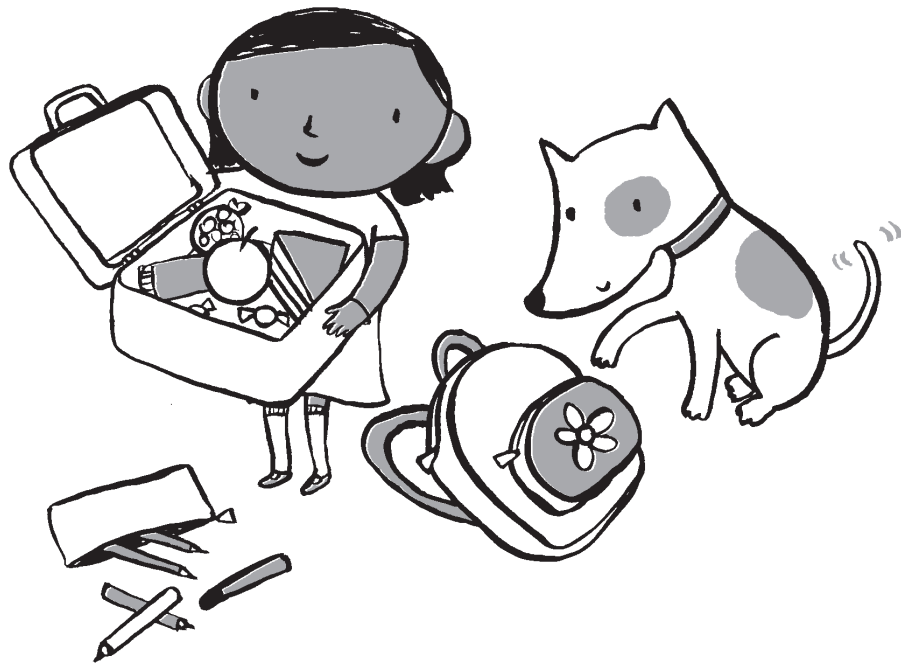


**SUFFOLK
LIBRARIES**

**WHERE
I BELONG**

For books that support school readiness
please go to suffolklibraries.co.uk/parenting



Guidance supplied by Children's and Young People's Services, Suffolk County Council.



By donating to Suffolk Libraries you can help us fund crucial additional services that reduce social, digital and rural isolation in our communities. For details visit www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/donate HMRC charity number: XT34476

**SUFFOLK
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Getting ready for school

Supporting your child as they start school



Starting school is an exciting time but it can be daunting too. With a little preparation and encouragement, most children will settle in easily at school, ready to learn and discover. Here are some top tips on starting school and how you can make a your child's transition as smooth as possible.

School readiness is about making sure your child has the skills and information they need before they go. This may include:

- Understanding early years subjects such as shapes, numbers, the alphabet, opposites and colours.
- Social skills such as good behaviour and sharing.
- Personal care skills like looking after your body, using the toilet and healthy eating. Suffolk Libraries has collections of picture books about all different kinds of feelings and new experiences, including reassuring stories about going to school.

For recommended book lists on these subjects please visit the parenting resources page on our website:

www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/parenting

Libraries also run lots of activities for pre-schoolers to help with making friends, speech and language, listening skills and following instructions.

Wordplay sessions

Our libraries hold regular Baby Bounce, Tot Rock and Storytime sessions for babies and young children and their parents/carers. The sessions are free, informal and welcoming, with no need to book in advance.

The Summer Reading Challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge takes place every year and encourages children to read six library books during the summer holiday. Many children get their very first library card so they can take part, so it's a great way for children to discover the library from an early age.

Craft Clubs and other activities

For more details about events and activities for children of all ages visit the webpage for your local library.

First Aid

What happens if my child has an accident at school?

Children do have bumps and accidents at school, the same as they would when at home. They might run into someone at playtime, they might trip over and graze their knees, they might bump into a table in the classroom – these things happen.

School staff are trained in dealing with paediatric first aid and will always comfort your child and find out what has happened. They might clean a graze, they might use a cold compress to stop it stinging and reduce a bruise. Please let the school know if your child has any allergies so that they can be cared for in the most effective way.

Staff will deal with what has happened and will then let you know either by sending text, and/or an email notification and/or sending an accident slip home with your child.

If there is ever anything more serious, staff will phone you to talk to you.

If your child has asthma, staff need to know so that inhalers can be kept safely in class.

What happens if my child is ill?

If your child is ill and not well enough to go to school, please phone and let the school know – if they don't know they we will phone you to check where they are. If your child is feeling poorly during the day they will look after them. If they think they are too poorly to keep going, they'll call and ask you to collect them so they can recover at home.

For books that support school readiness please go to suffolklibraries.co.uk/parenting



Eating and drinking at school

What do I need to know?

Drinking

Children sometimes don't drink enough when they come to school for the first time. At home you have probably sorted out drinks for them throughout the day and they may not have encountered being thirsty.

At school they can bring a water bottle and staff will remind them to have a drink during the day. It's worth talking to them about remembering to drink their whole water bottle.

Lunchtime

This can be daunting for children as it can be busy in the lunch hall. Children can have a school dinner, which offers a variety of options, or a packed lunch. Has your child eaten away from home before? Have they had a picnic lunch with you? How much do they normally eat at lunchtime? Staff at lunchtime will help them to open packets and cut up food and will check they are managing and eating enough.

If they have a packed lunch, make sure they have a named lunch bag and know what it looks like! Please also avoid packing sweets and any products containing nuts as some children may be allergic to them.

Feelings

What happens if my child is sad at school?

If your child is upset coming into school, they will be supported and comforted by the staff. If you are feeling anxious when leaving your child at school, share your worries with staff who will be there to reassure you. Schools also have specially selected children who are 'buddies' at playtime.

Alongside the midday supervisors these children will help and befriend reception children. If there are any concerns about your child whilst they are at school, the class teacher will contact you or speak to you at the end of the day.

Speech and Language

What will my child learn about at school?

How can I help them get ready?

Talking to your child

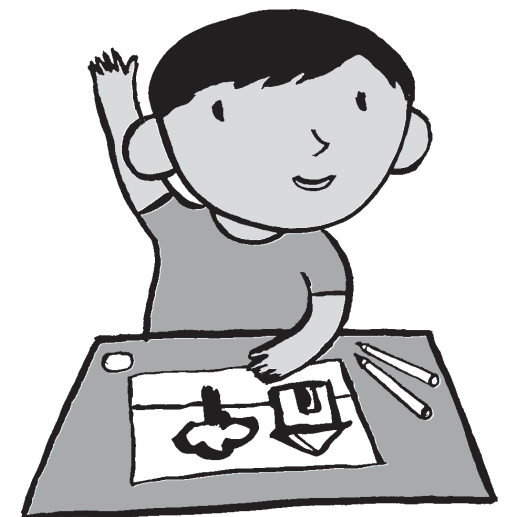
Talking and listening to young children develops their social and literacy skills and reading aloud is a good way to encourage two-way communication.

Books introduce children to the exciting world of stories and help them to learn to express their own thought and emotions. Stories provide parents and carers with a structure to help them talk aloud to children and listen to their responses. Characters, words and sounds discovered through books can be talked about outside of reading time.

Songs and rhymes are especially good for children as the rhymes and repetitive language make it easier for them to learn language skills. Suffolk Libraries run regular free Wordplay sessions which include stories, songs and rhyme sessions for babies and toddlers.

Top tips to encourage your child's speech and language

- Don't swap your lap for an App, read with your child
- Join your local library and let your child choose their own books.
- Ask your child questions about their day or an activity they are doing
- Repeat what your child says to indicate that you understand them and expand on what was said
- Ask questions that require a choice



Using the toilet

Children can be anxious about using 'big' toilets and may need some practice before September. In school toilets there are often squeazy soaps – can your child use them? There also can be noisy flushing toilets and hand dryers, staff will show children how to use them.

Children do sometimes have accidents – don't worry. Staff will help them get changed and put on spare clothes. Spare pants and knickers in their school bag can be really helpful.

Has your child learnt to wipe their bottom when they are finished? Can they manage to do up their own trousers or manage their own tights? At home children often leave the door open and call you – at school they need to know to shut the door and manage for themselves.

Has your child learnt to wash their hands themselves? At school they will be asked to wash their hands before lunch especially.



Getting dressed

How do I help my child prepare for wearing uniform and PE kit?

In school uniform is really important as it helps children feel like they belong. It is also a sign that they are moving to 'big' school! Often they will want to wear it even before they start school - let them!

During the week children will have PE lessons where they need to get changed from their school uniform to shorts and a t-shirt and plimsolls. Their PE kit needs to be in a labelled bag they can recognise and find on their peg.

You can help prepare your child by letting them learn how to dress themselves at home before September.

Here are some tips:

1. Choose shoes with Velcro or teach them to tie laces themselves.
2. Choose easy open plimsolls so they can put them on themselves.
3. Check that they can manage zips and buttons?
4. Check that they can manage tights themselves? Remind them to leave underwear on when removing tights.
5. Name label everything - even shoes and knickers. You would be amazed at how many pairs of shoes look the same and children sometimes accidentally take everything off when they get changed.
6. Choose trousers and skirts with adjustable waistbands, so they last longer.
7. Put spare socks and underwear, labelled, in their bag just in case things go missing!
8. Label coats, scarves, hats and gloves.
9. Lots of parents and carers find getting uniform mid-year difficult so you might want to get three of everything. One on, one in the wash and one spare!

