

Before school: A quick guide to helping your child with reading, writing and maths

Reading and writing tips

- Read a range of books.
- Encourage your child to join in and don't object if your child wants to hear the same stories over and over.
- Identify particular words in the books. Ask your child to find these words throughout the book.
- When reading aloud, follow the words with your finger, point to pictures and talk together about the story.
- Let your child pretend to read. Children pretend to read at this stage by making up stories using pictures and other clues. This is a great start.
- Tell stories, say or sing nursery rhymes, poems and songs. Make up actions.
- Young children lose interest quickly. Little and often is best. A good 10 minutes reading is better than half an hour.
- Visit your local library and become involved in the programs on offer.
- If your child isn't showing interest in the book, don't push them.
- Have a message board and write a message together every day. Write events on the calendar like birthdays and special celebrations and talk about these with your child.
- Make birthday cards, thank you cards and invitations to send to friends.
- Provide a space on a small table to write and draw.





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Maths tips

- Ask your child questions to get them talking about maths from an early age. For example, *How many are there? Which way is it? Is there enough for all of us? How big is it?*
- Play shops with things from the kitchen, shopping bags, purses and real or play money. Make lists, signs and prices together.
- When you are out shopping, count fruit and vegetables as you put them in bags. Let your child use the shop scales to weigh fruit. Talk about coins and notes in your purse and the price of things. Let your child give the money and collect the change.
- Unpack and sort the shopping at home. Talk about the size, shape and weight of items as you put them away.
- When you are cooking, encourage your child to find the ingredients in the kitchen and help you measure them.
- Cut food for your child and talk about size, shape, colour and taste.
- Sort things by size, colour or shape, for example blocks, toys, pegs or the washing.

