

How can I help?

There follows a few pages of ideas which we have put together. You may find these ideas are useful ways to prepare your child for school.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development



We believe in giving our children plenty of praise and encouragement. We try to ensure that by talking situations through the children understand the difference between right and wrong. We constantly reinforce good manners and respect for other people and their property. We have plenty activities in school and it is better if your child does not bring their own toys – if they take any of our home, it's alright – just please let us have them back!

- **Playing with others**

In order to prepare your child for school, talk to them about sharing and taking turns and why they should co-operate with other children and adults.

- **Doing things for themselves**

Allowing your child to do some things for themselves is a very important part of preparing them for school. At school, they will be asked to put things away, get dressed after P.E., eat dinner and go to the toilet. It will help your child if they have already had practice at home before they come to school. They just need a little time!!

Language and Literacy



Talking and Listening

- **Be a good listener**

This provides children with a good role model. If they feel you are interested in what they have to say, they will converse with you more.

- **Ask and answer questions**

Ask your child questions about something that interests them. Always try to answer your child's questions.

- **Allow your child time to talk**

Play is a great way to encourage children to talk. For example talking on the telephone, talking to their toys and taking messages. Your children will also benefit from talking about and retelling stories and talking about events that have happened e.g. a visit to the park or to Grandma's.

- **Sing songs and nursery rhymes**

This helps them when they are learning to read.

- **Read stories to your child**

Talking about the book and its pictures are very important. Encourage your child to 'read'.

Reading

- **Reading must be FUN!!**

Reading time should be a special time when your child can enjoy a book with you. They should never feel pressured into reading, as this not only knocks their confidence, but also can stop them from wanting to read.

- **Read to your child regularly**

There are plenty of opportunities for reading with your child. It does not have to be limited to bedtimes. Re-read a favourite story and encourage them to participate. Tell the story rather than reading it each time.

- **Handling books**

Show your child how to hold the book correctly and to turn the pages. Talk about the features of books such as the title, the author, the illustrator and the front cover.

- **Read a variety of print**

This may include:

Environmental print e.g. shop names, signs, street names;

Comics and magazines;

Poems and rhymes;

Words on packets and tins in the supermarket.

- **Join the local library**

Watch out for local activities organised by your local library – membership is free and the choice of books is fantastic!!

- **Look at letters**

Children need to be able to know the letters of the alphabet, and be able to distinguish between a letter and a number. A good place to start is with the letters in their name, introducing the letter name and the sound it makes.

For example: ***“It’s the letter A (as in ape) and it makes the sound ‘a’ (as in apple).”***

Writing

A child’s writing goes through many stages of development, ranging from scribbles to joined up writing. In the home, there are a number of opportunities to help your child with their writing.

- **Let them see you writing**

This will show your child that writing has a purpose. Usually, when children see you writing, they will want to ‘write’ for themselves. By reading what you have written, they will realise that the marks you have made on the paper actually mean something.

- **Encourage your child to ‘have a go’**

It is very important that your child gains confidence in, and an enjoyment of writing. There is no need to worry about what it looks like as long as they are having a go. If

your child wants to copy your writing it is important that you write clearly and only use capitals where appropriate i.e. at the beginning of names and sentences. For example:

Jill

My name is Sam

- **Use a variety of paper and pens**

These do not have to be expensive or new. This will encourage your child to 'have a go'. Examples may include old diaries, envelopes, chalks etc.

- **Pencil control**

Some children swap the hands they hold their pencil in – don't worry! Eventually they will settle for a more dominant hand.

Mathematical Development



There are a number of opportunities for you to help develop your child's understanding of numbers, shape and size – both in the home and while you are out and about.

- **Developing an awareness of numbers**

Discussing numbers around them develops your child's awareness and recognition of numbers. For example, numbers on clocks, houses, microwaves, car registration plates etc. Singing number rhymes can help to develop knowledge of the number system. Other opportunities may include counting how many eggs are needed for baking etc.

- **Talk about shapes**

The environment is full of shapes that can be talked about. Talk about the number of sides and whether they are straight or curved. How many corners do they have? etc. Examples of this may include street signs, toys, books, windows.

- **Matching and sorting**

Examples may include:

Matching cups and saucers;

Laying the table;

Sorting the washing into piles according to colour;

Putting socks into pairs;

Playing number games such as Snap;

Bingo, dominoes and pairs.

- **Development of the language of mathematics**

Knowing names of shapes and counting objects are important, but one area of mathematics often overlooked is the language we use. Here are some words your child could become more familiar with: more, less, heavy, heavier, tall, long, shorter, triangle, few.



Physical Development

- **Gross Motor Skills**

Children are always using their gross motor skills.

Examples of these are: running, hopping, skipping, jumping, kicking, throwing, riding tricycles etc.

- **Fine Motor Skills**

Examples may include holding a pencil, fastening their coat, pressing buttons, pulling things, holding objects, scissor skills and doing jigsaws.



Creative Development

We encourage the children to draw, crayon, paint and make models. These activities all aid children in controlling the muscles needed for writing. Such activities help to develop a child's imagination.

- **Drawing and colouring**

Always praise your child's efforts even if they do not look like what they have tried to represent. Ask them to tell you about their picture.

- **Painting, gluing and cutting**

The scissors we use in school are safety scissors, they are not toy scissors. Perhaps you could buy some for your child to use at home as cutting out successfully needs a lot of practice. Activities may include going through old catalogues and magazines and cutting all the red things out, things that need electricity etc.

- **Model making**

Junk material e.g. cornflake boxes, toilet rolls etc. are ideal for making models. Your child could also use plasticine or play dough.

- **Making music**

Singing songs and rhymes together can be fun. Encourage your child to bang and shake objects around the home! It does not matter what the sound is like as long as they are having fun.

- **Cooking**

This is an excellent activity for children to do. They can get so much out of making a cake. Important mathematical skills such as estimating and measuring are learned as well as scientific understanding i.e. ingredients changing from solids to liquids, irreversible changes etc.



General Understanding of the World

Encourage your child to look at the world around them, they can gain invaluable experiences. For example, pointing out different colours, shapes, patterns, smells, tastes and textures.

- **Talk about what they can see**

Opportunities are often missed to talk about new discoveries. For instance, how does a worm move without any legs? Why are the puddles frozen over? Why do I have a shadow?

- **Provide them with new experiences**

These do not have to be expensive. By making the most of local facilities, your child will be stimulated and experience new things. For example, museums are free to children.

- **Play with your child**

Children can learn so much through play, particularly if it is related to 'real-life' situations such as doctors, hospitals, cafes, shops, schools and post offices.

- **Introduce days of the week**

For example:

What did you do today/yesterday? What day is it? What day will it be tomorrow?

- **ICT**

We use ICT to support and extend a number of areas of our curriculum.

Opportunities to practise the hand-eye coordination skills required to move a mouse and click and drag are useful for children before they come to school. Opportunities to play with programmable toys such as remote controlled cars, ipods/ipads are also useful.