

Getting ready to start Reception Class at school

Getting ready for school is an exciting time for children, their parents, and carers with lots to think about and do. Some parents and carers think that their child needs to be able to read, write their name and count to be ready for school. This is simply not true.

The best start a child can have is when you support them to:

- **Be independent** - such as being able to put on their coat, or go to the toilet
- **Manage emotions** - they are ok to leave you and are used to playing with groups of other children
- **Communicate, listen and learn** - being able to talk to their teachers and friends, join a group for story time and explore new things
- **Be healthy and well** - brushing teeth every day, getting out and about

All the above can be done through day-to-day routines and activities.

We have put together some ideas about things that you can do to help prepare your child for starting school. Your early years provider will work in partnership with you to help you get your child ready for school, but there are other services that can offer advice, guidance, and support such as your Health Visitor, or Public Health Nurse.

Attend all health checks and immunisations

Children will develop and learn if they are fit and healthy, so make sure you keep up to date with all health checks including eye and hearing tests. And don't forget those immunisations and boosters!

Speak to a health professional or your child's key worker if you have concerns and are worried about your child's development, health, and wellbeing.

Establish morning and night-time routines

Try to establish a good morning and night-time routine, so that your child is not tired and has a positive and calm start to the day. NHS recommends Pre-school children (3-5 years) have 11 - 13 hours of sleep each night.

Help your child to be independent

Encourage your child to follow your instructions to independently:

- Put on and take off their own coat and shoes
- Go to the toilet
- Wash their hands
- Wipe their own nose
- Feed themselves

Provide play opportunities and experiences

Allow your child to gain new experiences of the world and opportunities to explore outdoors, experience nature, and play with different toys and resources, as this will develop your child's curiosity.

Talk, read and sing with your child

Make time to ask your child questions and listen to their responses; read stories; look at books and sing songs with your child **as much as possible** to develop their speaking and listening skills ready for school.

Limit screen time to 2 hours per day and set a good example: try to limit your own use of phone and screen time and turn the TV off if no-one is watching.

What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents

This guide has lots of information about child development for parents and carers.

You can download this from the following website: [What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf)



3 & 4-year-olds: how you can help me with my learning?

Mathematics

- [Point out the number of things rather than just the names](#), e.g. "We have **two** apples!"
- Give me lots of opportunities to count for a real reason and always emphasise the last number – "There are **3** cookies."
- Cut out a large shape from a cereal box (circle, triangle), then cut that shape into 2-4 smaller pieces to make a simple puzzle.
- When we're at the park, use words like 'up', 'under', and 'between' to talk about what we see.
- [Make playdough with me.](#)

Understanding the World

- Help me make collections of interesting natural materials, e.g. pebbles, shells.
- Let me explore ice, once it has melted a bit (so I don't get frostbite)
- Plant seeds and bulbs with me.
- Take me to different places such as the library.

Literacy

- Talk about stories with me, what is happening in the pictures? Give me time to think and share my ideas.
- Play around with words. Make up fun rhyming sentences with me.
- Let me help you write birthday cards and shopping lists.

Expressive Arts & Design

- Make [home-made paintbrushes](#) using clothes pegs and items from around the house and outdoors.
- Join in pretend play with me.
- Give me a cardboard box and some fabric to build a den with.



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3 & 4-year-olds: how you can help me with my learning?

Communication & Language

- Have conversations with me about things that I am interested in. Encourage me to keep talking by nodding, smiling and making comments.
- Introduce new words when we are playing, eating or when we are out and about. Explain what new words mean to me.
- Talk to me about things that have already happened and what might happen soon.
- Play listening games with me such as 'Simon Says'.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- Give me tasks to carry out, e.g. washing my plate after snack.
- Model how you manage your own feelings, e.g. "I'm feeling a bit angry so I am going to take a deep breath." Help me to understand why I am feeling sad or frustrated.
- Make a '[calm down jar](#)'.

Physical Development

- Help me with dressing but let me do the last steps, e.g. pulling up my zip after you have started it off.
- Give me lots of opportunities to be active and practise running, jumping, balancing, climbing and swinging.
- Encourage me to walk, scoot or bike to my nursery or childminder.



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Timeline of key events from applying for a place to starting in Reception Class

Transition timeline for parents of children starting Reception Class in 2025 – updated September 2024

Transition timeline for parents of children starting Reception Class in 2025

September 2024 – January 2025

Parents must apply for a primary school place a year before their child starts school [School admissions: School starting age - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- [Applications](#) open in September and close on the 15th January. Your child will be 3 or have just turned 4 when you apply.
- You must apply then, even if you want your child to start part-way through the year.
- If your child is at a **school nursery** you still need to apply for a place.

16th April 2025 – Primary School allocations are confirmed

- Let your nursery provider know which school your child is going to.
- Your nursery teacher will talk to you about transition and seek views about how they can support your children to prepare.
- If your child has special educational needs, your nursery teacher will seek your permission to start an 'enhanced transition' by sharing information and planning with your child's new school.

May 2025

- If your child has special educational needs or disability, an agreed enhanced transition activity will start.

June 2025

- Your nursery provider will discuss early years transition information with you that you can add information to. This will be shared with the reception teacher.
- You will be invited for activity to help you get to know your new school.
- If your child has special educational needs or disability, your school will work with you and your nursery provider to plan what might need to be in place to support them.

June – July 2025

- Your nursery provider and school will work in partnership to support transition for your child.
- Transition information will be shared to support this.

September 2025

- Your child starts Reception Class.



Useful Links to web pages for parents

- [Children's language development and parenting advice - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)
- [Learning to talk | 3 to 5 years | Start for Life \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [5 Golden Rules](#)
- [PEaCH Resources for Parents](#)
- [Bolton Libraries Click and Collect](#)
- [Toddlers and Tablets: Ten First Steps - CBeebies - BBC](#)

Supporting your mental health

- If you are struggling, text 85258 to [SHOUT](#) to be connected to a trained, empathetic and listening Shout Volunteer
- Parents can text a healthcare professional through **ChatHealth** on 07507 331751. This service provides parents, carers and young people with quick and easy access to confidential health advice from a Bolton based specialist team – the team can help with questions about:
 - Breastfeeding support and advice
 - Child development
 - Behavioural issues
 - General advice and support