

Starting School ...

I know the beginning of school can feel scary for you and your child. These are also different times and the uncertainty of lockdown means you might be worrying that your child won't be ready for reception. **Don't panic!**

Here are some things that you can do with your child at home over the coming weeks to help make sure they're just as ready as they would otherwise have been. I am not expecting you to become reception teachers and I understand that not everyone will find the time to do all of these activities – that's fine. Try to fit them where possible into your daily routines. Whatever happens, I'll make sure that all children catch up by carrying out these activities too. If you have any questions about these activities, get in touch – my contact details are at the end.

To help your child develop independence, get them used to doing the following at home:

Getting dressed independently every day – practise closing buttons, putting on socks and shoes on the right feet, putting coat on and zipping up

Going to the toilet and wiping their bottom on their own – simple clothing like elasticated waistbands are easier to get on and off

Cutting food using a 'real' knife and fork

Tidying up their toys and doing simple household chores – giving them responsibilities will help them to become more independent

Helping them to recognise their name in writing and to consistently respond to it verbally.

Create a coat and shoe peg at home with their name on it to help get them used to having something similar at school – it seems like a simple thing but it'll help when we ask your child to go and fetch their coat!

You can practise some of the activities your child would have done in early years in your own home to help make sure they develop the same skills and feel more ready when reception starts:

Do turn-taking activities such as playing with a toy – this helps them to get used to taking turns and also to understand the concept of sharing

Get your child used to eating with others even if it's just a snack

Lots of the learning in reception happens through play. Get down onto the carpet so you're at their level and enjoy some play with your child. Follow their lead with what they're doing or how they're playing. Then, try to get them to follow your lead and also create games together. This will help them to get used to playing and engaging with other children

Practise basic phonics in everyday settings:

See this useful guide from [Alphablocks – CBeebies](#) on phonics so you can practise using sounds, segmenting words and blending them with your child

Recognise sounds and words in the environment around you to help your child hear the initial sound in words – e.g. look at that t-ree, first sound 't'

Segment sounds in words orally while doing your usual daily routine – e.g. get your c-oa-t on, where is your b-a-g

Play I spy but sound out the word and see if your child can blend it – e.g. I spy with my little eye a d-o-g

Explore rhyming words

If you want to get started on basic numeracy skills, CBeebies has similar resources called [Numberblocks](https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/numberblocks) (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/numberblocks>).

Routine and consistency helps children to adapt and this will help ease the transition into reception. This week, try to set a morning routine with your child.

You can start with small steps and gradually add to the routine:

Get up at the same time every day and have breakfast

Get dressed up in the school uniform and put on 'school' shoes

Look up the route to school and if it's walking distance try it out – point to the school and tell your child they'll be going there soon. Remind them of the photo story book and the videos of me reading a story. I'll also be creating a starting school video where they can look at the playground and classroom etc.

I look forward to welcoming you and your child to Milborne St Andrew First School. If you would like to get in touch with me, my email address is jenna@milborne.dorset.sch.uk