

Parent Guide



@twinklparents

We are excited to share this content with you. If you are interested in finding more resources made especially for Parents, then check out these links to different areas of the **Twinkl Parents** hub.

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What is this resource and how do I use it?

If you're looking for some helpful tips to prepare your child before they start school then this **Preparing For School Guide** is just what you need! It's full of everything you need to help get your child ready for this important step forward, including a wide range of advice and some activity ideas to make learning fun and engaging for your little one.

What is the focus of this resource?

Preparing for School

Parent Guide

Early Development

Further Ideas and Suggestions

Starting school can be an emotional time for a child. Support them with their feelings with these **Back to School: Easing Anxiety activities**. Make your evenings a bit easier with this **After School Easy Meals Planner and Ideas**.

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Preparing Your Child For School

A Guide For Parents and Carers

Communication and Language

Parents and carers can have a huge impact on their child's talking and listening development. Your child is like a sponge - they absorb the language around them all the time. You can support your child's development by playing games and reading fun stories with them.

Communication is important for your child - they communicate in many different ways, including facial expressions, gestures and vocalisations. To encourage their communication, you can play call-and-response games and guessing games like 20 questions.

Understanding Spoken Instructions

A simple game of 'Simon Says' during long car journeys or during some family time can support your child's understanding of instructions. Give your child an instruction to do, like 'Simon says put your finger on your nose' and see if they can follow your instruction. The game becomes more difficult as they are only supposed to follow your instructions if you start the sentence with 'Simon says...'. Can your child listen carefully and only follow the instructions when directed?

The game can be made more challenging by building up to instructions with two or three steps. For example, 'Simon says touch your nose, then clap your hands and then put your hands on your head!'.
Take a look at some of Twinkl's supporting communication resources for young children [here](#).

Vocabulary Development

At school, children will start to extend their vocabulary so it is a good idea to encourage your child to learn and use new words. You could play sorting games when tidying their room. For example, items can be sorted into different piles, such as clothing, toys and things for washing.





Reading and Writing

Teachers do not expect children to know their alphabet or be able to write sentences when they start school. You can give your child a head start by working on some sound recognition and singing nursery rhymes - they will do this in school but having some memory of it already can give your child the confidence they need to approach their learning.

A good foundation for being able to write is to develop your child's fine motor skills. This is because good fine motor skills enable a child to hold a pencil firmly as they are writing. There are many resources that could support the development of this skill [here](#). Threading is also a great way to develop fine motor skills, with beads or buttons, making necklaces out of dried pasta or using squeezing modelling dough is a great fun way to improve your child's fine motor strength.

Listening and Attention Skills



Your child will be given many spoken instructions throughout the school day and will need to be able to shift their attention from their activities to the person speaking. A lovely activity to promote this is to go on a 'listening walk' where your child listens for all the sounds around them in the park, local area or town. You could make a fun checklist to encourage your child to focus on different things on the walk. You could also see what they remember by asking them to tell you what they heard when you get home.

Mathematical Development

Counting Verbally and One-to-One



One-to-one counting can be done incidentally throughout the day, for example, counting steps as your child climbs the stairs, counting the fruit in the bowl, slices of pizza, shoes on the shoe rack or socks in the drawer. To help your child understand what numbers mean, ask them to find the same amount of different items. For example, find 3 spoons, 3 hats or 3 socks.

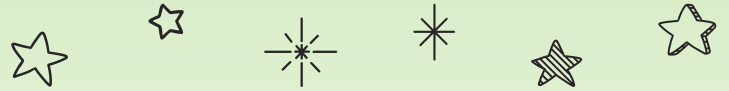
Number songs are a great way to support your child's counting - the more you do, the more the number sequence will become embedded in your child's memory. It can take time for children to understand numbers so try not to worry if they don't get it right away.

Number Recognition

A number hunt is a fun way to look for numerals on doors, on clocks, buses, cars, signs, at home, at the shops or on TV. You could also play 'I spy' but with numbers. It's good to practise recognising small quantities without having to count them, such as the dots on a dice. Check out the Twinkl Parents [Early Maths Number Resources](#) to find some fun and interesting activities.



Shapes and Size

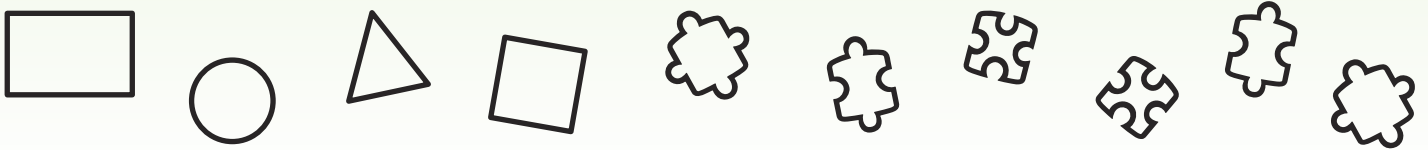


You could go on a shape hunt to see how many circles, squares, rectangles and triangles your child can find, for example, square windows, circular plates, and rectangular posters.

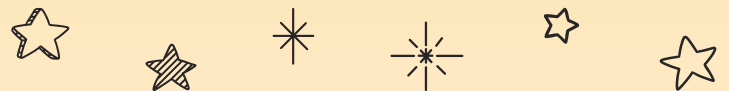
You could look for patterns too, and make a fun pattern with spoons and forks and see if your child can guess the next shape in the pattern. Talk about the shape and size of objects, e.g. big car, little car, round ball, square table, rectangular book and ask your child questions, such as 'Can you pass me the biggest box?', or 'Which one is the smallest shoe?'.

Play with blocks and encourage your child to think about size, colour and shape. Also, play with containers and ask, 'How many socks can you fit in the box?', 'Which container holds the most, or the least, sand/water?', etc.

Jigsaw puzzles, inset puzzles and pattern tiles are fantastic ways to increase spatial awareness in your child as they give the opportunity to select and rotate shapes that will fit.



Promoting Independence



Your child will really benefit from being as independent as possible when they start school. Of course, teaching staff will always be on hand to help, but children feel a real sense of achievement when they can accomplish things by themselves! An example is being able to dress and undress independently as this will really help with PE sessions. Children in reception (FS2) will also have access to an outdoor space throughout the day, so being able to put a coat on and zip it up independently will mean that they can get straight to their playing and learning without having to stop and ask an adult for help!

Your child will also really benefit from having experienced being away from you for short periods of time, such as going to a friend's house to play. This will really develop their confidence and independence and stand them in good stead when it comes to saying goodbye on that first morning at school.

