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# Starting School

## What should my child know before starting?

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# Oral Segmenting and Blending

A vital skill in early Phonics and will give your child a solid foundation for future learning. Encourage your child to break up and merge the sounds they hear in words.

Segmenting - You say a word and then they tell you the sounds they hear.

"cat" - "c-a-t"

Blending - You say the sounds within a word and they merge those sounds to form the whole word.

"ch-air" - "chair"

Model this as much a possible and play games like 'I spy' or 'Simon Says' where you say the sounds and they blend them to make the word.

There is no expectation that children know any of the letters and their sounds when they start School. Children will be introduced to these within the Reception Year.

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# Name Recognition

Give your child as much exposure to their name as possible so that they begin to recognise it. This will help them recognise their name, amongst the others, on their pegs, drawers and clothes and they will be able to independently look after and put away their belongings.

Some Schools might do a self-registration in the morning where children move their own name labels when they arrive in class so this will give them a head start with this.

Being able to spell and write their name when they start is not an expectation but if they are able to practise this it is useful for them to begin to label their own work.

Read and write names using lowercase letters except for the first letter with a capital.

Make sure to label everything that goes into School (even pants and socks) so they can be identified and returned.

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# Nursery Rhymes

Sing as many nursery rhymes as you can together. The more the merrier!

Studies have shown that if a child can recall eight nursery rhymes by the time they start School they are more likely to be better readers and spellers by the time they are 8 years old.

Nursery Rhymes not only form part of Phase 1 Phonics but develop lots of other areas of the curriculum.

- Vocabulary
- Story Sequencing
- Numeracy skills
- Listening skills
- Physical Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World

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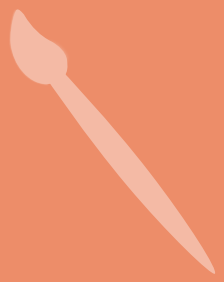
# Fine Motor Skills

Provide opportunities for your child to develop the muscles in their fingers, hands and wrist and practise making marks. By taking part in pre-writing activities, that support fine motor skills, means they are developing their finger and hand muscles to eventually hold a pencil and form letters.

Any activities that involve your child making small movements with their fingers are brilliant. They could include:

- Making models with Lego
- Clipping pegs onto a washing line
- Placing poms poms into a ice cube tray
- Using cotton buds to paint
- Posting coins into a money box
- Using keys to unlock padlocks
- Using scoops, tongs and large tweezers
- Unscrewing and screwing lids onto bottles.
- Threading pasta onto string



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# Sharing Books Together

"Children are made readers in the laps of their parents"
- Emilie Buchwald

Share books at every opportunity. Reading books together not only means that you model how to hold and take care of them, turn the pages and read from left to right but you also prompt speaking and listening skills, concentration and develop vocabulary.

You could also practise oral segmenting and blending of some of the words within the book. You say the sounds of a simple CVC word and your child blends the sounds to say the whole word.
"In the light of the m-oo-n" - "moon"

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Discuss the role of the Author and Illustrator.
Find rhyming words.
Can they spot some of the letters in their name?
Can they retell the story in their own words?
What happened at the beginning? End?

# Getting Dressed

Give chances for your child to practise dressing and undressing themselves independently. Practise with buttons, poppers and zips.

Practise putting shoes on by themselves. Try writing their name on a piece of masking tape, cutting it in half and then sticking each half into each of their shoes.
That way they will know which is the left and right and another chance to recognise their name and reinforce it starts with a capital.

Practise putting on their coats, trousers, skirts and tops. Talk about how the label needs to go at the back and show them where their name is on their clothing so they know where to look if they lose it.

A plea - only put your child in shoes with laces if they can tie them up themselves.

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# Independent Skills

Lunch - practise with knives, forks and spoons, opening lunchboxes and packaging, drinking from a open cup and peeling fruit.

Toileting - try and encourage your child to use the toilet independently, wipe themselves and wash their hands afterwards. Not every child will be able to do this so speak to your child's class teacher. You won't be the only one and they will be grateful that you told them of any issues.

Using Resources - discuss with your child about how they can take care of their toys and resources and encourage them to help tidy things away after they have finished playing.

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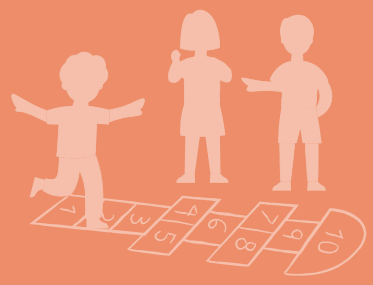
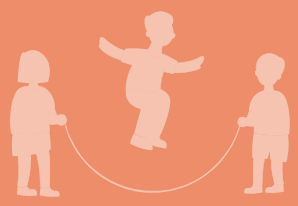
# Social Skills



Have a chat with your child about speaking to adults if they feel things are not going well. Tell them it is okay to ask for help and tell someone if they need the toilet.

Encourage sharing of toys, turn-taking and following instructions. Playing simple board games like 'Snakes and Ladders' is perfect for this and will develop patience too. Make sure that they don't always win the game! This means they are exposed to the feelings of not winning and will learn how to deal with these emotions and develop resilience.



Talk through the journey of getting to School and the routine they will need to follow. Discuss some social situations that they might come across, such as a child saying they can't join a game, and talk about how they would react and what they could do.

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