Reception Ready

Growing in confidence, one small step at a time

Being Reception ready means building confidence to play, communicate, learn and manage everyday routines. The following pages share what children are working towards by the end of Nursery and simple ways you can help at home.

Growing independence



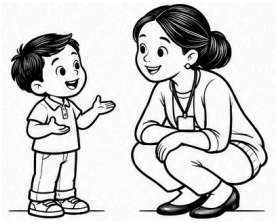
Encourage your child to try putting on their coat and shoes, pulling clothes up and down, and putting belongings away. Practise opening their lunchbox, using cutlery and drinking from a cup. Allow extra time: let them try, then help with the tricky part.

Becoming toilet trained



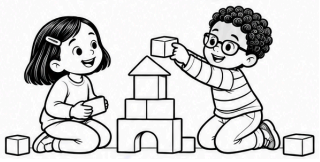
Work towards your child being toilet trained during the day: recognising when they need the toilet, telling an adult, managing clothes, using toilet paper, flushing and washing and drying their hands. Practise calmly at home with easy-to-manage clothes. Praise effort and respond kindly to accidents.

Talking, listening and asking for help



Help your child tell a trusted adult what they need, including when they are hurt, worried or need the toilet. Practise simple instructions through everyday jobs. Chat, sing and share books in the language you know best.

Feeling secure and joining in



Give opportunities to play alongside and with other children, take turns and wait briefly with support. Name feelings and practise asking for help. Talk positively about Reception and use school visits or photographs to make the new routine familiar.

Learning through play



Read together every day, count everyday objects and enjoy drawing, building and outdoor play. Encourage your child to explain their pictures and marks. They do not need to read books or write sentences before starting Reception.

We will work together

Children develop at different rates. If your child is not yet toilet trained or needs support because of SEND, a disability or a health need, speak to Nursery and Reception staff before they start. We can agree the help and routines they need. These checkpoints are a guide, not a pass-or-fail test.

Communication and language

Listening, talking and understanding

What we are working towards

- Enjoy listening to stories and talk about what happens.
- Follow familiar instructions, beginning to manage two linked actions.
- Use sentences to share needs, ideas and experiences.
- Take turns in a conversation and learn new words.
- Begin to answer questions about who, what, where and why.



How you can help at home

1 **Follow their play**

Join in for a few minutes. Comment: “Your tower is tall!” Pause and listen. Add to their words: “Yes, the tall tower fell down.”

2 **Share a book every day**

Talk about the pictures. Ask one useful question, then give time to answer. Re-read favourite books so the words become familiar.

3 **Talk through everyday jobs**

While cooking or getting ready, name objects and describe actions. Try “Get your coat and bring it to me”, adding gestures if needed.

Notice together → **Listen and wait** → **Add a new word**

Talk, sing and tell stories in the language you know best. Strong home-language conversations support learning. Tell us if understanding or talking is difficult in any language.

Children develop at different rates. These are learning goals, not a pass-or-fail test. Talk to your child’s key person about progress, questions or extra support.

Based on Development Matters: the broad 3-4-year-old pathway. Home activities are suggestions.

Personal, social and emotional development

Feeling secure, making friends and growing independent

What we are working towards

- Seek help or comfort from a trusted adult.
- Talk about feelings and accept help to calm down.
- Join another child’s play and begin taking turns.
- Try familiar routines and new activities with encouragement.
- Become more independent with clothes, handwashing and toileting, with help where needed.



How you can help at home

1 **Name the feeling**

Say “You feel cross because the game finished.” Stay close, help your child settle, then think together about what to do next.

2 **Practise taking turns**

Roll a ball, build a tower or play a simple game. Say “My turn, your turn.” Keep waiting times short and praise kind actions.

3 **Let them try a small job**

Give time to put on a coat, tidy toys or wash hands. Help with the difficult part, then let your child finish. Praise their effort.

Name the feeling → **Help them settle** → **Try a next step**

Children still need adults to help with big feelings. Let Nursery know which routines, words or comforts help your child. Agree adaptations together where needed.

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Physical development

Moving confidently and using hands with control

What we are working towards

- Enjoy running, climbing, balancing and changing direction.
- Use large arm movements to paint or make marks.
- Build and handle objects using both hands.
- Use brushes, crayons and child-safe scissors with growing control.
- Make deliberate lines and shapes, and begin forming familiar letters with teaching.



How you can help at home

1 **Move and play outside**

Walk, climb, dance, jump or play with a ball. Make a simple route to step over, go around and balance along, with suitable supervision.

2 **Give hands useful jobs**

Squash and roll dough, build with blocks, use pegs or help with clothes. Practise using a spoon and fork at mealtimes.

3 **Draw together**

Offer paper, chunky crayons or chalk. Draw roads, people or patterns. Help your child sit comfortably and steady the paper with the other hand.

Move and reach → **Build and squeeze** → **Draw and make marks**

Encourage a comfortable, controlled hold without forcing a writing hand. Keep activities enjoyable and brief. Tell Nursery if using tools causes pain, tiredness or frustration.

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Literacy

Enjoying books and beginning to write

What we are working towards

- Enjoy books, talk about pictures and join repeated phrases.
- Understand that print carries a message.
- Join rhymes and begin noticing sounds at the start of words.
- Give meaning to drawings and marks.
- Write some or all of their name and some familiar letters, with teaching and support.



How you can help at home

1 **Read and talk every day**

Let your child choose a book. Enjoy the story, discuss the pictures and act out a favourite part. A few happy minutes are valuable.

2 **Play with sounds**

Sing nursery rhymes. Try words starting with the same sound: “Mum, moon, milk.” If Nursery sends home sounds, use the same pronunciation and approach.

3 **Make writing useful**

Make a card, shopping list or label for a model. Ask “What would you like it to say?” Say the message together, then let your child draw or write. Model familiar letters as Nursery teaches them.

Say an idea → **Draw or write** → **Tell me the message**

Talk comes before writing a message. Value meaningful marks and letter attempts; do not expect independent sentences at the end of Nursery. Use your child’s interests to give writing a purpose.

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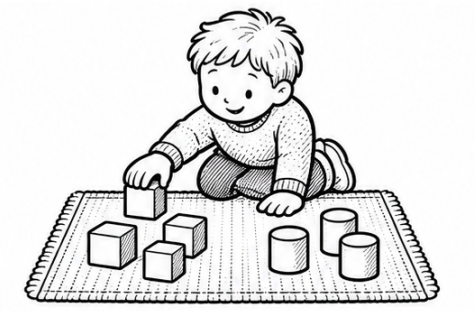
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Mathematics

Noticing numbers, shapes and patterns

What we are working towards

- Recognise small groups of up to three without counting.
- Count a small group, touching each object once.
- Begin to understand that the last number tells how many.
- Compare groups using more, fewer and the same.
- Explore shapes, positions, repeating patterns and size.



How you can help at home

1 **Count real things**

Count up to five toy animals, plates or socks together. Touch each one once and say the total: “One, two, three. Three altogether!”

2 **Spot a small number**

Show one, two or three fingers and ask “How many?” Try another arrangement. Split three blocks into two and one and notice the parts.

3 **Build, sort and make patterns**

Sort socks or blocks, compare big and small, and build together. Make a red-blue-red-blue pattern. Use words such as under, beside, long and short.

Look at the group → **Count or recognise** → **Say how many**

Use objects and play before written sums. Counting aloud is useful, but understanding a small number matters too. Let your child show an answer with objects, fingers, words or marks.

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Understanding the world

Being curious about people, places and nature

What we are working towards

- Talk about familiar people and their own experiences.
- Notice how they have changed since they were a baby.
- Recognise familiar places and features on a walk.
- Show interest in other people's lives and traditions.
- Explore plants, animals, weather and changes around them.



How you can help at home

1 **Talk about photographs**

Look at family photos. Discuss who is there and what happened. Compare a baby photo with now: "What can you do now that you could not do then?"

2 **Go on a noticing walk**

Look closely at trees, buildings, insects and weather. Name what you see. Visit the same place again and talk about anything that has changed.

3 **Investigate together**

Grow a plant, watch ice melt in a bowl or see which objects float. Ask "What do you notice?" Listen to ideas and describe what actually happens.

Look closely → **Talk about it** → **Look again later**

Use real experiences to build vocabulary. Share your family's stories, languages and traditions, and show interest in others. Supervise investigations and wash hands after outdoor exploring.

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Expressive arts and design

Making, imagining, singing and moving

What we are working towards

- Explore paint, colour, texture and different materials.
- Make drawings or models that have meaning to them.
- Use objects and toys in pretend play.
- Join familiar songs, rhymes and actions.
- Explore sounds and move in response to music.



How you can help at home

1 **Make something their way**

Offer paper, crayons, tape and safe boxes. Let your child choose what to make. Ask “Tell me about it”, rather than expecting it to match your example.

2 **Join a pretend story**

Play shops, a family meal, a journey or an animal adventure. Follow your child’s ideas and add a simple event. Make a sign or ticket if it helps the play.

3 **Sing and make music**

Repeat favourite songs and rhymes. Clap a simple rhythm for your child to copy, then swap. Move quickly, slowly, loudly or quietly with the music.

Choose and explore → **Make or pretend** → **Share the idea**

Offer every child a wide choice of art, music, construction and pretend play. Enjoy their ideas and effort. Talking about a picture or acting out a story also builds foundations for writing.

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