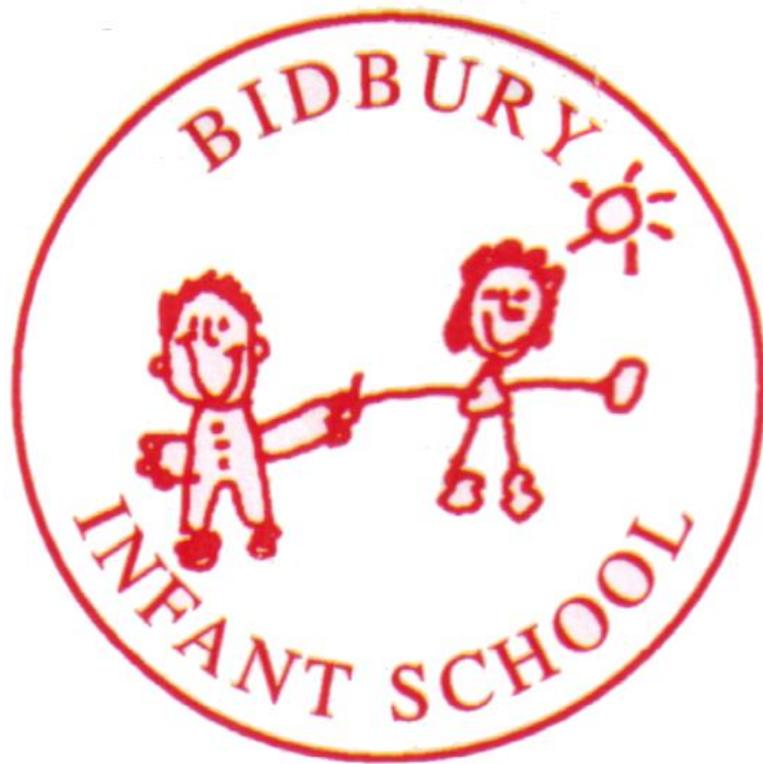


# School Readiness

*Getting off to a flying start*



*Handy Hints to help your child be ready for school!*

Picture the support you give your child when

- they get dressed
- you prepare meals
- they eat a meal
- they go to the toilet



Now picture a teacher trying to give the same support to the 30 children in their class during a normal school day.



***School Readiness is:***

- *doing every day things a little more **independently***
- *'having a go' rather than having an adult do it for you*
- *helping children start school with **confidence** and a 'can do' attitude when learning new things*

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# Health and Hygiene

Starting school is an exciting time when children make new friends, play with lots of toys and get to explore new places but this also means they are exposed to new germs.

## Handy Hints

*It is important that children are aware of and used to simple hygiene practices such as:*

- *washing hands thoroughly before they eat and after they go to the toilet*
- *covering their mouth when they cough*
- *sneezing into a tissue*
- *knowing how to blow their nose*



*More information:*

- *If you have any health concerns for your child you should contact your GP or Health Visitor (accessible through your GP surgery).*
- *When your child enters school they are more likely to be exposed to headlice. Fact sheets are available on the School Nursing website for advice on this.*
- *During the term in which your child turns 5, the School Nursing team will visit school to look at their vision, hearing, height and weight*

## Toileting

By the time your child starts school they would usually be expected to be able to:

- go to the toilet
- wipe themselves and pull pants up
- wash their hands



Of course if your child still needs help with any of these things, schools will continue to support them.

In the meantime discuss your needs with your child's pre-school or with your GP or Health Visitor (accessible through your GP surgery).

### *More information*

- *if your child is still learning to develop these skills, helpful information can be found on the School Nursing Website*

## Getting Dressed

At school your child will have to dress:

- after going to the toilet
- before and after PE
- putting on their coat



## Handy Hints

- *instead of holding their coat for them to put their arms in; place their hood on their head, they put one arm in, then the second arm*



- *show children how to lay the clothing item in front of them with opening end near them, e.g. bottom of t-shirt, top of trousers*
- *fastenings: (1) wear elasticated trousers until secure with zips and buttons (2) velcro or slip on shoes until confident with laces*

*More information: see Fact files on School Nursing Website*

## Social Skills and Play

Throughout their day at school your child will be playing and learning with many different children and adults. These can both be happy and frustrating times, when you have to wait to take a turn on the trikes or share half the lego with a group of children.

### Handy Hints

- *play turn taking games*
- *support the sharing of toys with brothers and sisters, cousins or during play dates with friends*



*Remember it is not a bad thing to make children wait a little while for something they want - patience is a key life skill.*

## Communication

At four, child would usually:

- ask lots of questions like **'what'**, **'where'** and **'why'**
- answer questions about **'why'** something has happened, such as **"Why are you crying?"**, **"Because I hurted my knees."**
- use longer sentences and link sentences together, such as, **"I had pizza for tea and then I played in the garden."**
- describe events that have already happened, such as **"We got dressed up and we went to the hall and singed songs. All the mummies and daddies did watch."**
- start to like simple jokes, although often their jokes make little sense
- start to be able to play games with others
- have fluent and mostly clear speech, though will continue to have difficulties with a small number of sounds - such as 'r' as in 'rabbit', 'l' as in 'letter', 'th' as in 'thumb', 'sh' as in 'show'
- listen to longer stories and answer questions about what they've just heard. For example, questions such as **"Who did Cinderella dance with at the ball?"** **"Were Cinderella's sisters kind?"**
- understand and often use words that describe colour, number and time, such as **'blue car'**, **'three fingers'**, **'today is my birthday'**
- enjoy make-believe play

taken from Communication Trust: Small Talk leaflet

# Handy Hints

## Talk

By 4 years, children can explain their ideas, talk in sentences and talk about things that have happened.

*Can they explain to someone else an event or activity - where you went and what happened?*

*Child: "Mum and me and Jasper go park, but he runned away"*

*Adult: "Oh no, what happened to him?"*

*Child: "A lady finded him in the café - that was lucky wasn't it mummy?"*

## Listen

Your 4 year old is getting good at understanding more and more of what people are saying.

*Are they able to follow simple two part instructions reasonably well?*

*"Go get your slippers, they're upstairs under mummy's bed."*

*Are they able to understand questions starting with 'why'? "Why were the three pigs scared of the Big Bad Wolf?"*

## Take part

4 year olds use talk to organise themselves and others in their play.

*Do you hear your child using language to do this?*

*You might hear them saying things like "Let's pretend we're in a jungle, you be the tiger and I'll be the lion and then....."*

*taken from Communication Trust: Small Talk leaflet*



## Lunchtimes

You know your child best and will decide if your child will have a hot dinner or a packed lunch. It's important to encourage your child to try new foods and eat healthily.



## Handy Hints

*Let your child watch you prepare foods and eat, before letting them have a go for themselves. Let them:*

- *practice using a knife and fork in play, e.g. making foods out of play dough and cutting them up*



- *try to cut up their own food at mealtimes*

- *attempt to open their own crisp bag, take the lid off a yoghurt, peel their own banana*



- *take their own plate to the table and back into the kitchen*

- *encourage them to try new foods and to eat healthily*

*More information:* If your child has any food issues, e.g. fussy eating, discuss this with your GP or Health Visitor (accessible through your GP surgery).

## Being Ready to Learn ~ Sleeping

A good sleep routine is worth its weight in gold. After a good night's rest children are ready for the busy day ahead and a well rested child is usually a happy child.

### Handy Hints

- *get your child into a good bedtime routine as soon as possible*
- *if this routine is going to change when they start school, start it earlier so they are used to it*

*A good bedtime routine consists of:*



#### *\* calm activity before bedtime*

*The advice is that watching TV or using technology over stimulates and prevents sleep and is, therefore, not a good activity for before bedtime.*

#### *\* bath, clean teeth etc*

#### *\* settle into bed - with a bedtime story*

*More information: If your child has any difficulties with sleep or bedtime routine please discuss this with your GP or Health Visitor (accessible through your GP surgery).*

## Being Ready to Learn: Healthy Lifestyles

Another key element of being ready to learn is being prepared for the days learning by having a hearty breakfast.

Research shows that children who have eaten breakfast take on learning new things more readily.

When your child starts school we will send a leaflet out about healthy eating but until then the Change for Life website would be worth looking at.

<http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>

## Useful Websites

- school nurse website address ~  
[www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/schoolnursing](http://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/schoolnursing)
- remember if you have any concerns contact your Health Visitor or GP, or have a conversation with your child's pre-school