



Skills for school



**Remember that all children develop at different rates and will start school with varying levels of skills and achievements.
Keep encouraging them with the things suggested here.**

Confidence and Independence:

Some children come to school unable to do things for themselves. They either want someone to help them do a task or don't have the confidence to try for themselves. School children need to attempt things on their own as the staff may be working with other children when help is needed.

Getting dressed and undressed:

Encourage your child to get dressed and undressed on their own. Putting on and taking off shoes shouldn't be too much of a problem, thanks to Velcro straps. Children also need to be able to manage their own personal hygiene by going to the toilet by themselves and washing their hands afterwards.

Social Skills:

At school, children meet more new people than they have ever met in one place before. Try to ensure they have regular contact with different adults and children.

Basic Manners:

Words such as please, thank you and excuse me take children a long way. Responding to adults and children politely, in actions and words, is also very important. Sorry is another useful word for children to know how to use.

Putting Things Away:

All children should tidy up after themselves. This means putting away the things they have finished using. At school, they will be expected to help in tidying up after classroom activities, even things they haven't used themselves (staff don't do it for them!)

Taking Turns and Sharing:

Many children are used to adult attention and haven't always had to wait for their turn. The earlier children learn to take turns, the better as at school they will often have to wait. Children will be expected to share equipment and classroom resources. The most treasured and popular items will be in high demand with all children. Children who know the rules of sharing won't be disappointed or angry when they can't have something they want immediately.

Ability to Sit Still:

This may seem a strange skill to ask of small children, but in order for learning to take place, children have to concentrate. And in order to concentrate, children need to sit still (albeit for short periods of time!) This can easily be taught by parents sitting with children and reading to them, or playing games with them.

Asking and Answering Questions:

A lot of learning occurs through asking and answering questions. If children are not used to answering questions, they may find this aspect of school difficult. Likewise, children need to know how to ask questions to find out information they need.

Name Recognition:

When children start school they really need to know what their name looks like. Right from the first day they will meet their name in many different ways. If they can write it as well (using lower case letters), that is a bonus.

Writing:

It is important that children have lots of opportunities to use writing tools. Felt-tip pens flow more smoothly than others and are good ones to start with. Check how they hold the pen as it can be difficult to break bad habits later). The first stage in writing development is making marks on a page. It doesn't matter if it looks like scribble!

TO SUM UP

This list is by no means exhaustive, but should serve as starting points. We all want children to have a successful transition to school. If they have been introduced to these basic life skills, children will be in a better position to maximise their learning.