



Getting Your Child Ready to Start School or Nursery in Central Manchester



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Introduction

There is much that you as a parent or carer can do to give your child a good start to school life, helping him or her to meet new experiences with confidence and with an enquiring mind.

The information in this booklet is aimed at being shared by you and your child if your child is under the age of 5.

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Important information about applying for a school place

Everyone must apply to Manchester City Council for a place in a Reception class within a Manchester Primary School. This will be for the school year your child turns five years old.

If your child is in a nursery class at school this does not mean they will automatically get a place within the school.

Parents can apply through the Manchester City Council website or by a paper application form sent to them in the Autumn before their child is due to start school.

Applications must be submitted to Manchester City Council by a set date, (usually in January). Any late applications will not be considered until all the on time applications have been placed.

Offer day. (Usually in April) Manchester City Council will let you know in writing of the school your child has been offered a place at.

You must accept your school place by the date quoted in your offer letter. Your place is NOT guaranteed until you have accepted the place.



Top 8 skills you can help your child with before they start school:

It will help your child if he/she can manage these tasks independently.



Many schools encourage children to find their name and register themselves each morning. Try and make a name card for your child so they get used to seeing it.

Remember to only use a capital letter for the first letter, write the rest of the name in lower case, e.g. Jacob, Megan, Imran.



Children should also be able to wipe themselves, pull up their own pants and wash their own hands.



Encouraging your child to share their toys and practice taking turns at home. Take your child along to groups at your local children's centre so they get used to mixing and sharing with other children.



As well as sitting at a table, children need to be able to open and close their lunchboxes, open any cellophane wrapping on sandwiches etc, drink from a carton using a straw and eat a whole piece of fruit.



Zips may be easier and quicker for young children to manage. Help your child to hang their coat up on a hook. Shoes with velcro straps are often easier for children to manage independently.



Give your child opportunities to engage in conversations with you and others about things that interest them. Encourage your child to speak to you using full sentences and give your child lots of praise when they follow an instruction.



Encourage your child to put their toys away when they have finished playing, putting one set of toys away before getting another set out. This will also help develop your child's sorting skills.



Show your child how to blow and wipe their nose, throw the tissue in the bin and wash their hands. Give them lots of praise every time they remember to wash their hands.

If you have any concerns or would like to talk to someone about your child's development please contact your local Children's Centre or Health Visitor

Maths is fun!



Count everything!

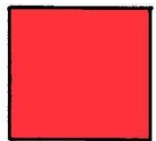
Counting steps as you walk up them, count peas on a plate, count how many people are at lunch today, how many spoons will we need, how many people want a drink, how many cups will we need? This will help your child to develop an understanding of number.

Numbers are everywhere;

Numbers are everywhere. Find numbers on cars, houses etc. Point out numbers and set your child a challenge to see how many they can find! Guess who has the most sweets, potatoes, chips or sausages. Sing counting rhymes together.

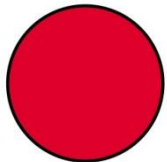
Let your child explore the coins in your purse;

Sort coins into groups and talk about who has the most. Compare their shape and size.



Encourage your child to recognise simple shapes in their environment;

Squares, circles, rectangles, triangles. Point out different shapes around the home. Count how many circles you can find on your walk to the shop.



Maths is fun!



Talk about time during the day;

Time to get up, time for nursery, time to eat, time to go to bed etc. Talk about the days of the week and what you do on those days. Talk about tomorrow and yesterday. Talk about the months in the year, the four seasons, and special times e.g. Christmas, Eid, Birthdays, Diwali, Chinese New Year etc.

Sorting;

Sorting cutlery into a cutlery tray and laying the table, pairing up socks etc. are all good activities that help to develop matching skills. Sort toys or everyday objects by size, shape, colour, weight etc.

Use mathematical words;

Use words such as

- How many?
- First, next, last, pointed, round, tall, short.
- High, low, same, different, deep, shallow, heavy, light.
- Full, empty, hard, soft, wide, narrow, thick, thin.
- Longer-shorter, bigger-smaller, heavier-lighter.
- Short, medium, long, small, medium, large.
- Big, little, odd, even, smooth, rough.
- Up, down, left, right, more, less.

longer shorter
smaller taller
WIDER thinner
skinnier THICKER

Language is all around

Reading to your child has been proven to have many benefits for your child
Show your child how to use a book properly



- Which is the right way up?
- Where does the story start?
- Which side of the page do you start from?
- Talk about what is happening in the pictures.
- Ask your child to point to different objects and describe them in words.
- Follow the words and pictures with your finger as you read or talk to your child.
- Where does the story end?

Read everything and anything: labels on packets, road signs, and road and house names, shop names.

If not already a member, consider joining the local library

Remember picture books without words are proper books! Children like repetition and will often go back to their favourite stories or rhymes again and again. Talk to your child about which stories or rhymes they like best.

Try to encourage your child to listen and concentrate for short periods

Listening to the radio or stories are better than the television for developing concentration.

Singing and reciting nursery rhymes have many benefits



- Nursery rhymes, poems and songs are important for memory development and the enjoyment of rhythm within words.
- Encourage your child to act out and sing favourite rhymes or songs.
- Make up simple stories or rhymes with your child about everyday things, as well as imaginary or humorous ones.

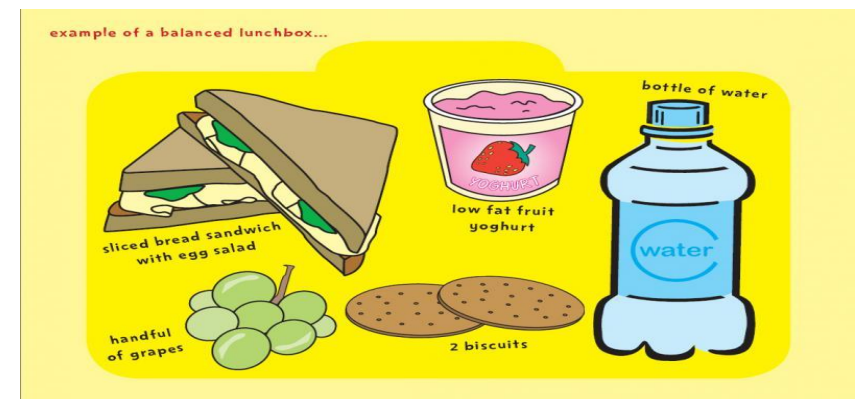
Healthy meals

It is important to make sure your child eats meals which provide a healthy balanced lunch. If your child has a packed lunch please ensure they contain:

- Starchy foods such as bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and others. These are a good source of energy. As well as sandwiches try pitta bread, wraps, baguettes and bagels. Use brown, wholemeal or seeded bread.
- Protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs and beans.
- Dairy such as cheese or yoghurt.
- Fruit and vegetables. Chop up carrots, cucumber, peppers, tomatoes etc. so that children can pick them up. Pack cottage cheese or houmous for them to dip the vegetables into.
- A drink.

Limit chocolate bars and cakes to special occasions and replace with fresh or dried fruit. Many schools have a 'no nut' policy so check before sending your child to school with nuts.

Try to vary the foods you pack, be inventive and remember to praise your child when they have eaten their lunch or tried something new. Make sure your child is able to open their lunch box and unwrap any food. Let your child practise opening food and eating from a lunch box before they start school.



The First Day...

So you have chosen the school, been along for visits, worked with your child to help develop some of the skills they will need, spent lots of time discussing what lovely activities they will do. Now what???

On the day:

- Name your child's clothes wherever possible, especially coats, hats, gloves and boots.
- Send your child to school in practical clothes that are easy to get on and off e.g. elasticated trousers.
- Ensure that you have spoken very positively about starting school, even if your own experiences of school were not very positive.
- Take your lead from the staff (they have done this before).
- When the time comes to leave, tell your child you are going and that you will be back later to pick them up.
- If your child becomes upset, reassure them that you will return at lunchtime/ teatime etc and then leave them in the capable hands of the staff.
- Smile, wave goodbye and then leave, do not let your child see that you are upset. Wait until you have left the room before you cry!
- Ensure you return promptly and show interest in what they have been doing.
- Some children take longer than others to settle. Keep talking about school in a positive way and ensure that you take your child to every session as breaks may make it more difficult for them to settle.

Some useful contacts

Manchester City Council (School Admissions):
www.manchester.gov.uk/admissions
0161 245 7166

Manchester City Council (Schools and Children's Centres):
www.manchester.gov.uk/education

Family Service Directorate:
<http://manchester.fsd.org.uk>
Tel 0161 234 5001

Ideas for healthy lunch boxes:
<http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/healthy-lunchbox-picnic.aspx>
www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk

Home Start (Family Support Charity):
Email admin@homestartsouthmcr.org.uk Tel 0161 946 3552



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