



Family Learning

A practical guide for parents, carers and grandparents of children who started school this September

Starting primary school can be an exciting and nerve racking time for you and your child. To help you feel more prepared for the big day, we have put together some helpful tips which we hope you will find useful.

Surrey Family Learning

**READY FOR
SCHOOL**



1

Help to develop your child's confidence and self-belief

Remind your child of all the things they have already achieved and always talk positively about going to school.

- Create an: 'All about me' book with your child with all of their favourite people and things.
- Use published books to help you to talk about school.
- Look at the school website to see all of the fun things your child will do and speak to staff to find out about school routines and any current adaptations. Can you bring in any of these routines at home? For instance switch meal times to match those of the school day.

2

Support your child in being independent

One of the most useful things you can do to get your child ready for school is to make sure they can carry out a number of practical tasks on their own.

- Washing their hands.
- Going to the toilet and wiping their own bottom.
- Flushing the toilet
- Wiping their own nose
- Putting on coats and shoes and taking them off. (Try Velcro!)
- Doing up zips
- Getting changed into their PE kits. Why not try a few practice runs?
- Using a knife and fork and opening a lunchbox and its contents.

3

Develop your child's interpersonal and cognitive skills

Children learn and develop by playing alongside their classmates and so it is important that they are happy mixing with other children and adults. Being able to concentrate for small bursts, follow instructions and 'have a go' are also all important skills.

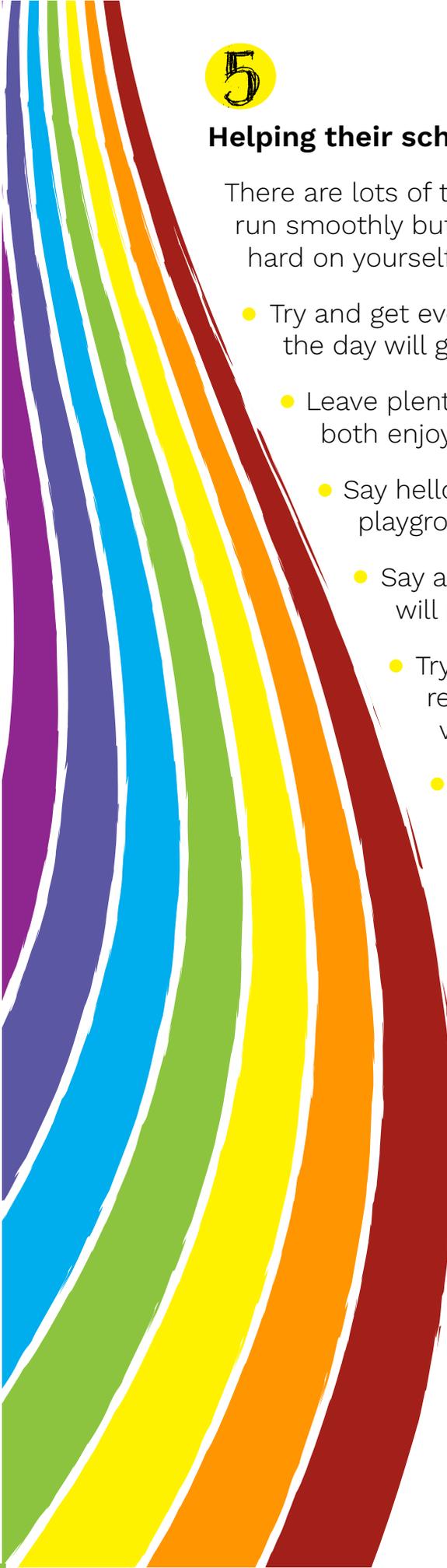
- Encourage sharing and taking turns through games and conversations.
- Encourage your child to explore new environments
- Practise talking and listening. Give your child your full attention when they speak - and hopefully they will listen to you too!
- Try to solve problems with words; talk about it instead of getting upset.
- Children are natural copy cats. Let them see you reading or tidying up and they'll soon want to join in, or try a role-play.
- Arrange play-dates and picnics to improve your child's social skills.
- Build up your child's concentration levels, a minute at a time, to focus on one activity. See if you can build up to 10 minutes.
- Practise following simple instructions.
- Spend time with them on one activity, with no distractions, talking about what you are doing as you go along.
- Develop a 'have a go' attitude and an understanding that it is ok to make mistakes, as we can learn from them.

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Introduce them to literacy and numeracy skills

Your child's teachers will work with them to build these skills. However, there are many easy things you can do at home to support your child's learning:

- Help them to recognise their name so that they can find their space in the cloakroom. Do lots of drawing and colouring to practise holding a pencil.
- Talk with your child throughout the day and explain new words.
- Share a book together every day, even if it's just for a few minutes. Mix it up. Talk about pictures, characters and stories; find rhyming words or repeated phrases; guess what's going to happen on the next page or make up new endings. Take turns in choosing a book ... so you don't end up reading the same one every night (!) but also watch to see what they choose. Sometimes they will surprise you.
- Develop a shared love of books. If your child sees you reading and enjoying books, they will too.
- Introduce number through rhymes and songs like 5 little ducks.
- Make and play number games like beetle, dominoes and hopscotch.
- Count — everything — stairs at home, numbers on doors (great for counting in 2s), cars going past, birds in the park, and, if you're lucky, toys as away! Do countdowns, to count backwards too.



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Helping their school day to be successful

There are lots of things you can do to help make your child's day run smoothly but remember you are learning too, so don't be too hard on yourself.

- Try and get everything ready the night before. Talk about how the day will go and all the exciting things your child will do.
- Leave plenty of time so you're not rushing and you can both enjoy the first day.
- Say hello to other children and parents in the playground. Your child will copy your behaviour.
- Say a quick goodbye and remind your child that you will pick them up later.
- Try and stay calm if your child gets upset and remember the reception teacher and staff are very experienced in dealing with this.
- Plan something for you to do to take your mind off any worries you may have.
- Make sure you're there to pick up on time!

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Settling in to school life

Remember all children are different and some will take longer to settle than others and that's fine; just carry on being kind and supportive. Also there are things you can do to help your child settle into their new routine.

- Don't plan too many things for after school as your child will be tired.
- Bring a healthy snack for the end of the school day. This will help boost their energy and mood.

- Your child may be over excited or over tired. Be prepared for anything!
- Let your child tell you, in their own good time about their day and try not to quiz them the moment they get home from school.
- Remember to check their book bag every day for letters, pieces of work, reading books- and banana skins!
- Stay in touch with your class teacher and get involved with your school. Perhaps join the Parent Teacher Association? (PTA)



Home learning

Education is a three way process between your child, their teacher and you. Even in normal times, children spend much more time at home than they do at school, so you can have a big impact on your child's education.

Be prepared!

Think about routines, times and spaces to learn.

Can you create a cosy book corner to encourage your child to read?

Lots of things you do together at home already is "learning". Don't underestimate yourself!

Don't take on too much!

10 minutes' of quality time is better than half an hour trying to multi task.

Sometimes the simplest things are the best - and the cheapest - a walk through the woods, a game of I-spy or snuggling up with a good book.

Ask for help!

If you want advice or support, speak to your school teacher or other parents.

The Family Information Service has links to information and support agencies: www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/families

Learning on TV and using the Internet

We all know that screen time is a mixed blessing and it does us all good to switch off sometimes. However, while children will learn best from their own experiences, television and the internet can be useful sources of inspiration and give you ideas to talk about and try.

- Check out **CBeebies**, **Numberblocks** and **Alphablocks**.
- **Hungry Little Minds**- hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk
- **Teach your Monster to Read**- www.teachyourmonstertoread.com
- and our local **Family Learning Facebook page**: [Facebook](#)



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Family Learning

Recent times have shown us more than ever just how important (and challenging!) home learning can be and the idea of phonics and other school topics can be daunting. But learning takes place in lots of different ways, so it's great to share ideas with other parents, carers and grandparents and find out new ways to support your child at home.

We regularly send out a keeping in touch bulletin to parents – please let us know if you would like to be included.

family.learning@surreycc.gov.uk

The Family Learning team, with their experienced tutors, have put together ONLINE courses to help you support your child at home and at school.

Maths

You will work online with the tutor and other parents and carers to improve your own maths skills as well as improving your ability to support your children's learning. You will also improve your understanding of the maths curriculum. Your child may be able to learn with you on this course.

If English is your second language - EAL Course Overview

You will work online with the tutor and other parents and carers to improve your English language skills as well as improving your ability to support your children's learning. You will also improve your understanding of education in the UK. This is an adult-only course.

For details of courses and to register follow this link: [Family Learning](#)

New courses are being developed and you can find our courses on [Family Learning](#)

New to online learning? No internet? Speak to us and we will try to help.

To book or for further information about this or other courses: Call or text one of the numbers below, or email family.learning@surreycc.gov.uk

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