

Let's all support school readiness

A practitioner's guide



What you do matters...

As early year's practitioners, your role in supporting children and families to get ready for school is an important one.

Introduction

This booklet aims to support everyone involved with young children to:

- Recognise the importance of their role in ensuring that children are school and life ready.
- Provide a clear definition of the meaning of 'school readiness'.
- Ensure that a consistent message about school readiness is shared.

The benefits of being school ready are well known and documented. In order to support professionals in their work with families and young children in preparing children for school, it is useful to establish a common understanding of the term school readiness.

Definition of school readiness

Oxfordshire Early Years team adopts UNICEF's description of the three elements of school readiness:

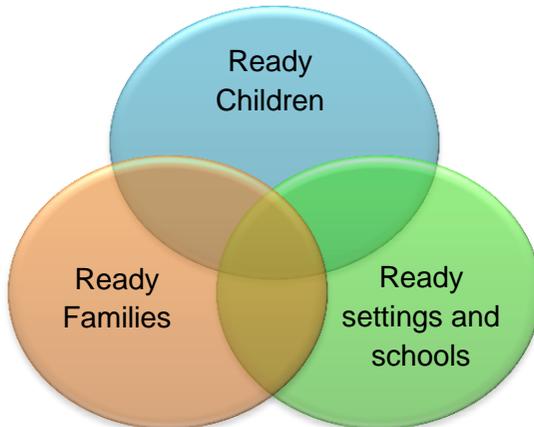
- Children's readiness for school.
- Families and communities' readiness for school.
- Settings' and schools' readiness for children.

Together, these elements maximise each child's likelihood of success as they progress through their time in school and highlights the importance of working together to improve outcomes for children.



Key partnerships for school readiness

Children have the potential to become school ready when families, early years providers and schools work together to support the development of children's confidence, resilience and curiosity. The model below illustrates the importance of partnership links and that the child should be at the heart of all that they do.



Ready children

A child who is ready for school will be:

- Curious and confident about learning.
- Resilient and ready to take part.
- Able to take risks, ask questions and find solutions.
- Confidently active and be healthy.
- Independent with self-care skills.
- Comfortable to make friends and take turns.
- Cared for and feel safe and secure.
- Able to vocalise choices.

Ready families

Supportive parenting and stimulating home environments have been shown to be amongst the strongest predictors of school performance during primary school and beyond.

For school readiness families should:

- Recognise that they are their child's most important role-model.
- Read, sing songs and recite nursery rhymes with their child, every day if they can.
- Celebrate their child's achievement in language development.
- Have fun with their child: playing, talking and sharing together regularly and frequently.
- Use every day experiences as learning opportunities and giving their child opportunities to take the lead.
- Support their child's self-help skills so that they learn to do things for themselves and to allow them to make choices.
- Recognise and talk through their child's feelings and emotions.
- Provide opportunities for their child to develop independence skills, for example with toilet training.
- Allow enough time for relaxation, rest and play.
- Establish a good sleep routine.
- Seek professional advice and guidance, particularly in terms of health related matters.
- Ensure their child is active and healthy.



Let's **all** support school readiness

All practitioners who work with young children and their families play an important role in developing school readiness. As experienced childcare professionals you are well placed to support children and parents with transitions.

Ready **settings** and **schools**

Children who attend a nursery, pre-school or childminder setting have opportunities to learn, grow and thrive, developing the skills and attributes they will need to become 'school ready'.

For school readiness practitioners should:

- Help children feel valued and respected.
- Communicate and share information about every child's unique development with their parents and other relevant partners.
- Provide challenging and meaningful learning opportunities for each child, whilst giving them confidence in becoming a learner.
- Demonstrate high expectations of all children and raise aspirations.
- Enthuse, engage and motivate all children and allow them the opportunity to make decisions.
- Share ideas about how to support home learning with parents, including routines.
- Respect and respond to the children's backgrounds, circumstances and culture.
- Ensure that all children meet their full potential.
- Aid all children and families with making smooth transitions into school.
- Identify any potential issues that may require further professional support .

A child who is ready for school is more likely to reach their full potential at school and in their lifelong learning. So what you do to help children's smooth transitions into and throughout school really does matter.

For schools this means:

- Forming good relationships with parents, other professionals and the local community.
- Communicating and sharing information about every child's unique development with their parents and other relevant partners.
- Assessing children's starting points.
- Identifying vulnerable children and use pupil premium funds to ensure that children make good progress from their starting points.
- Helping children feel valued and respected.
- Recognising the importance of play.
- Promoting physical development.
- Providing opportunities for children to speak in sentences and initiate questions.
- Developing communication and language skills.
- Using outdoor play regularly.





Resources and references

- Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness, Ofsted (2014)
- What does 'school ready' really mean?, Pacey (2013)
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014)
- [Development matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)
- School Readiness: a conceptual framework
www.unicef.org

Useful links

Links below can be accessed from Oxfordshire County Council web-site home page by entering the terms in the search box or using a search engine. Links accessed January 2017.

- [Services and Teams](#)
- [Family Information Service](#)
- [Health visitors](#)
- [Children's centres and Early Intervention hubs](#)
- [Forces Families](#)
- [SEND support and toolkit](#)
- [Early Years Toolkit](#)
- [Step into Training](#)
- [Steps to starting school](#) Pacey
- [Big hopes big future](#) Home start

We would like to acknowledge Bournemouth Borough Council, whose documents were referred to during the preparation of this guidance.

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