

# I'm starting school!



In this guide, the different ways to support your child starting school have been divided up into a typical day.

This is because there are so many teaching and learning opportunities within everyday activities and routines. It highlights the important role you play and that you are your child's greatest teacher and role model.

At each point in the day, we give you examples of some ideas and tips as to how you can help your child's learning and development. Take any opportunity to encourage your child to play and explore, to have ideas and keep trying when things do not always go as planned. Most importantly, talk, talk, talk with your child.

As you know, being a parent is very special and amazing as you watch your child grow up and starting school is an important and exciting milestone. It can also have challenges!

We hope this guide will help you to make this transition and what to expect, remembering that all children are different and start school with different abilities.

## Wake up and breakfast

**Did you know...**the first 3 minutes after your child wakes up is one of the most important times of their day! This is your first opportunity to be present with your child. Starting your day off with a positive connection will get your child off to a great start.

- Support your child to develop their independence and personal care by washing their own hands and faces and cleaning their own teeth
- Getting dressed themselves, doing zips and buttons, putting on their own socks encourages hand and finger muscles to work which are needed to write
- Talk together during breakfast - offer a choice of breakfast so they can get used to making decisions
- Count the scoops - how many scoops of cereal in each bowl? This will help to develop number sense
- Make a place mat with their name on, this will help your child to recognise their name.

## Body moves

- Encourage different ways of moving, can we all walk like dinosaurs or fairies, run quickly like superheroes, or walk slowly like a snail and crawl like a bear
- Take a ride out on the scooter or bikes, if possible, to develop balance

- Play ball games and make your own obstacle course with rope, boxes, chairs, or anything you can find to encourage different ways to move and build agility
- Play games where you give an instruction, like “can you j-u-m-p?” Encourage your child to put the sounds together and then show the action - blending activities support your child learning to read
- Go for a number walk - looking for numbers on doors, signs, car registration numbers. Look for shapes and patterns in street signs/zebra crossings etc.
- Cool down - take time for calm moments. Show your child how to use their breath to help them to feel calm again. Help your child to understand and accept the range of emotions they feel and show them ways to express themselves safely by providing reassurance and support. Name the feelings, happy, sad tired and show how to react to them.

## Helping hands

- Let your child help you with unpacking the shopping by asking them to find different items, such as “find the apples please”
- Tell your child what you are writing on the shopping list and then let them ‘write’ their own
- Clean the car with big sponges, paint the house using buckets and water with brushes outside. e.g. nail brushes, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, paintbrushes, and rollers of different sizes. This is good for building big muscles in the arms and shoulders and supports early writing skills
- Give smiles and compliment your child for their efforts, it will make you feel good too. Use specific positive praise when you are speaking to them. Such as “thank you for helping me sweep Molly”
- Match pairs of socks, sort and compare clothes big and small. Using words of colour/pattern/shape and size will help your child to learn early maths concepts
- When tidying up give your child a two-step instruction like “put your shoes in the basket please and hang your coat up”.

## Play time

- Spend some time for you and your child to snuggle in and share stories. Share photos and videos of special times you have had together. Make a den space using sheets and blankets to play in together
- Lay large paper on the floor, encourage your child to lie down to draw and make marks – old wallpaper and cardboard boxes are great for this
- Play a game. Matching games, dominos, snap/number snap, or games with letters and words. Playing games and taking turns helps your child to learn how to make relationships with others and how to share
- Sing - Songs and rhymes, action songs get you moving and counting songs help to develop number skills

- Playdough is really good for muscle development in fingers and hands, get your child to squeeze and pull, squash and roll - talk as you play together, “ I’m rolling my dough into sausages, I can see you are squashing yours flat”
- Set up a pretend shop where your child can read the packets and boxes.

## Bath and bed

- Having a set bedtime routine can help your child know what to expect each evening. Good sleep is essential for developing brains. Have some screen free time before bed
- Bath play - have containers to fill and empty or objects that float and sink. Medicine syringes encourage different movements of the hands. Use bath crayons and pens to draw on tiles, get your child to clean it off with sponges or flannels
- Story time, share books together, ask your child what they can see in the pictures or what they think might happen next. Talk about things you notice in the story such as rhyming words, or words all starting with the same letter. Stop at different parts of familiar stories and let your child tell you the missing word
- Teddy bear breathing - show your child how your teddy is moving up and down as you take nice deep breaths. See if they can notice their teddy bear rising on their tummy as they breathe in and then gently go down again as they breathe out.

## Further advice

If you feel unsure about your child’s learning and development you might want to speak to someone from your local Start Well Family Centre, your child’s key person, childminder, or a health professional.

- [Find out the latest Local Offer news and updates.](#)