

Starting Reception

School readiness



Learning and thriving through play and discovery

Confidence and Readiness

Building Confidence and Readiness for a Positive Start to School

Every child develops at their own pace, and learning begins from birth. As children approach starting school, some may need more support than others.

There are important skills that schools expect children to begin developing before their first day.

Practising these can help make the transition to Reception a positive experience.

You can play a key role at home by supporting your child's confidence and independence, helping them feel both emotionally and practically ready for school. Starting school is a gradual transition, and we support this throughout your child's time in pre-school so they feel confident, secure, and well prepared.



What we will do to help prepare your child for Reception

- We prepare a detailed report to share with you and your child's new Reception teacher.
- We invite Reception teachers to visit our setting so they can get to know your child before they start school.
- Where possible, we gather photos of local schools, including Reception classrooms, playgrounds, and school halls, to help familiarise children with their new environment.
- We provide school uniforms in our role-play areas so children can practise getting dressed independently.
- If appropriate, we group children by their new schools and talk with them about who will be moving on together.
- For children continuing at Genesis Trust, we offer additional opportunities to spend time with their new teacher, both in the pre-school room and in their Reception classroom.
- We work closely with receiving schools to share important information about your child's learning, development, and daily routines.
- Where possible, we attend or arrange transition meetings with schools to help ensure a smooth and supportive handover.
- Transition support begins early in the year, rather than being limited to the final term.
- We introduce simple school-style routines, such as lining up, tidying away, and self-registration, to help children feel more familiar and confident.
- We also encourage independence at mealtimes, supporting children to open lunchboxes and manage their belongings.



How can I help my child get ready?

When children start school, they will encounter new routines, activities, and expectations, including doing more things independently than before. Research shows that a child's relationship with their parents is the most important influence on their development, and there is much you can do at home to support this.

Family time at home is a great opportunity to practise key skills through fun, everyday activities. Once you have received your school place, it is helpful to speak positively about the new school and take part in any transition sessions offered.



Growing Independence

Play, creativity and curiosity

- Engaging in imaginative play, such as role play activities
- Drawing, painting, colouring, and using glue and craft materials
- Sharing story books, exploring pictures, and talking about characters and events
- Exploring the world around them by observing nature and safely investigating everyday objects at home
- Managing their own belongings, including their bag, coat, and water bottle
- Practising simple routines, such as tidying away toys after play
- Developing independence by opening food packaging and managing lunch items themselves

Taking Care Of Themselves

- Putting on and taking off their coat and shoes independently
- Using the toilet and washing their hands properly
- Getting dressed with minimal support, for example after using the toilet or taking part in PE
- Using cutlery such as a fork and spoon (or chopsticks where appropriate) and drinking from an open cup
- Spending short periods away from you, building confidence that they can be cared for by other trusted adults



Building relationships and communicating

Being with others

- Practising sharing and taking turns with toys
- Talking together about feelings and what may be causing them
- Sharing story books and discussing how characters might be feeling as a way to build emotional understanding
- Beginning to recognise and respond to the feelings of others, for example noticing when a friend is sad
- Supporting children to understand and set simple boundaries for themselves and others, including learning to say "no" appropriately
- Building confidence to speak to unfamiliar adults, such as teachers

Communication and language


- Singing songs and nursery rhymes with confidence and enjoyment
- Talking to others about their activities, experiences, and the world around them
- Communicating when they need help, using clear speech, basic English, or sign language where appropriate
- Recognising the pattern of their own name to help them identify their belongings, such as their coat peg or jacket

Listening and engaging

- Maintaining attention for short periods of time
- Listening to and following simple instructions
- Persevering with tasks, even when they are challenging, and recovering when things do not go as planned
- Following simple two-step instructions, such as "put your coat on and line up"

Physical development

Physical development

- Walking up and down steps one foot at a time, using a wall or handrail for support
- Climbing, running, jumping, and engaging in active play 
- Catching a large ball most of the time
- Completing simple puzzles and craft activities, including cutting and sticking to strengthen fine motor skills
- Being physically active for at least three hours each day

Healthy routines

- Going to bed at a consistent time each night and waking in time to get ready for school
- Limiting screen time
- Eating a balanced, healthy diet and being encouraged to try a variety of new foods
- Brushing teeth twice a day, with adult supervision needed until at least age 7
- Establishing a consistent morning routine that reflects a typical school day structure



Concerns about development

What should I do if I have concerns about my child's development?

- If you have any concerns about your child's progress, please speak to their keyworker, Health Visitor, local Children's Centre, or Family Hub.
- If your child has developmental delays or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), whether suspected or confirmed, please speak to our SENCO or your Health Visitor as early as possible, ideally before school selection, and discuss their needs with the schools you are considering.
- We work in partnership with you to support your child's development in areas such as self-care, emotional regulation, social skills, and communication, in ways that are appropriate for their stage of development.
- It is important to share key information about your child's needs, including what motivates them, potential triggers for distress, how they learn best, and strategies that are effective in supporting them. This helps ensure consistency across all settings, including their new Reception teacher.
- For children who require additional support, we may develop an individual transition plan, working closely with parents and the receiving school to ensure a smooth and well-supported start to school.



Parent Partnership

Working with Parents and Schools

We work closely with parents and schools to support a smooth transition into Reception.

With your consent, we share key information to ensure your child's needs are fully understood and supported. We also encourage families to attend school visits and transition sessions wherever possible, and we provide ongoing support and guidance from the moment school places are confirmed through to the start of school.



