

Our top ten list of things you can do to help your children before they start school!

1. Talk!!! Model speaking in full sentences, explore new words and model the correct use of he/she/I etc. A child needs to hear a new word on average of 20 times before they use it with understanding.



2. Teach them to dress and undress independently, trying to do buttons and zips. This helps when we start getting ready for PE and when we need our coats on for wet and rainy play times.

3. Share stories just for fun and make up stories (even if they make no sense). Stories can be read again and again. Children are learning so much from the time they spend with you doing this. Sharing a bedtime story every day is an incredibly valuable and enjoyable activity for all involved.



4. Teach children to recognise their own name and begin learning to write it. This helps to create a sense of belonging in the new classroom and gives confidence for future writing activities.



5. Sing nursery rhymes together. You could even add instruments, claps or actions and make up your own rhymes and rhythms.



6. Play games where children learn how to take turns and share. This helps children to get ready taking turns amongst larger groups in the classroom.

7. Begin spotting numbers wherever you go. We use number skills as part of our adult everyday life without even realising it. Sharing this with your child is a great foundation for future learning. Count the shopping into the basket, count the plates on to the table and look at the numbers in shops or on front doors. By the end of reception children need to recognise all of the numerals to at least 20.



8. Search out shapes and patterns in the world around you. What shape is your front door? Can you sort and match the socks?

9. Be active – go outside! Physical games such as playing catch, riding a bike or going to the park help develop muscles and coordination that are needed for writing as well as for general health and well-being.



10. Cut and stick to create a collage or get messy with painting. It takes time to learn how to use children's scissors but it is important for children to begin practising.

Most of all have fun and enjoy your time together. Spending time together, talking, being imaginative and having fun will encourage the most valuable and memorable learning experiences.

As parents you really are "your child's first teacher".

Will your child be learning to write their name before school?

Learning to write your name is something that holds a lot of significance for young children as it is often the first real word they learn to write and is a way of identifying items that belong to them rather than anyone else!

There is no expectation that children should begin school knowing how to write their name but if you wish to begin this process at home it is very important that children begin by orienting their letters correctly right from the start. This way, we can prevent children from forming bad habits and struggling later with fluent or joined writing.

Below is a model of where children should begin and finish each letter. Each letter should also be completed in one fluent movement, without lifting the pencil off the page (except for the letters t, f and x). Children should only use a capital letter for the first letter and lower case letters to write the rest of their name. Please feel free to ask if you are unsure about forming letters as we know it may have been a long time since many adults were given hand writing homework in Reception!



You could try writing in the air, on someone's back, in sand or even in mud as well as with pencils and pens! Don't forget to keep checking the sheet to see if you are starting in the right place and going the right way round. If children get into the habit of forming letters incorrectly it becomes tricky to un-learn and then re-learn the correct formation.