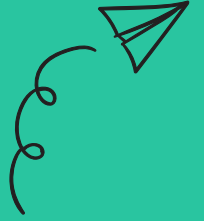


BE SCHOOL READY



ABC

**MAKING
FRIENDS**

The *ultimate*
school starter
shopping list

School lingo
explained

PREPARING
YOUR LITTLE
ONE (AND
YOURSELF)
FOR CHANGE



What parents need to get *ready, set, school!*



Make a difference to children's lives with your PTA

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) are volunteer groups of parents just like you who are dedicated to giving children the best experiences at school

YOUR PTA...

- ...organises fun events and activities
- ...builds stronger links between parents and your school
- ...raises funds to support your child's school
- ...brings the local community together

“Bringing people together and helping forge a strong community – to me, it's what PTAs are all about.”

Nolan O'Connor – Fielding Primary PTFA

Ask your PTA to find out how you can get involved
parentkind.org

Welcome to your Be School Ready guide!



Hello!

What an exciting year this will be for both you and your child! As a parent to a blended family of eight children, I have been at this point of your journey many times myself. I know it's both exciting and daunting. Your little one will experience many firsts this year – first time trying on their uniform, first birthday party, first book read all by themselves – and as you watch them learn and grow, I'm sure you'll experience a range of new emotions too!

This guide is packed with information, tips and advice so you can focus on enjoying this special time with your child. We've also created an online hub with even more handy resources – scan the QR code on the front of this guide to be taken straight there.

'Be School Ready' has been created by Parentkind, the national charity for parents. Parentkind works tirelessly to support parents in enabling their children to thrive throughout their educational journey and beyond, which begins before they even start school. For more information about how we collaborate with and support parents, head to our website at parentkind.org

If you're looking to connect with other parents with children starting school this year, join our Be School Ready 2024 group on Facebook. You can share ideas and chat through your experiences with families going through exactly what you're going through.

Finally, your school's PTA has shared this guide with you in the hope that it may offer some help during this first year of school life. PTAs are run by volunteer parents like you to enhance the learning experience of all pupils in the school. Anything you can do to support your PTA will be greatly appreciated and will help children to thrive in education.

On behalf of myself and everyone at Parentkind, I would like to wish you and your child the very best during the most exciting of years. Good luck, and don't forget to take lots of pictures!

Jason
Chief Executive, Parentkind



Our school shopping list on page 10 contains everything you'll need to buy your little one before their big day



What should your child be able to do before school starts? Find out on page 16

Give us a follow

- Be School Ready 2024
- @parentkind
- @parentkind
- @parentkind

Scan me to read the digital version:



Supported by





28
Your PTA
and you



6
Parents get first
day nerves too

BE SCHOOL READY

Head of Marketing:
Louisa McNally
Editor:
Emily Babb-Doherty
Designer:
Anna Tuck
Feature writer:
Taran Knight
Sub editor:
Rosanna Evans
Contributors:
Sian Lewis
Celia Tedstone

Advertising: Bourne Media
07771 881251 / 01202 757646
mark@bourne-media.co.uk

Give us a follow

- Be School Ready 2024
- @parentkind
- @parentkind
- @parentkind

Scan me to read the digital version:



6 Parents get first day nerves too
Before we focus on your little one, let's get you school ready!

8 Preparing your little one for a big step
Build your child's confidence with games, conversations and more

10 School shopping list
Everything to buy before their first day



12 Finance and childcare support
Find out the support you're entitled to

14 Getting to know your school
Handy information about school life

16 The building blocks of learning
What should your child know before school starts?

18 Navigating Parenthood Parentkind webinars
Get free support and guidance with our parent webinars

20 The first day
How to prepare and what to expect on their first day

21 Before and after-school routine
Creating a routine that's right for you and your child



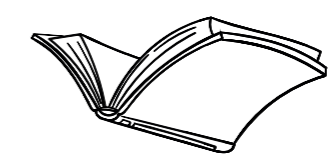
22 The first year
Important dates and milestones for the first year in reception

24 Dealing with issues at school
How to raise concerns and what support options are available to you

26 Learning at home
Continue your child's education at home

28 Your PTA and you
Get to know your PTA and the amazing things they do for your school

30 Resources
Further reading on education, support, wellbeing and special educational needs



Be School Ready is published by Parentkind, a national parent charity and the network of Parent Teacher Associations, mobilising over 100,000 volunteer fundraisers to raise in excess of £100 million annually to fund vital equipment and services for our schools. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Parentkind cannot accept any responsibility for errors and inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly in regards to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any way without prior written permission from Parentkind.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Parentkind a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Parentkind nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

Be School Ready is published yearly by Parentkind, 16 Old Queen Street, London, SW1H 9HP. Registered charity number 1072833

Parents get first day nerves too

Welcome to one of the most exciting (and nerve-racking) parts of your parenting journey! While the focus will be on getting your little one ready to start school, don't forget to prepare yourself as well for this transition

How are you feeling?

It's completely normal to have mixed emotions about your child starting school. A survey of 1,000 parents revealed that 69% felt anxious about it, with concerns ranging from their child making friends and drinking enough water, to misbehaviour and going to the toilet by themselves.

While starting school will be a big change for your family, it needn't be a scary one. Your child will pick up on any anxieties you have, so your first task is to focus on being positive. Challenge any negative thoughts by asking yourself if they're being helpful or unhelpful to you. Are your worries allowing you to prepare for this change, or are they just making you feel bad?

It's also normal to look forward to your child starting school! Getting some precious time back to do other things may provide some relief.

There's no right or wrong way to feel, just make sure you acknowledge those feelings so they don't get in the way of enjoying this special time.

Remember:
they'll always need you

Even though your child is becoming more independent, you still play a key part in their school life

Do your homework

Researching your child's school and learning about what to expect during their first few weeks will help to ease your concerns. Reading your Be School Ready guide is a great way to start!

Your imagination will also play an important part in feeling 'ready'. Visualise a before and after-school routine and look at photos of the school and staff to imagine being part of this new environment.

Preparation, preparation, preparation

There is a lot to remember and get your head around, so start getting organised as soon as possible. Reminder apps, lists stuck to the fridge, whiteboards, family calendars – whatever works best for you.



It all adds up

Worried about school expenses? Turn to page 12 to find out about financial support

You're not alone

Thousands of parents go through first-day-of-school jitters every year, so you're not alone! If you have friends or family who have been through this recently, try and find an opportunity to sit down with them for a cup of tea and a chat. Ask about their experiences and if they have any advice. It might be good for you to talk about your worries too – they do say 'a problem shared is a problem halved' for a reason!



Meet other parents on our Facebook group

Join Be School Ready 2024 to chat to other parents with children starting school this September:



Managing your social calendar

Balancing your child's social life with your own may feel a teensy bit hectic at times, especially once school starts. Try doubling up adult and child play dates at parks, soft play areas and cafés. This allows parents to have a chat while the children have something fun to do.



Making new friends

It's not just children who thrive on making new school friends. Check if there's a parent Facebook or WhatsApp group for your school that you can join, or be brave and make some introductions at the school induction days.

Volunteering for your PTA is another great way to meet other parents and get more involved with your school community.

"What I wish I knew..."

We asked parents what they wish they knew before their little one started school. Scan the QR code to see what they said:



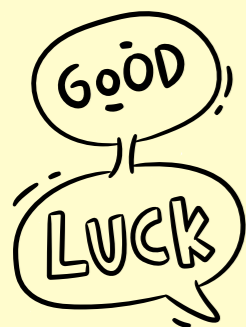
Preparing your little one for a big step

Every child is different. Some rush to the school gates from day one, and others take a little while to warm up to a new routine. No matter how they cope with change, you can do lots of things to prepare them for the start of school

Big feelings

Starting primary school is a big change in your child's young life. They'll be leaving nursery or pre-school, saying goodbye to other primary carers, and there are lessons, classrooms and lots of new people to get used to.

Your child might be worried or upset. They might be excited or overstimulated. They also might not react the way you expect them to. While you can't predict how your child will feel, you can be there for them with comforting conversations, having a strong and stable routine and by ramping up the positivity for this exciting new adventure.



There are no 'good' or 'bad' feelings

Emotions are a healthy part of life. By helping your child to describe their feelings rather than labelling them as 'good' or 'bad', they'll develop a better understanding of what they're going through

Boosting confidence

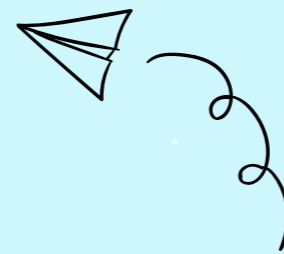
Fear can come from not knowing or understanding something, so familiarising your child with their school in the lead-up to their first day can help boost their confidence. Your child's school will arrange taster sessions, welcome meetings and tours before they start, but don't stop there. Go along to any events you can, such as the summer fair, and as you walk around

talk about what goes on in the playground and classrooms (these events are great for picking up cheap second-hand toys and books too). If you have older children already at school, take your little one along to their open days and school performances.

If you know the name of your child's teacher, talk about them with your child so they become a recognisable figure in their day-to-day life.

Make a game of it

Spark your little one's imagination by reading books about children starting school at bedtime or playing make-believe games about it



Bigging up school

How you and your family talk about school with (or in earshot of) your child will have the biggest influence on how they feel about going. Show lots of enthusiasm for the learning and experiences they will have in the first year of school. Even if your own memories of school aren't happy ones, make sure you talk in a positive way to your child about what school will be like for them.

A perfect opportunity to big up school is when you're driving or walking past the building. You could point it out and start a conversation about how exciting it's going to be, or even cheer and give the building a little wave!



Not the only new kid

Remind your child that their classmates will be new too, and the teachers will be looking after all of them to make sure they settle in – it might comfort them to know they won't be the only one!

Getting to know their future besties

Ask your child to think about the new friends they will make, even if they're joining school with friends from nursery or pre-school.

If you can find out who else will be in their class (induction days are a great time to do this), invite one of those children over to play with your child during the summer holidays. That way your child already has a friend from the start of term. This will put them at ease when they go into class on that first day. If you're not sure which child to invite, choose one whose parents you have met and get on well with. If the children become best friends, you'll be seeing a lot more of them!

Skilling up

Practise listening skills and following simple directions with your child, such as asking them to fetch something or put something away. Talk to them about how they should never be afraid to ask for help or let an adult know if something bad has happened

Kids + routines = 😊

To ease your child into the idea of school and new routines, have as many conversations about them as possible. Get your child to try on their school uniform a few times and tell them how smart they look. Talk about the journey to school and the snacks they'll have when they get home afterwards! You could even have practice runs to and from school in the summer holidays to see how fast you can get there!



School shopping list

Let's get shopping! Make sure to order your child's uniform as early as possible as stock can run out fast. The school will let you know exactly what you'll need, but also check if they have guidelines around hair, nails and jewellery

The essentials

- Name labels or wash-proof markers
- Jumpers, cardigans or sweatshirts
- Shirts or polo shirts
- Trousers, shorts, skirts or pinafores
- Socks and tights
- Coat
- Extra underwear (just in case!)
- Summer hat
- Tie (for some schools)
- Blazer (for some schools)
- Fleece (for some schools)
- Comfortable school shoes (slip-proof options may help avoid accidents in the playground and velcro may be quicker and easier than laces)
- Hat, scarf and gloves
- Waterproofs – shoes and outer layer
- Hair tie (for long hair)
- PE kit with plimsolls, sports socks and a gym bag to keep it in
- Swimming kit (for some schools)
- Rucksack
- Lunchbox and drink bottle
- Book bag

Measuring for school uniform

Grab a measuring tape, pen and paper.

Height: Have your child stand barefoot with their back straight against a wall. Measure from the top of their head to the floor

Collar: Place the measuring tape around your child's neck, but leave a little growing room

Chest: Place the measuring tape under your child's arms around the thickest part of their chest

Waist: Wrap the measuring tape around their belly button

Hips: Measure around the widest part of their hips and bottom, keeping the tape measure level all the way around

Inside Leg: Have your child wear shoes and stand up straight. Place one end of the tape measure at the top of the inseam and measure straight down to around 5cm from the floor

Remember: If your child is in between sizes, always go bigger!



Measuring for shoes

For children aged five to ten, you should measure their feet every 12 weeks. It's best done in a shop, but you can also do it at home. You'll need a piece of paper and a pen to draw around your child's foot to accurately measure it. Then look for the 'size chart' on the retailer's website. Never go too big or too small for shoes – this can damage their feet.

Label everything!

Losing or mixing up belongings happens a lot in schools, so label everything. This will help avoid confusion and keep the school's lost property box nice and empty

As good as new

Does your PTA run a pre-loved uniform stall? It's cheaper and usually as good as new. Don't forget to donate your own child's uniform once they've grown out of it



Are you school ready?

If your child is starting primary, post-primary or secondary school, we're here to help you Be School Ready.

We know there's lots to do and remember in the lead up to their first day. That's why our guide and online hub have all the information and advice your family needs during this exciting time.

From getting the right uniform and learning at home to the best snacks for hungry, growing minds, we've got everything you need to kickstart your child's education journey.

Join the club!

Head to our Facebook group to chat to other parents with children starting reception this year:

 **Be School Ready 2024**

Scan me to visit the Be School Ready online hub for more information, tips and resources:



Financial and childcare support

Juggling home and school life is tough for every parent. If you can't find the support you're looking for on this page, head to our resources on page 30

Check what financial support you're entitled to

These are some of the benefits parents are able to apply for:

Child Benefit – For parents responsible for a child under 16 (or under 20 if they stay in approved education or training)

Universal Credit – For families on a low income needing extra support to meet their basic living costs

Carer's Allowance – For parents spending at least 35 hours a week caring for a disabled person who is on certain disability benefits and does not work, or works but earns less than £139 a week

Council Tax Reduction – Families on a low income may be entitled to a discount off their council tax bill

Pension Credit – For families on low income, but only if they are over State Pension age

New-Style Jobseeker's Allowance – For parents who have worked and paid sufficient National Insurance contributions in the last two to three years and are unemployed and looking for work, or working 16 hours a week or less and looking for additional work

New-Style Employment and Support Allowance – For parents who have worked and paid sufficient National Insurance contributions in the last two to three years and are unable to work due to ill health or disability

Still not sure if you can claim?

The easiest way to check which benefits you're entitled to is by using the online benefits calculator: [gov.uk/benefits-calculators](https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators)

Transport

Your child can get free transport to and from school if:

- **The school is more than two miles from home**
- **There's no safe walking route between home and school**
- **They have special educational needs, disabilities or a mobility problem**

They may also qualify if you have low family income. Check with your local council's website to see if you're eligible.

Wraparound care

Wraparound care is before and after-school childcare, such as breakfast clubs and after-school provision, which runs until 6pm or later. This may be provided through the school itself or a private company. There is often a waiting list, so make sure to book well in advance if you're going to need it. Some schools run separate breakfast clubs where children can get a hot meal to start the day, sometimes for free.



Flexible working

All employees in the UK have a legal right to request flexible working. You can request to make changes to your contract from your very first day of employment. You can make two requests within a 12-month period and your employer will need to make a decision within two months. All of the details can be found via the Government's website: [gov.uk/flexible-working/applying-for-flexible-working](https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working/applying-for-flexible-working)

Your right to take time off work

Did you know that if you're employed, you have a right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with emergency situations that affect your little one? This is called 'Time off for Dependants' or 'Emergency Family Leave'. You can also request unpaid parental leave for non-emergency situations. Speak to your employer to find out about the policies they have in place for parents. For more information about your rights as a parent, visit the Working Families website: [workingfamilies.org.uk](https://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)



The most important meal of the day

Studies show that eating a healthy breakfast can positively impact children's physical development, concentration, academic ability and behaviour. So make sure a yummy, filling meal is planned, whether your child has it at home or at a breakfast club. Looking for healthy grub on a budget? Go to page 18 to find out about our webinar with the Lunchbox Doctor

Nap club

Wraparound care is not the same as an after-school club, which is for activities and hobbies. Your school might choose not to run any after-school clubs for the first few months of your child's first term – reception children are usually too exhausted!

What's on the menu?

School lunch policies can vary quite a bit. Some schools provide free meals and don't allow lunchboxes, while others let children bring in food on the days they don't like what's on the menu. There are also schools that allow your child to pick what food they want on the day, some that ask parents to choose in advance, and others that have a set menu for everyone. Be sure to check before wrapping up sandwiches on the first day!

Free school meals

England: In state-funded schools, children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 get free lunches. In London, all children in state-funded primary schools get free school meals.
Wales: All children in primary schools get free school meals.
Northern Ireland: Children only get free school meals if they're eligible due to low family income or other benefits.

Find out if you're eligible for further support

England: [gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/financial-help-children](https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/financial-help-children)
Wales: [gov.wales/children-families](https://www.gov.wales/children-families)
Northern Ireland: [nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/expecting-or-bringing-children/financial-support-parents-and-children](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/expecting-or-bringing-children/financial-support-parents-and-children)



Getting to know your school

Having clear and open communication with the school not only benefits your child, but it'll make your life easier too. Asking questions, getting contact information and building relationships with staff are all things you can do before your child's first day

School Q&A

You're sure to have questions, but luckily other parents will have had similar thoughts, so most of the information you'll need will be on the school's website. Can't find something? Just give them a call.



Questions you might want to ask the school

- ✂ What does the curriculum look like for the first term?
- ✂ Will my child have homework?
- ✂ How do school dinners work?
- ✂ Should I provide snacks?
- ✂ Are there before or after-school clubs?
- ✂ What do I do if my child is ill?
- ✂ How do I find out about school updates?
- ✂ How can I find out about PTA updates?

Questions the school might ask you

- ✂ Does your child have any allergies?
- ✂ Will different family members or care roles be picking up or dropping off your child?
- ✂ What's the best number to reach you on?



Who's who

Senior Leadership Team (SLT): Responsible to the Governing Body for the leadership and management of the school. Their team may include:

- ✂ **Headteacher/Principal**
- ✂ **Deputy Head/Vice Principal**
- ✂ **Key Stage Leaders**

Pastoral care: Supports the social and emotional health and wellbeing of children at school. Hopefully your child's school blends pastoral care throughout teaching, but there may also be a separate dedicated team.

Family support: Extends pastoral care to parents, offering help with issues you may have in supporting your children at home or in school. Their team may include:

- ✂ **Parent Support Advisers**
- ✂ **Family Liaison Officers**
- ✂ **Education Welfare Officers**

SENCO/ALNCO: The Special Educational Needs Coordinator or Additional Needs Coordinator. SENCOs/ALNCOs work with the families of children with special educational/additional learning needs to make sure they get the support they need.

Support in class

Your child's teacher will likely be supported by a **Teaching Assistant (TA)**, **Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA)** or **Learning Support Assistant (LSA)**

The ABCs of school lingo

ARE: Age related expectations

Circle time: The teacher brings the children together to share news or discuss values – the class sit in a circle on chairs or on the floor

Early Learning Goals (ELGs): Curriculum learning goals set for the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (end of reception)

Fine motor skills: Skills that involve smaller muscles of the hands, like using a pencil, building with LEGO® and doing up buttons

Free play: Children choose their own play activities (indoors or outdoors) with little adult direction or intervention

Golden time: Children stop work and spend time doing special, enjoyable activities for a period of up to an hour, usually on a Friday – used to promote positive behaviour

Gross motor skills: Skills that involve whole body movement like standing, walking, running and jumping – also includes hand-eye coordination skills like throwing, catching and kicking

Guided reading: A method of teaching that involves reading with children in small groups

INSET day: In-Service Education and Training days for teachers – also known as staff development days. A day off for the children!

Learning objective (LO) or We Are Learning To (WALT): Describes what children are expected to learn or achieve from a task or activity

Phonics: A method for teaching reading and writing by developing the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate units of sound

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA): A short assessment to measure language, communication, literacy and maths skills

Don't be afraid to put up your hand

You've probably said this yourself, but if you don't understand something, ask the teacher! You're not expected to know everything

How your school might get in touch

- ✂ Notices on the classroom door
- ✂ Forms, letters and reports
- ✂ Emails from teachers, headteachers and governors
- ✂ Updates on their website (there may be a page for each year group or class)
- ✂ Apps and social media groups for the school and/or your child's class

How you can stay in touch

- ✂ Write your child's name, class and what's inside on any envelopes sent in with your child
- ✂ For a quick chat, try to catch the teacher at the door before or after school. For more in-depth discussions, book an appointment
- ✂ Go to any meetings the teacher holds to update parents on what children will be learning (if you can't make it, ask for notes)
- ✂ Attend parents' evenings

The building blocks of learning

While your child won't be expected to be able to read, write or do sums, there are some learning milestones that will help your little one get off to a great start at school

Learning checklist

My little one can...

- ✓ Recognise their own name when written
- ✓ Hold a pencil
- ✓ Form letters with a pencil, or is starting to learn how
- ✓ Recognise some letters
- ✓ Recognise some numbers
- ✓ Turn a page in a book
- ✓ Name colours and shapes
- ✓ Sing songs

Communication and making friends checklist

My little one can...

- ✓ Say please and thank you
- ✓ Play with other children and join in with games
- ✓ Understand other children's feelings
- ✓ Talk about ideas and feelings with teachers and other children
- ✓ Ask an adult if they need help
- ✓ Follow simple instructions



Self-care checklist

My little one can...

- ✓ Use the toilet alone
- ✓ Wash their hands with soap
- ✓ Wipe their nose and put the tissue in the bin
- ✓ Be away from home and parents for a few hours
- ✓ Put their shoes and coat on
- ✓ Dress themselves in their uniform
- ✓ Eat with a fork, knife and spoon
- ✓ Open their lunchbox and some food packaging
- ✓ Open and drink from their water bottle

It's okay if they can't do all of these things yet

Every child is different and progresses at different rates. The teacher will be expecting this and a lot of the items on these checklists will be set as goals for the whole class

Practice makes perfect

Scan the QR code to watch our video on practising our checklist skills at home:

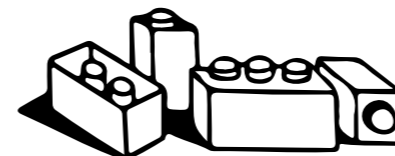


Having fun while learning

If you want to, there are some activities you can add into play time at home to help your child on their learning journey.

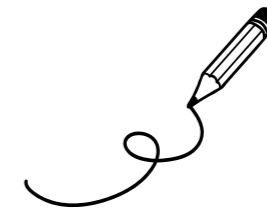
Strengthening muscles

- Pinching, chopping and squeezing Play-Doh helps develop all the muscle groups needed for writing
- Make pictures using small objects they'll need to pick up using the thumb and index finger, such as stickers and sequins
- Get your child to help in the kitchen by 'tickling' a crumble topping, kneading dough and stirring cake mix (ask them to stir clockwise and anti-clockwise)
- Puzzles, LEGO® and building blocks are great for strength and hand-eye coordination
- Encourage your child to climb on play equipment at the park



Mark making

- Give your child a paintbrush and a bucket of water and let them 'paint' the garden fence or patio. Or buy some pavement chinks and let them create a large-scale masterpiece
- If your child likes getting messy outdoors, they could make muddy handprints, bark and leaf rubbings, press flowers or draw in the mud using twigs
- Buy rolls of lining paper and encourage your child to draw roads to play on with their cars or other toys
- Technology is great for mark making – there are lots of apps that children can draw and make shapes with
- Think big and make your own 'art attack'. Create a giant picture by laying out colourful scarves, cushions, plastic plates, cups and toys



ABC

Recognising letters and numbers

- Encourage your child to spot numbers on everyday items, from street signs to car number plates
- Help your child find the letters of their name in books, on signs and posters
- Count everything, from the potatoes on their plate to the stairs up to bed
- Look at different letters and discuss their shapes. Which letters are curved and which are straight?
- Go on a letter hunt. Choose a letter and ask your child to find items around the home beginning with that letter





Navigating Parenthood

Parentkind webinars

From fussy eating to building independence, our expert-led Navigating Parenthood webinars can help with any challenges you may face in your parenting journey as your child starts school



Preparing for primary

Rachel Vecht, Educating Matters
09/05/24 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

For most parents, a child's first day at school is a nerve-racking but exciting time, with many new experiences. Getting off to a good start and laying the foundations for learning can have a hugely positive impact on your child's education journey. Hosted by Rachel Vecht, founder of Educating Matters, this session offers practical advice from the perspective of both a parent and a teacher with almost 30 years of experience.



Helping your child succeed in reception

Lisa McLeod
17/05/24 | 12.30 - 1.30pm

Discover the knowledge, skills and understanding that young children will acquire in school the year they turn five. You'll learn how the curriculum is delivered and how to support your children, including the seven areas of learning and development in early years, the balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning, and the teaching of early maths, literacy and communication.



Time Management for parents juggling work and family life

Matthew Carlton, Shine Workplace Wellbeing
21/05/24 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

Busy parents can learn how to enhance their time management skills and balance their family and home life in this session. You'll learn organisational skills for your daily and weekly tasks, which can lead to a calmer and happier family life with more free time.



Promoting your child's independence

Parenting Focus
06/06/24 | 10.00 - 11.00am

This session is for parents of children attending preschool and primary school. It provides an understanding of how independence can be developed in children. You'll recognise the importance of independence, whilst identifying situations in which it can be given. You'll also have the opportunity to recognise appropriate levels of independence.



Healthy snacks and lunchboxes on a budget

Jenny Tschiesche, The Lunchbox Doctor
07/06/24 | 12.30 - 1.30pm

Nutritionist Jenny Tschiesche, also known as the Lunchbox Doctor, has a passion for both healthy and tasty lunches. In this session, she acknowledges the challenges most parents face in terms of the rise in the price of food. Bringing together her 15 years of experience in creating recipes and running workshops, you can discover how to find better, healthier lunchbox solutions that your children will genuinely enjoy.



Inspiring reading at home

Professor Teresa Cremin and Kelly Ashley, The Open University
11/06/24 | 7.00 - 8.00pm

Experts Teresa Cremin and Kelly Ashley from The Open University will share ideas for encouraging reading at home as families get ready for the school journey. The session will involve practical tips on using local library services and fun ways to promote reading over the summer holidays.



Keeping your child entertained this summer

Georgina Durrant
24/06/24 | 7.30 - 8.30pm

This session is all about entertaining kids over the summer holidays and includes tips for parents of children with SEND as well. Discussion points include understanding the importance of play, strategies and activities you can do with your children over the summer, and how to feel empowered that your children are developing skills through play and not 'just playing'.



Find out more and sign up to our webinars here:



The first day

Every primary school organises the first day slightly differently. Your child might begin with shorter days that gradually increase, or they might not be at school every day for the first week. Whatever the schedule, be prepared to take lots of photos!

The night before

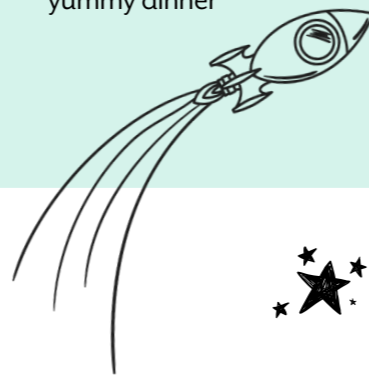
- ✓ Get everything ready – lay out their uniform and put everything they’ll need in their rucksack so there’s no last-minute panics in the morning
- ✓ Talk through what’s going to happen the next day calmly and in a positive way (try not to overexcite them in case they can’t sleep!)
- ✓ If they seem nervous, ask your child if they have any specific concerns and reassure them that everyone in their class will be new
- ✓ Remind your child how clever/big/brave they are and have been in the past – “Remember when you did that all by yourself?”

Before school

- ✓ Have fun getting ready and ramping up the excitement – they’ll only get one first day, so enjoy it!
- ✓ Take lots of photos of your child looking adorable in their uniform
- ✓ Try and get out the door with plenty of time to spare
- ✓ Be strong and cheery on the journey in, it will help your child feel confident too
- ✓ Say a quick goodbye, especially if you feel your chin start to wobble
- ✓ Say hi to other parents and share the experience

After school

- ✓ Expect your child to be tired
- ✓ Take a snack when you pick them up
- ✓ Be prepared for a few meltdowns – after behaving all day, you’re their ‘safe space’ where they can display their true emotions. This is called ‘After School Restraint Collapse’ (and it can happen long after reception age!)
- ✓ Cook a special yummy dinner



You’ll probably want to find out every little detail about their day, but try not to overwhelm your child with questions, especially if they’re tired and hungry!

It’s okay to cry

There might be lots of tears on the first day, or your child might be fine at first but get upset a few days or weeks later as the novelty of school wears off. All they need is time, love and reassurance. Tuck a little note into their pocket or draw matching hearts on your hands for them to touch when they need to feel close to you

Night night, sleep tight

It’s recommended your little one gets 10 to 13 hours of sleep a night



Before and after-school routine

Every family is different and has different schedules, but if you’re looking for ways to kickstart your child’s day and help them relax in the evenings, we’ve got you covered!

Before school

Wakey wakey

Getting up half an hour earlier than your child will give you a nice head start (and you can get dressed in peace!)

Bright and early

Opening curtains or switching on a lamp ten minutes before your child needs to get up will help them wake naturally

To-do list

Use a morning checklist to help your child understand what they need to do to get ready for school

Hearty breakfast

Setting aside 15-20 minutes to sit down and eat will help growing minds concentrate at school

Getting out the door

Switch off distractions like TV or tablets to help your child focus on getting ready



After school

Dawdling and chats

If your child walks slowly, leave the house a little early so you don’t have to worry about being late

Quick bye bye

A quick cuddle goodbye is best if your child gets a bit tearful when you leave

Any news?

Check the school’s app (if they have one) and your child’s book bag for letters or notes from their teacher, the school office or PTA. Party invites are often sent out this way too

Snack attack

Picking them up with a snack or having one ready at home helps to stave off hunger!

Chitchat

Asking your child about their day will help them retain the things they’ve learnt

Winding down

After a busy day, give your child time to unwind and relax, either with television, play time, exercise or a cuddle

What’s for dinner?

That brain has been working hard and needs refuelling!

Prep for tomorrow

Is there anything special going on the next day that they need something out of the ordinary for, such as wellies, cardboard boxes or a costume for World Book Day? Make sure any books that come home are back in their bag and their uniform is laid out

Night night, sleep tight

Tuck them in on time – tired and grumpy children aren’t fun in the morning!

It might take a while to establish your routine, but stick with it. On the days it all goes to plan, you’ll find the day will be much calmer

Looking for snack and meal ideas? The Lunchbox Doctor is in:



Photos/illustration: Shutterstock.com/FXQuadro, Freepik

The first year

The first year at school will be full of new opportunities and experiences for you and your little one. You'll probably be expecting some of them, such as learning to read big words and adding numbers together, but you'll also see your child getting more independent and absorbing the world around them like a sponge!

Important dates

For most schools, the first term runs from the beginning of September. In October, children get a week or two off school to relax, reflect and recuperate. Whether you take a family trip somewhere or keep things cosy at home, enjoy the break!

Terms are broken up by half-term breaks, as well as the longer spring, summer and winter holiday periods. The exact dates differ by region, so check with your local council.

AUTUMN TERM

Start of September – around a week before Christmas Day
(Half term in October)

SPRING TERM

Start of January – March/April
(Half term in February)

SUMMER TERM

April – end of July
(Half term in May)

The big milestones

First day

There's a lot to take in! Your child may be excited, but the big shift to school life is very tiring. It can be very emotional for both of you, so consider celebrating quietly with family once the day is over with dinner and a cuddle.

First best friend

Seeing your child make their first best friend is so heart-warming. They'll probably be very excited and won't stop going on about how great their bestie is! And it's okay if their best friend isn't a classmate – it's normal for a cool new toy or one of the adults in school to be declared their favourite person. But you should also expect a few friendship breakups – tears and arguments are all part of learning about relationships.

First wobble

Sometimes, once the novelty of going to school has worn off a bit, your child may come home to you declaring they're sick of it. Moments like these are totally normal. You can help encourage your child by

reminding them of exciting plans they have coming up, or by leaving a supportive note in their pocket the next school day.

First sick day

Coughs and sniffles call for warm soup and a rest in bed. Don't be surprised if your child picks up an illness soon after starting term – it's very common as their immune systems are getting used to being around lots of different people.

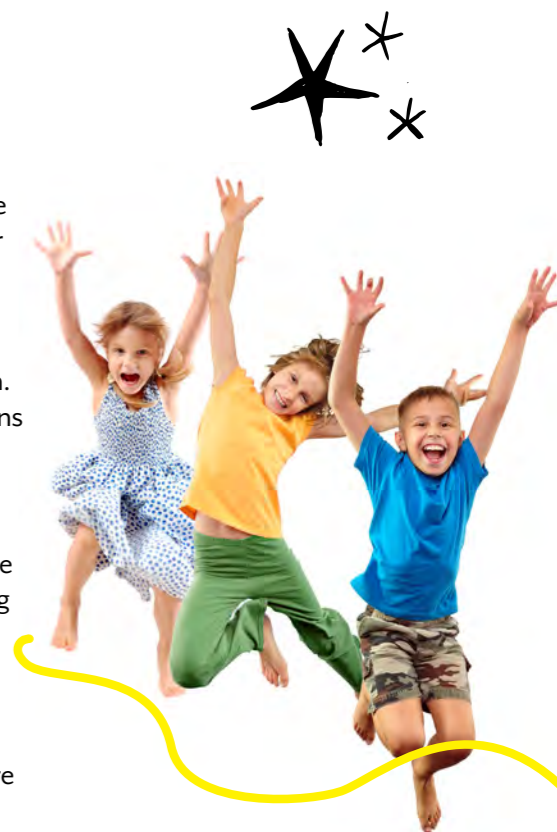


First parents' evening

Schools usually hold two parents' evenings a year, with the first in the autumn term and the second later into the year. This is your chance to get to know your child's school, meet their teachers and find out more about how they're settling in. Don't be shy about asking questions and learning as much as you can.

First PTA event

The PTA at your school will likely be running some fabulous fundraising events throughout the year. Popular events in the autumn and winter include discos, quizzes, fairs and raffles. Check the school noticeboards and make sure you're signed up for email newsletters so you don't miss out.



The end of their first year

Your child won't have to sit any tests after their first year at school, but their teacher will check their progress based on how they behaved and performed in the classroom.

Learning aims

- ✓ Listen, pay attention and respond
- ✓ Understand and follow instructions
- ✓ Express themselves
- ✓ Use past, present and future tenses
- ✓ Improve coordination, in movements and use of tools
- ✓ Understand basic hygiene
- ✓ Speak up in a group and ask for help
- ✓ Talk about their feelings and the feelings of others
- ✓ Understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- ✓ Form relationships with adults and children
- ✓ Read and understand simple sentences
- ✓ Use phonics to read and write words
- ✓ Write simple sentences
- ✓ Count from 1 to 20
- ✓ Recognise, create and describe number patterns
- ✓ Be sensitive to differences
- ✓ Use age-appropriate technology
- ✓ Make music and dance
- ✓ Use a variety of tools and techniques to show their ideas

Don't worry if your child doesn't know all of these things by the end of the year – everyone learns at different paces and has different strengths and weaknesses. If you're concerned, speak to their teacher





Dealing with issues at school

If you have any worries, concerns or issues with your child's school or their education, rest assured there are plenty of support options available to you

Worrying is (unfortunately) a normal part of parenting

Parents' top concerns when their child starts school include making friends, not eating or drinking enough and being bottom of the class. Sound familiar?!

Your child's teacher will expect you to be a little worried, so ask questions if you need to put your mind at rest.



What to do if you have concerns

Talk with your child. You may be able to find out more information that way and, depending on the issue, even solve it yourselves.

If you still have concerns, the next step is to contact their teacher. From bullying to learning milestones, they'll know the best course of action to take.

✂ Ask the teacher the best way to contact them – it could be a quick chat at the door,

a booked appointment, a phone call or an email

- ✂ Take notes so you remember to say everything you need to
- ✂ Explain the problem clearly
- ✂ Ask what the teacher can do to help and when
- ✂ Ask the teacher when they'll give you an update

If you emailed, keep a copy of it. If you spoke over the phone or in-person, make a note of the date and what was said. Your notes could help if you have to contact the school again about the problem.

School anxiety and refusal

It's normal for your child to feel worried about school or even say they don't want to go in some days. They might get upset when you first start dropping them off, or be fine for a few weeks and then suddenly hate it.

Most children just need a bit of reassurance, but if they continue to get upset, ask them why. It could be a simple problem that's easy to fix, such as not enjoying lunch or an argument with a friend.

For many children, school anxiety and refusal are temporary problems, but for some families it's more serious. If your child is consistently anxious, the mental health charity Young Minds has a guide to help you work out what to do next and where to get further support if you need it: [youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal)

If the teacher has concerns

No one wants to hear that their child is struggling at school. If the teacher comes to talk to you about an issue, try to remain calm and write down everything that's said, even if you disagree with it. You can then use this information to have further conversations with the school and with your child.

Try to see things in a practical way by creating a plan or agreeing next steps, whether that's to gain a better understanding of what's going on or to work on a solution.

How to talk to your child on their first week of school

Scan for guidance from Louisa Rose, CEO of the youth mental health charity, Beyond:



Your first parents' evening

Parents' evenings are an opportunity to reflect on your child's progress, discuss ways they can improve and find out how they are in the school environment. Children are often quite different at school than they are at home, so it's also an opportunity to find out about their friendships and behaviour from the teacher's perspective.

When is it?

Usually in the autumn and spring terms. The autumn term meeting is ideal for building relationships with your child's teachers. The spring term meeting is best for picking up areas for development before the end of the school year.

How to prepare

The meetings are usually quite short, around 10 or 15 minutes, so make sure you write down any questions you want to ask.

It doesn't just have to be about their academic progress – you can ask about their friendships and behaviour, or even any physical issues you're concerned with such as hearing, vision or coordination. The teacher will then know to keep an eye on them and report back if they have similar concerns.

Talk with your child about how they're feeling about school. Do they like their teacher? What do they enjoy, and what do they struggle with? They may even have an issue they'd like you to bring to the meeting.

Finally, parents' evenings give you the chance to talk about any circumstances at home that could have an impact on your child's school life. Being open about these things will help the teacher to understand your child's behaviour and respond accordingly.

Don't wait

Parents' evening isn't the only time you have to speak about your child to their teacher. If you need it, arrange to meet with them sooner



Learning at home

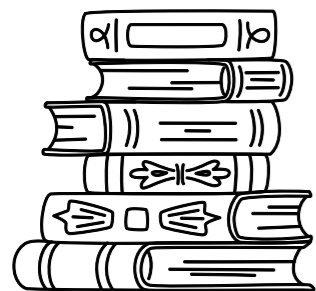
Your child will do better, achieve more and feel more confident if you're connected and involved with their school life. Here are some ways you can strengthen at home what they learn at school

Encourage little bookworms

Children who read for fun every day perform better in reading tests, develop a broader vocabulary and increase their general knowledge. It doesn't matter what they read, so long as they enjoy it!

Making books a part of everyday life is a great way to encourage little bookworms. Whether it's an audiobook in the car, a story after dinner or a tale before bed, try and make time for reading in your daily schedule.

It's also important that your child chooses what they read or is read to them. It can be age-appropriate fiction, joke books, or even cereal packets – everything counts! Ask their teacher or your local library for suggestions based on your child's interests. We guarantee there'll be lots of books out there they'll love.



Conversations for curious minds

You can build your child's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning simply by talking with them. Here are some prompts to get you started:

- Ask which subjects they're enjoying at school and why
- When reading together, ask questions like "Where did we get to?" and "What do you think happens next?"
- Help with their numeracy by counting anything and everything, from the number of houses on the way to school to how many peas on their plate
- If they're reluctant to talk, they could be tired from speaking all day. Tell them how you spent your day instead
- Don't forget to keep it light – asking about friends and playtime is just as important as the academic stuff!

Will there be homework?

Not all schools do this, but some set homework for reception-aged children – studies show that parents getting involved with their child's schoolwork really helps to speed up development.

Don't get it? Don't worry!

Subjects and teaching methods change over time, so the way you were taught at school might be very different to the way your child is taught. If you're worried about confusing your child but still want to support learning at home, there are lots of websites you can use together, such as teachyourmonster.org and doodlelearning.com



Photos/illustration: Shutterstock.com/kepop, Freepik

START SCHOOL WITH STIKINS® Name Labels

SIMPLY STICK IN & STAY IN – NO SEWING & NO IRONING



ORDER FROM WWW.STIKINS.CO.UK

OVER 11,000 INDEPENDENT REVIEWS



Save time and money with just one label for clothes, shoes, lunch boxes, and all school items



Support your child's future with every online shop

Your favourite retailers and 8,000 others will give a free donation to your child's school whenever you shop with them.

Simply sign up to easyfundraising, pick your child's school as the cause you want to support, and you're away.

Registration is free and will take you less than two minutes to sign up!

Scan me



"Without changing any of my spending habits, I've raised nearly £1,000 for my daughter's school!"

Joanna, supporter of Lady Eleanor Holles School

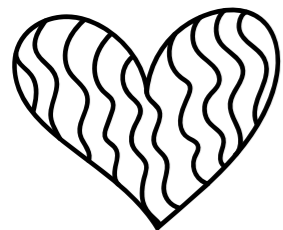


Your PTA and you

Your PTA is made up of volunteer parents like you working to enrich the education experience for every child at the school. But what do they do exactly, and how can you get involved?

A sense of community

PTAs are vital parts of the wider school community, creating links between parents and their children's educational journey – something over 70% of UK parents are concerned about. Our research shows a correlation between an active PTA and a happy, thriving school. Plus, when parents are involved in school life, children are more likely to succeed in their education.



Many PTAs are registered charities

"I've got to know some incredible people, many of whom I am now lucky to call my friends. And although our events don't 'just happen' and there is often a lot of work behind them, as parents we all want our children to have the best possible school experience."

Tom Panagos – Chair of Marshgate Primary School PSA, winners of the England PTA of the Year Award 2023

Making a positive impact on your child's education

The biggest difficulty most PTAs face is getting enough hands on deck. To run events and activities for the children and raise money to improve their experiences at school, volunteers are always needed.

Whether it's coming up with fun ideas, calling out the questions on a quiz night or creating social media posts, there are so many ways you can help your PTA. Plus, volunteering



The average PTA raises £9,000 each year



"Bringing people together and helping forge a strong community – to me, it's what PTAs are all about."

Nolan O'Connor – Fielding Primary PTFA, winner of the PTA Volunteer of the Year Award 2023

What does the fundraising go towards?

- Educational materials (such as books, classroom equipment and sports equipment)
- School renovations
- Improving and maintaining playgrounds and outdoor areas
- Trips
- Health and wellbeing activities
- Fun events for all the children to experience and enjoy

Our PTA members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland contribute more than £100 million to the education of our children and young people every single year

What is a PTA?

They can go under different names, such as 'Parents Association', 'Friends of' and 'Home and School Association'. But what all PTAs have in common is the goal of working together to make their school an amazing place for children to learn.

"What I enjoy most about being part of a PTA is feeling I'm making a difference."

Emily Evans – Chair of Ffrindau Ysgol Blaenau PTFA, winners of the New PTA of the Year Award 2022

Who's in a PTA?

A committee of parent and teacher volunteers is usually led by three main roles – the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

What do PTAs do?

- Raise funds to support the school
- Organise events
- Create stronger links between parents and the school
- Bring the wider local community together

What events do PTAs run?

- Summer and Christmas fairs
- Discos, quizzes and games nights
- Pre-loved uniform sales
- Tea and coffee mornings
- And so much more!

Speak to your PTA to find out how you can get involved



Resources

Be School Ready Hub

We have lots of extra advice, tips and resources on our Be School Ready online hub. Scan the code to find out more:



Education

BBC Live Lessons

Interactive lessons featuring some of the BBC's biggest brands and presenters.
bbc.co.uk/teach/live-lessons

DoodleMaths

Award-winning maths learning app for ages 4 to 14.
doodlelearning.com/maths-app

Internet Matters

All you need to know about staying safe online.
internetmatters.org

PE with Joe

Free exercise classes for children of all ages.
youtube.com/@TheBodyCoachTV

PhonicsPlay

Free information and subscription service to teach phonics.
phonicsplay.co.uk

s4c – Grown Ups

Welsh language programmes for younger children.
s4c.cymru/en/cyw/grown-ups

Financial health and parent support

Government finance support for parents: England

gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/financial-help-children

Government finance support for parents: Wales

gov.wales/children-families

Government finance support for parents: Northern Ireland

nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/expecting-or-bringing-children/financial-support-parents-and-children

Care for the Family

A national charity helping with family difficulties.
careforthefamily.org.uk

Child Poverty Action Group

Helping children growing up in poverty.
cpag.org.uk

Gingerbread

Supports single parents and their families.
gingerbread.org.uk

Working Families

UK charity for working parents and carers.
workingfamilies.org.uk

Mental health and wellbeing

Children in Northern Ireland

Support and free confidential helpline for parents and carers throughout Northern Ireland on everything parenting related.
ci-ni.org.uk

Family Links

Charity dedicated to empowering children, parents, families and schools to be emotionally healthy.
familylinks.org.uk

The Welsh Government – Young persons' mental health toolkit

An online resource with digital tools designed specifically to support young people with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
hwb.gov.wales

Young Minds

Offers lots of resources for children on looking after their mental health. Parents concerned about a child or young person under the age of 25 can call their Parents' Helpline on 0808 802 5544.
youngminds.org.uk



Special Educational Needs (SEN), Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and disabilities

Contact

Help and advice to families caring for a disabled child or a child with specific health conditions.
contact.org.uk

The Education Training Inspectorate

Learning resources for children with SEN in Northern Ireland.
etini.gov.uk

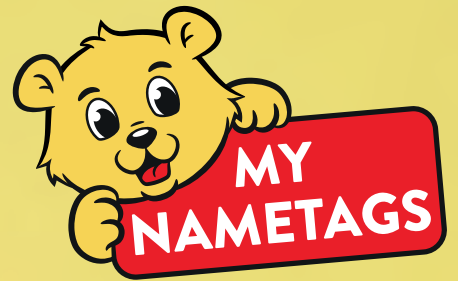
SENAC (Special Educational Needs Advice Centre)

Gives information and advice on supporting children with learning difficulties and SEN in Northern Ireland.
senac.co.uk

SNAP Cymru

SNAP Cymru offers free support to help children with SEN, ALN and disabilities in Wales.
snapcymru.org

For more resources, visit
parentkind.org/for-parents/parents-resources



NO MORE LOST ITEMS!

Scan for more information!



Our nametags are perfect to label all of your child's possessions. From clothing to shoes, stationery, toys - everything is identified!



STAYS ON CLOTHES & SHOES



QUEEN'S AWARD WINNER



WASHING MACHINE & MICROWAVE SAFE



UK MARKET LEADER FOR 10+ YEARS

Order now on www.mynametags.com