

# EARLY START



A PARENTS' GUIDE

to help your child to be

...ready to explore

...ready to play

...ready to join in

...ready to have fun!



PETERBOROUGH  
  
CITY COUNCIL

# EARLY **START**

## **START**

An easy guide to help your child to be...

- ...**READY** to explore
- ...**READY** to play
- ...**READY** to join in
- ...**READY** to have fun

In Peterborough we have worked together to help every parent and carer to get their child ready for school.

This **EARLY START** booklet will give you tips so that you can help your child be ready for preschool.

Being ready for preschool will help your child when their time comes to start school. Do not worry if your child cannot do the things suggested by the time they start preschool: just keep practising together.

\* Throughout this booklet the word preschool is used to describe all early years settings: preschools, day nurseries and childminders



This booklet is divided into sections that are based on our **Ready to START** School ideas which have been adapted for younger children



### **You are your child's first teacher:**

Learning to communicate, understand and use language is fundamental to children's early development. These skills help young children make friends, think, express ideas and feelings and provide the foundations for later learning.

### **Reading with your child:**

Enjoying books together from an early age will help your child to learn new words, speak in longer sentences and develop their speaking and listening skills:

- Find a quiet space for you and your child to share a book
- Begin by looking at the book cover and wondering aloud what the story is about
- Read the story, pausing at times to look at the pictures and talk about them
- As you read the story, ask questions about the story and characters

## Two Year Old Funding

Free childcare may be available for your two year old. If you qualify, your child could have the opportunity to make new friends and try new experiences, helping their development for up to 15 hours per week. Further information on finding a childcare provider and applying for funding can be found on the back of this booklet.



## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Early Years Special Educational Needs Specialist and Portage Service provides:

- Portage home visiting
- Training for parents, settings and other services supporting children with complex needs in their Early Years.
- Special Educational Needs Specialists work to support children 0-5 years, with complex needs that are not attending a pre-school setting.  
They also support transition into pre-school settings for children with complex needs and their families.

Once in an early years setting providers are required to assess children's needs and work with parents. All registered providers have an identified Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (Senco). Ongoing advice, support and training is provided to Sencos to ensure they are adequately trained to understand and meet the needs of children who may have additional requirements.

## Two Year Old Progress Check

When your child is between two and three and attending an early years setting, the setting will review their progress, and provide you with a short written summary of your child's development in a number of areas. This progress check will identify your child's strengths and any areas where their progress is less than expected.

The written summary will highlight: areas in which your child is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed. Settings will discuss with you how the summary of development can be used to support learning at home. If the setting staff have possible concerns about your child's health or development they may suggest carrying out a joint review with health called an Integrated Two Year Review, to help you access the right support for your child.

Build your child's confidence so that they start preschool curious and ready to learn. Positive encouragement from you will enable your child to feel good about themselves.

For more information and other helpful facts visit [www.peterborough.gov.uk/START](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/START)



There are lots of things you can do to get your child ready for preschool. But



## Simple and practical shoes and clothes

### Top Tips:

- Start practising with simple clothing. For example put a hat on, put a sock on, try putting arms into coats
- Try dressing a teddy with baby clothes
- Make sure clothes and shoes are named
- Talk about clothing and belongings. For example 'this is your coat'
- Encourage your child to have a go at simple dressing
- Allow time
- Choose shoes and clothes that are easy to put on and to take off
- Think about easy fastenings e.g. velcro
- Dressing up: hats and scarves

## Talk and listen and start to follow instructions

### Top Tips:

- Use simple words and ensure your child is looking at you as you talk
- Talk to your child in your home language
- Sing songs and rhymes with your child
- Visit your local library to share board books and join in Rhyme Time
- Share picture books and talk about the pictures as often as you can
- Make time! Five or ten minutes throughout the day for 1 to 1 special times, without technology
- Have fun with your child at local groups and children's centres
- Dummies and bottles get in the way of talking: limit their use
- Talk to your child whilst doing jobs around the house

## Arts, crafts and making

### Top Tips:

- Messy play is fun and strengthens fingers strong
- Explore and play to the home and garden
- Play alongside and use pencils, crayons, paint
- Join in messy play children's centres
- Explore the outdoors with safety harness bags
- Fill bags, bottles and containers with interesting objects to touch and feel
- Visit the local park to strengthen muscles and/or take part in sports
- Find fun activities such as finger painting, playdough and building
- Make things together such as cooking, junk modelling and sticking

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## Routines

### Top Tips:

- Sleep routines- try to keep the same each day: bath, brush teeth, share a book, bed
- Take your child to the local dentist with you
- Show your child how to clean their teeth
- Make time each day to play with your child
- Keep trying different healthy foods and avoid fizzy or sugary drinks
- Let them try what you eat and avoid too much salt and sugar
- Ditch the buggy and take a walk
- Make sharing books part of your day
- Swap a bottle for a cup ready for preschool



## Time for toilet training

### Top Tips:

- Look for signs that your child is ready for toilet training. For example hiding away, being interested in wee and poo
- Talk to your child about using the toilet and always use the same words
- Praise your child
- Make time and plan for toilet training
- Practise washing and drying hands
- Be consistent: it's not advisable to use pull-ups when toilet training
- Read stories about using the toilet
- It's okay for your child to have accidents: carry a spare pair of pants and clothes
- Make sure clothes are easy to take off



## Home learning ideas to help parents involve their children



**Play** with different bags to help your child become more skilled in using them. Get them to put items in and take them out. Practise opening and closing and carrying their bag.



**Talk** to your child about getting dressed to suit the weather. (Revisit at different times of the year). Don't forget hats, scarves and gloves, as well as how to apply suncream.



**Get** your child helping with hanging out and getting in **washing**. They can learn about matching pairs, folding and which things belong to each other. Discuss colours, patterns and sizes.



**Follow** simple recipes together.



**Play** board games with your child to teach turn-taking, sharing, waiting and the ability to cope when they don't win.



**Choose** a subject, that your child is interested in and encourage your child to ask at the **library** for books on the subject.



**Make** fun challenges on walks. Maybe who can find the biggest leaf, counting cars and spotting letters, shapes and numbers.





in activities to help them to be ready to START preschool



**Plan** a picnic (indoors or outdoors) and include all the tricky things from a packed lunch, such as opening packets, peeling fruit and putting straws in drinks.



**Visit** a local shop and encourage your child to **ask for something** that you wish to buy.



**Play** a game of **balancing** things on a tray and walk around the room.



**Try** to introduce new food. Talk about how it smells, looks, feels and tastes.



**Talk** about using the toilet. Share a book from the library.



**Practise**, practise, practise **activities** that involve cutting, weaving, squeezing, threading or drawing to build muscles for writing.



**Let** your child choose **underpants** to involve them in their own toileting journey from the beginning.



**Let** your child put their **teddy** on its own potty. This may help your child to talk about their worries around toilet training.

linked to the different aspects of **START** that they can do at home with their child.



[www.vivacity-peterborough.com](http://www.vivacity-peterborough.com)  
Find out here about your local library, the museum and events happening across the city that you can enjoy with your child.



[www.infantandtoddlerforum.org](http://www.infantandtoddlerforum.org)  
Find practical advice and ideas to help develop healthy eating habits and guidance on portion sizes for children.



[www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)  
Here you can find top tips on toilet training as well as many other early childhood matters.

# Signpost to services

Some useful and helpful contacts

## NHS Choices

Information and contact details for health and additional support on topics such as: potty training, healthy eating, common childhood illnesses, common sleep problems in children and childhood allergies

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Barnardo's

Find your local Children's Centre where there are play sessions, as well as family support

[www.barnardos.org.uk/  
childrenscentres/cc-search](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/childrenscentres/cc-search)

## Bookstart

Find information about books: Look at the online activities to support reading and writing

[www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/  
programmes-and-campaigns/  
bookstart/](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/bookstart/)

## Spurgeons

Find your local Children's Centre where there are play sessions, as well as family support

[www.spurgeons.org](http://www.spurgeons.org)

## Peterborough City Council Admissions

All the information you need to register your child for a school place in Peterborough

[www.peterborough.gov.uk/  
residents/schools-and-education/  
school-admissions](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/school-admissions)

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust

Find local information on who to contact for health and well-being services

[www.cpft.nhs.uk](http://www.cpft.nhs.uk)



Visit [www.peterborough.gov.uk/START](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/START)  
or call 01733 747474



## Institute for Health Visiting

This website provides Top Tips for Parents on toilet training, child development, sleep,etc

[www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)

## Families Information Service

Free information and help on all aspects of childcare and family life in Peterborough

[www.peterborough.gov.uk/fis](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/fis)

## Childcare Choices

For information on all funded childcare entitlements and help with childcare costs

[www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

## Peterborough Early Years

Information about free two year old funding and other information linked to Early Years and Childcare

[www.early-years.org](http://www.early-years.org) and  
[www.facebook.com/  
PeterboroughEarlyYears](http://www.facebook.com/PeterboroughEarlyYears)

## Small Talk

Helping support parents to chat, play and read with their child at home as much as possible.

[www.small-talk.org.uk](http://www.small-talk.org.uk)

