

Preparing your child for nursery

Information and advice for parents and carers

Health Visiting



Your child is due to start nursery within the next 12 months. Are they ready to go? Please see the checklist below of what the nurseries expect your child to be doing. If you have any concerns, please contact your health visiting team.

You will know that being ready and prepared means more than your child growing up in age. In order for your child to make a successful and happy start to school, they need to have a good understanding of language, motor coordination, social and emotional skills. This is covered below.

Can my child...?	Always	Sometimes	Needs assistance
Face a person when they are talking and make eye contact			
Follow instructions and routines			
Sit at a table and focus on an activity			
Separate from parents			
Play independently with others and begin to take turns			
Learn how to share			
Begin a conversation and take part in responses in their main language, speaking clearly			
Describe recent experiences			
Recite rhymes and sing songs			
Retell stories			
Follow age appropriate instructions			

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Information and advice for parents and carers

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Can my child...?	Always	Sometimes	Needs assistance
Put on/remove socks, shoes and coat			
Go to the toilet on their own			
Wash and dry hands on their own			
Use a spoon and fork on their own, and use an open cup			
Recognise their belongings amongst others e.g. coat			
Tidy up and pack away their own things			
Brush their own teeth and have they been to a dentist			
Move confidently without bumping into objects or others			
Does your child have the opportunity to play on large equipment, e.g. slide, climbing frame?			
Play imaginatively (indoors and outdoors)			
Catch, throw and kick a ball to a partner			
Understand the need for safety, e.g. heights, roads			
Recognise own name			
Hold a pencil in an appropriate grip			
Can my child...?	Always	Sometimes	Needs assistance
Complete a simple jigsaw puzzle of 8–10 pieces			
Does your child know the colours red, yellow, blue and green?			
Attempt to solve problems independently			
Say numbers one to ten in order			
Enjoy interactive reading and answer questions about stories in a 1:1 setting			

Scoring

Green – no action required.

Yellow – follow the activities provided on the activity sheet and re-screen in one month

Red – contact your health visitor for advice and support.

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Health Visiting

Activities to help your child with their development

You should do the following activities with your child. Give your child lots of praise and reward. Never give your child negative comments.

Language

- Spend individual 1:1 time with your child looking at a book and undertaking nursery rhymes.
- Play nursery rhymes in the car.
- When reading with your child, encourage them to point and name the objects and colours.
- Ask your child what they did during the day to encourage their talking skills
- When out with your child, encourage them to talk about what they can see around them.

Physical skills

- Spend time and play with your child using a range of different toys such as balls, building bricks, jigsaw puzzles and other age appropriate toys.
- Encourage your child to dress themselves doing their own buttons, zips and Velcro and shoe laces. You can play games with your child when they are dressing themselves i.e. pretend the zipper is a choo-choo train going up and down.
- Encourage your child to become involved in choosing the potty and decorate it. If possible, encourage older siblings to get involved. Ensure your child is aware of the importance of washing and drying their hands.
- Encourage your child to watch you brush your teeth, and encourage your child to brush their own teeth. Also discuss the importance of brushing teeth, with your child.
- Encourage your child to discuss events and future events i.e. visits to the park, cinema etc.

You should contact your health visitor or GP if you are concerned about your child's vision or hearing.

Social

- Play 'ready, steady, go' with your child. Use a toy to pass to between you and your child after using the phrase 'ready, steady, go'.
- Encourage your child's sharing skills by having similar toys available for them and using an egg timer with a bell to signify when to swap toys.
- Encourage your child to take turns in conversation as this will help them to make friends.
- Limit the amount of time your child spends watching TV, playing on mobile phones and other electronic devices (less than one hour a day) to encourage imaginative play.
- Attend play and stay groups for your child to have the opportunity to use large equipment and begin to learn to share with others.

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Health Visiting

- Ensure your child's clothes are labelled with their name to encourage them to recognise their own belongings.
- Ensure your child is aware of road safety.
- Encourage meal times to be taken as a family and where possible at a table using cutlery.
- Give your child appropriate instructions to follow and give positive praise when completed i.e. putting toys away when finished.

Emotional skills

- When attending play and stay session's, you should encourage and let your child to explore.
- Encourage your child to express their feelings (i.e. happy and sad).

Have fun and enjoy doing these activities.

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Contact details

If your child has a score in the red area it is important that you contact your health visiting team, as we can provide you and your child with advice and support to help encourage their development and get them ready for nursery. You can find out which Health Visiting Team your child is under by looking on page 1 of your child's red book if you are unsure.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet:

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Health Visiting Service telephone number

Tel: 0121 612 5021

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