

Starting Reception : A new definition can help Early Years Settings share their ethos with parents

As many of our children are in their final term before starting school, we often find ourselves having to spend time reassuring parents that their children don't need to know how to write their name or count to 20!

A coalition of leading early years organisations has developed a new set of guidelines to assist parents, the early years workforce, and primary school staff in preparing children for their Reception year.

This initiative aims to bridge the gap between parents' and teachers' expectations of school readiness. A survey by Kindred Squared revealed that while 90% of parents believed their child was ready for school, only one-third of teachers agreed.

This discrepancy highlights the need for clear, accessible guidance to align expectations and support children's development effectively.



Understanding the 'Starting Reception' Definition

Education policy and media often present mixed messages about what 'school readiness' really means for young children starting primary school.

I'm sure most of you would agree that being ready for school is more around children's independence, emotional regulation, and communication skills

The new definition is an ideal way for you to share your settings approach to learning and the importance of play based learning

The definition, written for parents whose children are about to start school, states:

"New skills take time to learn. Practising at home will help your child move into school more easily and with confidence."

The 'Starting Reception' website and documents then takes this definition and outlines the key personal, social, emotional, and physical skills that most children are expected to develop by the time they start school, helping staff support a smooth transition into Reception

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Giving every child the best start in life is a cornerstone of the government's Plan for Change. The **Department for Education** stated that they are supporting Kindred Squared's new 'Starting Reception' definition to help:



CLOSE THE GAP

between what parents and teachers view as being 'school ready'



SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH SEND AND THEIR FAMILIES

by recognising the importance of ensuring education settings are ready to support them and their parents to practise key skills in the home.



REACH GOVERNMENT'S TARGET

to raise the number of children who are ready to start reception to 75%



BUILD CHILDREN'S CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE



The **Starting Reception** website (<https://startingreception.co.uk/>) provides ideas for parents to help their children be prepared for school. They are organised into four main categories, supported by practical suggestions and links to ideas families can use in everyday life.

We've outlined these below, along with examples of resources we've developed or delivered to support your role in helping children develop these skills

Growing Independence

Encouraging self-sufficiency in daily tasks.

Skills to practice include:

- **Putting on/taking off their coat and shoes**
- **Using the toilet and washing their hands**
- **Exploring the world around them**

St Edmund's Early Years Stronger Practice Hub has:

- Delivered a webinar on working together with families to support toilet training
- Developed a handout on working together with families to support toilet training
- Delivered a webinar on exploring your local community to support cultural capital



Physical Development

Encouraging self-sufficiency in daily tasks.

Skills to practice include:

- **Walking up and down steps**
- **Climbing, running, jumping and playing**
- **Doing simple puzzles and craft activities, strengthening their grip with cutting and sticking**

St Edmund's Early Years Stronger Practice Hub has:

- Supported settings to improve their outdoor environment through Outdoors Thinking
- Hosted an outdoor learning networking
- Held a conference with a focus on outdoor play



Building Relationships and Communication

Developing social skills and emotional expression.

Skills to practice include:

- **Looking at story books together and speaking about what characters are feeling is a good way to do this**
- **Talking happily to others about activities, experiences and the world around them**
- **Listening to and following simple instructions**

St Edmund's Early Years Stronger Practice Hub has:

- Delivered in person events focusing on modeling strategies
- Held a conference with a focus on language and communication
- Invited to settings to ask us for bespoke support around children's communication issues.

Healthy Routines

Developing social skills and emotional expression.

Skills to practice include:

- **Going to bed around the same time each night, waking up in time to get ready for school**
- **Limiting screen time to the recommended daily amounts**
- **Brushing their teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day**

St Edmund's Early Years Stronger Practice Hub has:

- Delivered a webinar on working together with families to support good oral hygiene
- Developed a handout on working together with families to support good oral hygiene

Over the next academic year we will continue to focus on these vital skills needed and would love to hear from you about any needs you would like support with. Our summer conference will be themed around being ready for school too! Do keep an eye on our website for all events.

<https://www.bradfordbirthto19.co.uk/early-years/stronger-practice-hub>