



MY CHILD STARTS SCHOOL THIS SEPTEMBER WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

Starting school is a big step for both children and families. At Little Explorers, we understand how daunting this can feel, so we've created this supportive guide to help make the transition to school as smooth as possible.

It might feel overwhelming to know where to start, but rest assured that your child has already developed many of the skills they need to thrive in school. The most important skills are the ones practised every day: good sleep routines, healthy eating, building positive relationships, and developing independence. Supporting your child emotionally by listening, talking, and encouraging their independence in everyday tasks—such as getting dressed or wiping their bottom after the toilet—helps free up their energy for learning.

Children don't need to be writing their names before starting school, but it is helpful if they can draw simple shapes like circles and lines to build fine motor skills, and recognise their name on items such as coat pegs and lunchboxes.

The most valuable things you can give your child are a consistent routine, a safe and loving environment, healthy choices, and your time and attention. These foundations help your child build confidence and resilience.

Quick Guide to School Readiness

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- **Concentration & Resilience:** Encourage your child to finish tasks and praise perseverance. Learning requires focus and the ability to cope with setbacks.
- **Social Skills:** Arrange play opportunities with other children, practise sharing, and model polite behaviour. Games that involve taking turns and managing winning and losing are especially helpful.

Physical Development

- **Moving & Handling:** Encourage activities that involve running, climbing, ball games, and mark-making (drawing with pencils, paint, etc.).
- **Self-Care:** Support your child to go to the toilet independently, wash hands, blow their nose, manage coats, and open lunchboxes.
- **Practical Skills:** Practice zipping up coats, dressing for PE, and carrying trays or packed lunches. These skills promote confidence and independence.

Communication and Language

- **Listening & Attention:** Read stories together and ask questions to encourage focus.
- **Understanding:** Use everyday moments to teach prepositions and object use. Encourage following two-step instructions.
- **Speaking:** Model full sentences and descriptive language. Encourage your child to retell past events and explain what they are doing. Use books to build vocabulary.

Literacy Development

- **Reading:** Share rhyming stories and songs. Encourage book handling, recognise familiar print (like their name), and link letters to sounds.
- **Writing:** Provide varied mark-making tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, and cotton buds to support fine motor development.

Mathematics Development

- **Numbers:** Count daily, recognise numerals 1-5, compare sizes, and group objects.
- **Shape, Space and Measure:** Use everyday language about shapes, patterns, and size. Play shop or sorting games with coins and containers.

Understanding the World

- **People and Communities:** Talk about family routines, holidays, and special events.

- **The World:** Explore nature, animals, and how things work.
- **Technology:** Let children safely explore simple technology, such as torches, remotes, or digital cameras.

Expressive Arts and Design

- **Media and Materials:** Offer access to musical instruments, paints, and construction sets.
- **Imagination:** Encourage role play, dressing up, storytelling, and creative expression.

Oral Health and Hygiene

- Support your child in brushing their teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste. Children need help brushing until at least age 7, but encouraging independence in the early years is important.
- Talk about healthy food and drink choices. Avoid sugary snacks and drinks, especially between meals.
- Make regular dental check-ups a positive experience. NHS dental care for children is free.
- Reinforce routines like brushing teeth after breakfast and before bedtime to establish lifelong healthy habits.

Helpful Tips for a Smooth Transition

1. **Establish a Good Sleep Routine**
 - Sleep supports concentration, emotional regulation, and physical health. Adjust your child's bedtime gradually and practise waking early before term starts.
2. **Be Realistic About Expectations**
 - Avoid talking about school too far in advance or presenting it as "the best thing ever" – this can create pressure or anxiety. Keep conversations positive but balanced.
3. **Use School Transition Resources**

- Check your child's new school website and attend transition visits. Your child's teacher may visit Little Explorers too.

4. **Teacher Visits at Little Explorers**

- We work closely with schools to arrange visits from reception teachers. Your child's key person will support this interaction and share a transition report with the school. If your child has an Individual Learning Plan or additional needs, we will arrange a meeting with the school with your consent.

5. **Fuel for the Day**

- On school mornings, provide a breakfast that offers slow-releasing energy such as porridge, banana, or wholegrain cereals like Weetabix.

6. **Stay Connected**

- Even after your child has moved on to school, please know that Little Explorers is still here for your family if you need any support.

What to Expect from Little Explorers Before School Starts

- **School Board Display:** Children will draw self-portraits for our display to help them recognise peers going to the same school.
- **Transition Reports:** Your child's key person will complete a report and share it with the school, along with any parental input from our School Readiness Chart.
- **PE Sessions:** Children will practise changing for PE with increasing independence.
- **Books & Stories:** We use a range of school-themed stories to support transition. Families are welcome to borrow books from our selection.

Graduation Celebration

In your child's final weeks at Little Explorers, you will be invited to attend our special Graduation Celebration. Children will wear gowns, receive certificates and gifts, and we invite parents/carers to join us in celebrating their achievements. Photos are welcome, but please ask permission before taking group photos.

Last Day of Nursery

The final day for children leaving us for school will be **31st August** (or the last open day before this if 31st falls on a weekend). If you require childcare beyond this date, please let us know in advance so we can support where possible.

Please see our attached "Road to School" map for additional tips and ideas to support your child at home.

As always, we are here to help – please don't hesitate to speak with us if you have any questions, no matter how big or small.

This policy was created on 10th January 2019 by Gemma Roberts
This policy was revised on: 03/06/2025 by Gemma Roberts

The Road To School

This tracker helps you and your child prepare for school.



Remember - learning is not a competition, children learn at different rates. For more ideas to help prepare your child for school, talk to your childcare practitioner.