

# Ready to learn



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Give your child the  
best start at school



The little things you do at home will  
help prepare your child for school.

#readytolearn

mae addysg  
yn dechrau  
yn y cartref  
education  
begins  
at home

# Dear parents and carers

Starting school is a huge milestone for children and parents. **Here are some helpful tips and suggestions on ways to start developing those all-important life skills** at home which will help your child settle in at school.

## Be prepared

**Visit the school with your child before they start school and meet the reception teacher** so your child is familiar with them on their first day. Ask if your child's school has settling-in sessions.

**Borrow storybooks from your local library** such as **'First day at school'**. Or, you could also **'pretend play' school** to encourage your child to raise any concerns they may have.

**Make friends with familiar faces.** If you know children who'll be at the same school, why not arrange play dates.

If your child's school has a uniform, let your child try it on, label it with their name – and encourage them to recognise their name.



## Children aged 4 tend to settle more quickly in school if they:

- know enough language to express themselves and ask questions;
- can listen to and follow instructions;
- can get along with other children, sharing and taking turns;
- can go to the toilet and get dressed by themselves;
- cope with being away from their parents or carers;
- are interested in stories, songs, drawing and making things;
- have some familiarity with letters and numbers; and
- are curious about the world, with a desire to learn.



Not all children starting school will be able to do all of these things. Teachers are skilled at helping children progress at their own pace.

## Children learn through play

### Get out and about

A trip to the library, into town, or just out for a walk, are great ways to learn how the world works.

Castles, parks and other free activity days are great for learning as a family and introducing basic social skills.



## Listening games

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Good listening skills will improve your child's ability to learn about their world. Games such as 'Simon says' and 'I spy' are fun but also teach them how to listen to instructions.

## Play the name game

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Encourage your child to recognise their name in written form – you could make a sign for their bedroom.

## Playing to their strengths

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Painting, playing with Play-Doh or using safety scissors are fun ways to increase your child's hand strength and co-ordination so they can use a pencil at school.



## Reading at bedtime or anytime

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Reading is good for a child. You can make it fun by using different voices, asking questions, laughing at pictures and showing them letters and numbers in the book.

## Counting is fun

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Use rhyme and song to introduce numbers, whether it is '1, 2, 3, 4, 5 once I caught a fish alive' or counting steps as you walk up the stairs.



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# If you have concerns

All children develop different skills at different times, but if you are worried about your child, there is a lot of support available. Talk to your health visitor, GP or children's centre and share your concerns with your child's new teacher before they start school.



## Useful links

### Education begins at home

Information on how you can support your child at home and help their performance in school.

[www.facebook.com/beginsathome](http://www.facebook.com/beginsathome)

### Parenting. Give it time

A campaign to provide helpful tips and advice to parents of young children.

[www.giveittime.gov.wales](http://www.giveittime.gov.wales)

### Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years

The guide for parents 'preparing your child for starting school'. [www.pacey.org.uk/workingin-childcare/spotlight-on/beingschool-ready/](http://www.pacey.org.uk/workingin-childcare/spotlight-on/beingschool-ready/)

This website is only available in English.

### Pori Drwy Stori

Bilingual programme to support literacy for children.

[www.poridrwyystori.booktrust.org.uk/](http://www.poridrwyystori.booktrust.org.uk/)

### Cyw

Welsh-language television programmes from S4C, mainly aimed at children aged three to six, Monday to Friday 7am to 1pm. Bi-lingual educational apps are also available

[www.s4c.cymru/cyw](http://www.s4c.cymru/cyw)

### Cymraeg

[www.facebook.com/cymraeg](http://www.facebook.com/cymraeg)  
[www.meithrin.cymru/project-nursery-rhymes/](http://www.meithrin.cymru/project-nursery-rhymes/)

### Libraries Wales

[www.welshlibraries.org](http://www.welshlibraries.org)