

# Getting Ready For School



**ST. ALBAN'S**

CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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LEAD THE WAY

A booklet of ideas and activities to help  
prepare your child for starting school



## Getting Ready for School (GRFS)

This booklet contains lots of ideas and suggestions for activities that will help prepare your child for starting school. Please practice these over the summer.

Thank you.

## Getting Ready for School

### How parents can help

If children are to get the most out of life at home and at school they need confidence, a willingness to co-operate and communication skills.

Parents are in the best position to help them develop these.

#### **CONFIDENCE is:**

- being able to do things for yourself
- knowing that you are loved and valued for who you are

#### **CONFIDENCE grows:**

- with praise and encouragement
- through trying new things and being successful

#### **CO-OPERATION is being able:**

- to listen to another person
- to take turns
- to work and play with others
- to share toys
- to share the adult's attention with other children

#### **COMMUNICATION is being able:**

- to hold a conversation
- to express your needs
- to ask questions
- to reply to questions
- to describe and explain
- to talk about the past and future

## Lots & Lots of Talk!!



When talking with children give them your full attention.

Give them time to have their say.

Listen carefully to what they have to say.

Try to ask questions that need more than a yes or no answer, for example when **talking about colours** you could ask:

*What colour are you going to colour the car?*

*Is this shirt lighter or darker than mine?*



Encourage your child to match colours:

*Let's put all the blue Lego in the box*

*Can you find another one just the same colour?*

When doing certain activities with your child use phrases like:

Laying the table

*Lets count the spoons*

*How many forks do we need?*

*Are there enough plates?*



Mealtimes

*Would you like a whole apple?*

*Shall I cut your cake in half?*

*A little less potato please*

In the bus queue

*That man is first in the queue*

*We are the last in the queue*

*Can you see two red buses?*

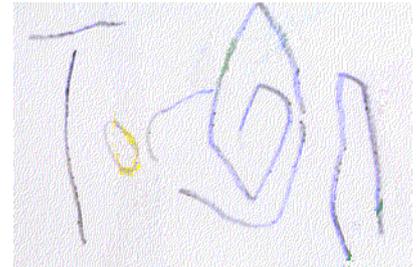


## Hand Control

Many of the play activities that children enjoy before school continue to be important when they move into school. Cutting and sticking, for example, are used in project work; pouring sand and water leads on to measuring and science. All these activities need good hand control.

Before they begin to 'write', children need to understand what writing is for. You can help by letting them see you write shopping lists, notes to the milkman, letters to Granny, posters for the jumble sale.

At first they call their scribble 'writing' and it is important that you let them read to you what they want their 'writing' to say.



When they begin to make shapes that look a bit like letters they are ready to be shown how to make letters correctly.

Different schools use different styles of writing. There is a sheet in the pack showing you the way your child will be taught to write letters at school.

**Any pencil activities help your child develop:**

- control of a pencil
- easy movements with a pencil
- left to right movements
- correct letter formation for the word he/she will want to write most often – his/her own name (please model name writing with a capital letter at the start and then lower case e.g. Mary, Tom)

## Colouring

Some children like to draw, colour or paint on large sheets of paper. It is fun for them to experiment with colouring in lots of different ways with:

**Chalk**

**Wax crayons**

**Thick felt pens**



## Pencil grip

Check that your child is holding the pencil between thumb and first finger as shown in the picture.



Activities like following a dotted line help your child to control a pencil. Make sure she has to follow a line from left to right as she will need to do this in both writing and reading.

## Cutting and Sticking

Some children find cutting difficult. Show them how to use scissors and don't expect too much at first.

Cutting up old Christmas or birthday cards into pieces is easier than cutting paper. It is fun for her to glue her cut-outs onto a large piece of paper.



Show you are pleased with her efforts. She will improve with practice.

If your child is **left**-handed you can buy special scissors from online retailers.

**Scissors are safe if they are used correctly and put away afterwards.**

## Playing Games

Playing games can be a lot of fun but can be quite difficult for young children. They have to learn how to take turns and wait while someone else had a go. It is best to start playing games with just two people, the child and an adult. Later, when he understands about taking turns and can wait without getting too impatient, another player can be included. Three people are the most that children of this age really enjoy in a game.

Winning is very important to young children and losing can seem a disaster. You can help by talking about losing before it happens. You can also help him to cope with losing by understanding how difficult it is for him. It is important to praise his efforts to control his tears or anger and to ignore any big fuss he may make. It is not helpful to always let him win.



It helps to:

- Explain the rules carefully before you start to play.
- Plan to end the game before he gets tired or bored.
- Give him some warning about when you will finish, for example when everyone had had one more turn.
- Encourage him to finish the agreed number of turns and to help put the pieces away afterwards.

### Reading Books

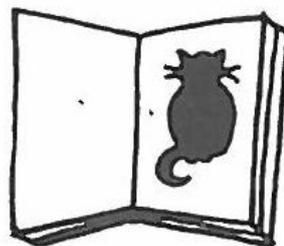
- Books and reading should always be fun.
- Above all, enjoy the story – choose a time when your child wants to sit down quietly with you.
- Sit comfortably with her.
- Let her look at the book with you.
- Look at the pictures and talk about them together before you read the story.

For example:

*What can you see?*

*What colour is the cat?*

*What do you think will happen if the cat falls in the water?*



- Then read the story, showing her the pictures and stopping to talk if she wishes.
- From time to time put your fingers under the words as you read them.
- Get her to turn the pages for you.
- Try to find time to read to her every day.

There is a lot for children to learn to before they can read for themselves.

On the next page is a pre-reading Jigsaw. This shows the pre-reading skills that children develop. When they are developed they will be ready to begin learning to read.



# Reading Jigsaw

Recognises the letter shape which begins own name	Says or sings nursery rhymes		Points to labels and notices, and asks what they say	Notices some letters on labels, road signs etc.	Asks for a story
Can say last word of a rhyme	Looks at books alone	Notices words on food wrappers, advertisements	Matches labels		Enjoys a story if offered
Enjoys home-made rhymes eg Pat the Cat	Looks at pictures while story is being read		Asks questions makes comments eg that's like mine	Joins in with a story	Pretends to read to other children, toys, dolls
Holds books the right way up	Knows which is the front of the book	Turns over pages one at a time	Has a favourite book	Tells stories about the pictures	Makes own rhymes
Listens well to stories or conversation	Points to part of the picture when asked "show me the dog"	Knows parts of some books by heart	Acts out stories, repeats phrases from stories		Watches adults read