

School Readiness in Northamptonshire



Are we all ready?

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Northamptonshire
County Council

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Northamptonshire County Council recently consulted Early Years professionals, parents and carers for their thoughts and views on the issue of 'School Readiness' in order to inform a county wide agreement on what it might mean.

UNICEF's description of School Readiness consists of three aspects or pillars – children's readiness for school, school's readiness for children and families' readiness for school, which is a statement we would wish to follow.

Local research, including an online survey, suggest education and health professionals and parents interpret school readiness to be:

- **Children** who have high levels of emotional resilience, can form positive relationships, show curiosity and an enthusiasm to learn, are reasonably independent and self sufficient in terms of self care and hygiene and can listen and communicate effectively.
- **Parents** who are well informed and support their child's learning and holistic development at home, who establish routines that enable the child to be healthy, sleep and eat well and ensure immunisations are up to date and who share information about their child with Early Years professionals.
- **Schools** who gather detailed information from parents about their child before they start and who meet the needs of every child through a play based curriculum. Schools who effectively communicate with parents and families and support them to be involved in their child's learning and also schools who liaise effectively with other Early Years professionals.

What does this mean for the Early Years settings, Schools, Health professionals, Parents and Children Centre Services?

The role of Early Years settings is to listen to children and their families, collaborating with them to identify children's learning and development and identifying to parents where progress is less than expected, for example when completing the Progress Check at two. They also need to work together with parents and other professionals where necessary to ensure children make good progress. Interventions to be put in place to ensure they have the necessary language and communications skills, emotional and social skills and physical skills.

The role of schools is to ensure they effectively communicate with families, Early Years settings and other professionals so that the Reception class provision reflects the needs of the children arriving. Transitions should be well supported and parents well informed of the expectations of school.

Health professionals will liaise and communicate key information to families, especially where progress is less than expected at key times in the child's life, such as the Healthy Child review. Interventions should be put in place wherever necessary and other professionals referred to in order for families and professionals to work together to support the child to be school ready. They can encourage all families to ensure their child's immunisation is up to date.

Children's Centre services can support the families to know their role in having appropriate routines at home to ensure the child can access their school with a curiosity and enthusiasm that will enable them to learn. They can support families to ensure children can operate effectively in the three prime areas by enhancing the work completed by the child's Early Years settings.

Parents can best support school readiness by playing, talking and spending time with their child as much as possible. By singing songs, nursery and finger rhymes and making time for talk and sharing books. Also to help their child to learn to do things for themselves and develop independence. Help the child to recognise and talk about feelings and different emotions. Parents can provide opportunities for their child to meet and relate to other children and adults to support socialising and build confidence.

By establishing a good sleep routine and healthy eating patterns and ensuring the child is as active and healthy as they can be will provide the child with the physical resilience for school.

Parents can help the child to get to know their school before starting and should seek professional advice and guidance when needed.



Are You Ready?

10 Top Tips for Helping Your Child Develop

Research shows that some children are more developed than others when they start school. In Northamptonshire we want to help all children be as ready as possible and to continue to learn and discover exciting new things.

The following top 10 tips are day to day things you can do with your child to give them the best possible start:

- 1.** Encourage your child to feed themselves with a knife, fork and spoon, and to drink from a cup without a lid. Try not to worry about spillages and encourage your child to help clear up afterwards.
- 2.** Encourage your child to dress and undress by themselves and put on their own coat or shoes. It may take a lot of time but children love to do things on their own and with your praise will feel proud when it is achieved.
- 3.** Find time for your child to meet, and play with other children and adults. This will build their social skills and confidence. Attending a pre-school, nursery or child minder is important in preparation to starting school.
- 4.** When your child is expressing feelings through their behaviour, help them to understand what they are feeling by naming the emotions to them. For example if your child is pleased to receive a new toy you could say, "Isn't it lovely to have a new toy". Or if your child is getting upset because he/she can't have a new toy you could say, "I can see you are feeling upset that you can't have that toy. Doesn't it feel horrible when you want something but can't have it".
- 5.** Establish family routines that ensure good eating and sleeping habits. Plenty of good quality sleep and a healthy balanced diet are very important your child's brain development and health.

6. Play, talk, listen and spend time with your child as much as possible, responding to them in gentle and loving ways. This helps them to have a healthy bond with you, and will encourage them to have healthy bonds with others.
7. Sing songs, nursery rhymes and share books. Add new words to what they know by talking about everyday things or whatever interests them.
8. Encourage your child to draw and do pretend writing. Try games, such as writing shopping lists, and drawing pictures of family members or pets.
9. When you ask questions give your child time to think before they answer. Their brains are not as developed as adults, so they need time to organise their thoughts and ideas before they can reply.
10. Help your child to get to know their school before starting and share as much information as you can with the school about your child, what they like and enjoy and what they already know and can do.

Access more advice, tips and downloadable resources at:

pacey.org.uk/schoolready

