



includes
interactive
progress
poster

Preparing Your Child For School

Working with your child
to get the best start to
school in Bedford Borough

A practical guide full of activities, ideas
and information to prepare your child for
the next stage in their learning journey.



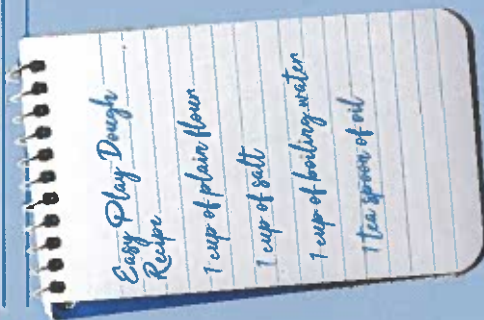
Peter Pan
Teaching
School Alliance

Literacy: Name Recognition and Fine Motor Skills

Exploring malleable materials helps children to build muscles in their hands, which helps with holding a pencil. Can they manipulate the materials through pinching, stretching, rolling and squeezing?



Explore dough gym examples on YouTube.



Knead the ingredients together and allow to cool before use.

Other activities that will support building these muscles:

- **Threading on string** - if you do not have beads, use pasta tubes, large buttons or milk bottle tops with holes.
- Or place uncooked spaghetti in a dough base so that it stands, and thread on cereal hoops.
- **Practise using children's scissors** - cut paper, play dough or cooked spaghetti.

Recognising their name will help your child to identify items that belong to them such as their drawer, cloakroom peg and books.

Activity



Support your child to:

- Make a name card for their bedroom door (display this at the child's eye level).
- Make a place mat with their name on.
- Use play dough to form the letters of their name.



All mark making opportunities are valuable for fine motor development.

if your child has a particular interest in reading, writing and phonics please ask your child's school or setting for more information on how to support them with this.

Listening and Attention

Singing lots of nursery rhymes and songs with your child can help to develop their language skills and it's lots of fun too! Making silly noises and making up silly songs can support your child's creativity and love of singing.

Stories play a huge part in building children's vocabulary and imagination skills. By creating a cosy time for reading-children will learn to love stories and show interest in reading. This can be done at any time that fits in to your daily routine, such as a wind down before bedtime or while tea is cooking.



Change your voice to suit different characters and to build the suspense within the story.

To find information about how to join groups running at your local library, please visit virtual-library.culturalservices.net

When reading a story include time for:

- looking at the illustrations and text with your child
- the child to make comments
- ask open-ended questions such as:
 - ◆ 'How does the character feel?'
 - ◆ 'What could they do...?'
 - ◆ 'What might happen next?'
- asking how much of the story your child can remember.



Create puppets using socks or other toys - encourage your child to introduce the character and make up a story.

Encourage your child to 'read' a story to you if they wish. They may choose their favourite story or use pictures to tell a story.

For more information and ideas visit www.literacytrust.org.uk/early_years



Understanding the world, building vocabulary and opportunities to talk

Children need to be given opportunities to listen to and engage in conversation in order to build their vocabulary.

As simple as discussing your daily activities and recalling places you have visited will have a big impact on the amount of vocabulary your child is exposed to.



Narrating your child's actions can be more beneficial than asking the questions. This provides them with the language they need to communicate.



Activity



If you have any concerns about your child's speech and language talk to their nursery for support in referring them to a Speech and Language Therapist. Alternatively your child's key person can support with this.

Take a trip to your local park. What can your child find? Encourage your child to take some pictures and collect objects which you can later talk about together. You could even make a scrap book to document this walk. Use envelopes on each page to store the objects.

For more information please visit www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk or www.booktrust.org.uk/resources

Maths

Mathematics should be fun and can be incorporated into daily routines and activities. By learning simple mathematical skills early, school education can focus on extending these into more complex mathematical skills.



Puzzles are a great first mathematical skill for children to develop.

Think about modelling ordinal language when taking part in daily routines such as getting dressed and cooking. For example: "First", then, "Next", after that, "Finally".
Take part in racing games – 1st, 2nd, 3rd
Modelling positional language when giving instructions. For example: "Put it... 'On top', 'Under', 'Next to', 'Behind', 'Above'."



You could choose to keep score and encourage your child to mark make in simple ways to represent number, such as a tally chart.
Sing simple counting rhymes and songs, together, using your fingers to show a visual of the numbers. For example: 'Five little ducks... Ten green bottles... Once I caught a fish alive'.



You can find these and more by searching the internet.



On your walk to town or to the park, what numbers or shapes can your child spot?

Take photos of these to allow reflection on later.

How many steps in between each lamp post?

Skittles - put numbers on water bottles and get your child to roll a ball. Discuss which numbers have been knocked down. This can be extended to simple number problems, for example: 'You have knocked down three, how many are left? $10 - 3 = X$ '.

For more information and ideas visit www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Managing feelings, self-confidence and making relationships are important skills for your child to develop in order to make them independent learners. This is a crucial area which is beneficial to be in place before starting school.

Acknowledge your child's feelings and help to give them reasoning as to why they are feeling that emotion. For example:

"I understand you are feeling very angry because you cannot have a biscuit, but your tea is almost ready. If you eat a biscuit now you will not be hungry for dinner."

This will support their language to express themselves and give them the skills they need to self-regulate their emotions.



Activity

Take selfies with your child, displaying different emotions. Look back at the photos and encourage your child to talk about what they see. Can they recall what has made them feel that way before?

This can be extended into stories and asking your child to consider the feelings of others.

Does your child have high well-being and involvement?

This will lead to deeper level learning and development



Well-being focuses on the extent to which your child feels at ease, acts spontaneously, shows vitality and self-confidence. It is a crucial component of emotional intelligence and good mental health.

Involvement focuses on the extent to which your child is operating to their full capability. In particular it refers to whether your child is focused, engaged and interested in various activities.

High levels of well-being and involvement are crucial in accessing a child's learning and developmental potential. It can also support them in coping with new situations such as entering a new setting, such as school or nursery.



For more information on the well-being and involvement scales, research:

Ferre Laevers
Leuven scales



Two weeks before starting school...

Most of the skills needed may now be in place from following the lily pads on the reverse of this page along with the advice and tips contained in this booklet.

Now is a good time to think about the transition from home into school.

Here are some more activities and tips to help alleviate any anxieties or worries you and your child may have.

Familiarise your child with the setting

Take a walk or drive to the school pointing out key areas like entrances and exits that your child may use.

View your school's website with your child.

Introduce new terminology

Familiarise your child with relevant new vocabulary they may encounter at their new school.

Read The Very Hungry Worry Monsters by Rosie Greening

This funny story will encourage your child to talk about their worries and help them manage their feelings.

Establish a good regular sleep routine

Getting enough sleep is crucial to your child coping with a full day at school.

See [page 7](#)

Establish a morning routine

Ensure your child has enough time to wash, dress and have a nutritious breakfast before going to school.

See [page 8](#)

Read 'Owl Babies' by Martin Waddell

and reassure your child that when you leave you will return to collect them very soon.

Plan for separation anxiety

Your child has, up till now, spent most of their time in your care so they may need some extra help to separate from you when the time comes. Discuss your child's interests with staff so they will have an engaging activity ready and waiting if needed.

Help to build self esteem

You can help your child to develop a sense of mastery and control by helping them to develop 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'.

See [page 9](#).

Read The Very Hungry Worry Monsters by Rosie Greening

This funny story will encourage your child to talk about their worries and help them manage their feelings.

Help your child to manage their feelings

You may notice some changes in behaviour which may be a projection of your child's anxiety of starting school.

This may include physical pain such as tummy ache or headache.

Recognising these emotions and feelings will help to calm their worries.

Try the [selfie activity on page 5](#) to alleviate such emotions.

Practise mindfulness techniques

Practise different breathing techniques i.e.:
breathe in for 3, hold for 3, breathe out for 3.

This will give your child the self control to manage their own feelings at school.

I can put on my shoes by myself.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!



3.

I can wash and dry my hands.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!



I can use a toilet independently.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!



6.

I like to eat different types of fruit and vegetables.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

I can talk about ways to keep my body healthy.

7.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

8.

I can manage eating and drinking independently.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

9.

I can hold a pencil between my index finger and thumb.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

MY VERY OWN PROGRESS POSTER

12.

I can talk about my feelings.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

11.

I can be patient when I do not immediately get my own way.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

10.

I can wait my turn.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

I can follow simple instructions.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

21.

I can sit appropriately to listen to a story.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

22.

I can talk about things I see.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

23.

I've been to the library.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

24.

I've been to the park.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

25.

I enjoy singing some familiar songs.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!

19.

I can help to tidy my toys.

I can nearly do it.
 I can do it!



Characteristics of Effective Learning

These characteristics are key to creating a love of learning for children. They will help a child to learn through the process of play.

Playing and Exploring

- 1 Finding out and exploring
- 2 Using what they know in their play
- 3 Being willing to have a go



Active Learning

- 1 Being involved and concentrating
- 2 Keep on trying
- 3 Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and Thinking Critically

- 1 Having their own ideas
- 2 Using what they know to learn new things
- 3 Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways



Useful Information

If you haven't already applied for your child's school place in September, do so by searching school admissions at www.bedford.gov.uk

The deadline for this is always the **15th January**.

Any applications after **15th January** will be late and may result in your child not getting any of your preferred schools. Your child's nursery or childcare provider can support you with this if needed.

Is your child currently accessing a childcare place?

Are you eligible for 15 or 30 hours funding for your child? Find out at:

www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds

Search '**2 year funding**' on the Bedford Borough website to find out if you can get funding for your two year old child.

It is mandatory for your child to attend school **EVERY DAY** after the term following their 5th birthday. Failure to do so without good reason or notice could result in a fine.

Education is intended to set children up to succeed in life. Missing just one day per week is the equivalent of missing an entire half-term per year.

Find out if you are eligible to receive pupil premium funding to support your child's learning within their provision. The provision is given a sum of money to further support your child's learning. This can be spent in a range of ways depending on the needs of your child.

Visit www.bedford.gov.uk and search 'pupil premium' to find out if you are eligible.

To locate your nearest centre call **0300 323 0245** or you can visit:

www.ecpbedford.org or visit the Facebook page at

 [/bedfordcc](https://www.facebook.com/bedfordcc)

Visit www.nhs.uk for any other queries regarding your child's health and well-being.

Bookstart provides further information and activities around books.

www.bookstart.org.uk

If you wish to learn more about how to support your child to love to read visit

www.oxfordowl.co.uk

and follow the links to 'home learning'.

Bedford Borough has a Family information service which provides confidential help and advice to help access the services you need.

Freephone 0800 0232 057