as an additional language (EAL) may need more support.
- If you know or suspect your child has special educational needs (SEND), developmental differences or delays, some of these skills may not be achievable for them at this point.
- Early intervention makes a big difference – ask your child's nursery, school, health visitor, local children's centre or Family Hub for help.



Who can I speak to for help?

All children will need help from their trusted adults so they can feel confident and excited about starting Reception.
Your childminder/nursery/pre-school team or your health visitor, children's centre or family hub can help if you need more information.

Skills to practise before starting Reception:

New skills take time to learn. Practising at home will help your child move into school more easily and with confidence.

Growing independence

Taking care of themselves

- Putting on/taking off their coat and shoes
- Using the toilet and washing their hands
- Getting dressed with little help, e.g. after using the toilet or doing PE
- Using cutlery (e.g. fork and spoon, chopsticks) and drinking from an open cup
- Spending time away from you, learning they can be looked after by caring adults

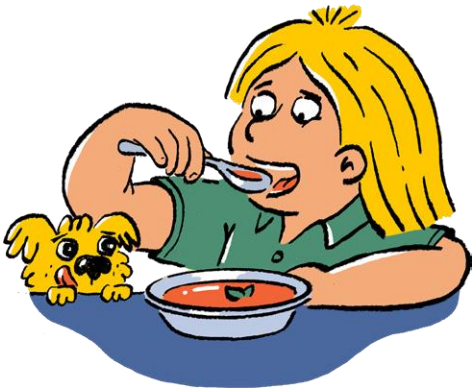
Play, creativity and curiosity

- Taking part in imaginative play (e.g. role play)
- Drawing, painting, colouring and sticking
- Counting, building and doing puzzles
- Exploring the world around them (e.g. looking closely at the natural world, noticing numbers, patterns and shapes, playing safely with objects at home)

Further support and guidance to support with self-care is available at:

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Occupational Therapy service. Resources to support with:

- Sensory needs
- Dressing skills: backward chaining
- Let me: dress myself
- Let me: develop hand strength
- Let me...use a knife and fork



ERIC – The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity

Further ideas to support with play and learning:

Cbeebies parenting here you will find activities and play ideas linked to different ages and stages of development

CBeebies PARENTING

NHS Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust

eric The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity

At school your child will be meeting lots of new people and make new friendships. Some things to help them get ready include:

Building relationships and communicating

Being with others

- Practising sharing and taking turns with toys
- Talking to them about how they are feeling and why
- Looking at story books together and speaking about what characters are feeling is a good way to do this
- Beginning to recognise what others are feeling, e.g. understanding if a friend is sad
- Encouraging them to set boundaries for themselves and others (e.g. knowing how to say 'no')

Communication and language

- Singing along with songs and nursery rhymes
- Talking happily to others about activities, experiences and the world around them
- Showing they need help by speaking clearly (in basic English or sign language)
- Recognising the pattern of their name (so they can find it on their coat peg or jacket)

Listening and engaging

- Paying attention for short periods of time
- Listening to and following simple instructions
- Carrying on with a task even when it's difficult and bouncing back if things go wrong

Further support and guidance to support with self-care is available at:

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Speech and Language Therapy service. Resources to support with:

- Early communication skills
- Speech, Language and Communication Toolkits
- Stammering
- Multilingualism



Leicestershire County Council

- Help your child to develop and learn in their first 5 years webpage
  - Top tips leaflets
- Every Child a Talker (ECAT)
  - Partnerships with parents
- Talking to children activity cards

Leicestershire Family Hubs

- Find out what is happening at your local Family Hub

Leicestershire County Council

Family Hubs Leicestershire

Physical development

Getting moving for at least 3 hours per day:

- Walking up and down steps (one foot at a time, using the wall for support)
- Climbing, running, jumping and playing
- Catching a large ball (most of the time)
- Doing simple puzzles and craft activities, strengthening their grip with mark making, cutting and sticking

Further support and guidance to support with physical development is available at:

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust Physiotherapy service Resources to support with:

- Movement and play



Leicestershire Healthy Tots

Leicestershire County Council

- Physical and medical needs webpage

Healthy routines

- Going to bed around the same time each night, waking up in time to get ready for school
- Limiting screen time to the recommended daily amounts
- Eating a healthy diet and trying new foods
- Brushing their teeth twice a day (you'll need to supervise this until they are at least 7)

Further support and guidance to support with routines is available at:

Leicestershire County Council

- Help your child to develop and learn in their first 5 years webpage
    - Top tips leaflets



HealthyTots

What should I do if I have concerns about my child's development?

- If you're worried about your child's progress, talk to your childminder/nursery/pre-school team, health visitor or Family Hub.
- If your child has developmental delays or SEND (suspected or confirmed), speak to their childminder/nursery/pre-school team, health visitor well before they start Reception and discuss their needs when you are selecting schools.
- You can work with your child's early years setting to help your child with self-care, managing emotions, social skills, and communication in a way that suits their stage of development.
- You might want to share details about their development, needs, what motivates them, what might trigger difficulties, how they learn best and what strategies will work well.
- Make sure you share important information with everyone supporting your child, including their new reception teacher.

Further information:
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust - Healthy Together 0-19

Health for Under 5s

Leicestershire County Council webpages

- Early Years SEND Inclusion Team – Information for parents – a variety of leaflets to support with:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Sleep
- Starting school – A guide for parents of children with ASD
- Biting

- Leaflet Transition: A Guide for Parents and carers
- Leicestershire County Council – School Readiness webpage

Resources for families with additional needs

There are many organisations who can support with information and strategies to prepare you, your child and their educational setting, ensuring a smooth transition and setting them up for future success. These include:

- Family Lives
- Speech and Language UK
- Dingley's Promise
- KIDS

Find out more

For more information, visit https://startingreception.co.uk

Top tips to support transition to school:

- Look on the school's website for their SEND policy.
- Ask the school about their settling in process and any adjustments they would make to look after your child.
- Attend transition events if your school offers them as this will help your child feel safe and become familiar with the environment:
    - Stay and play sessions
    - Open days or transition mornings
    - Informal events (e.g. teddy bears picnic)
- Ask if your child can make several visits before starting at different times of the day.
- Ask to meet the class teacher and support staff who will be looking after your child.
- Ask to meet the school SENCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator).
- If your child requires additional specialist equipment let the setting know so that they have time to get the training and know how to use it.
- Work in partnership with the school – good communication will help your child to settle
    - Share anything important about your child
    - Speak to staff if you have concerns before, during transition and after they start in the autumn term
- If your child does not like unfamiliar food ask if you are able to bring in food from home for snack time and a packed lunch.
- Get familiar with school routines and practice these at home, for example:
    - Snack time and tidying up
    - Morning routines – getting dressed in uniform and leaving the house
- Talk about school in a positive way and avoid sharing your own worries:
    - Talk about what it will be like
    - Share books about starting school
    - Look at photos of school on the school's website or in the prospectus
- Remember that every child develops at their own pace:
    - Children don't all need to be at the same stage
    - Confidence, curiosity and independence matter the most
    - Avoid comparing your child with others
    - Focus on progress not perfection

Make the transition positive, reassuring and gradual.



Use this space to make notes of any questions or key dates:

