



Starting School

Starting school is an exciting milestone for any child. There are so many fun ways in which you can help your child get ready for this transition. The Early Years providers in Teignmouth and Shaldon have worked together to give you some ideas.

Mark Making



Listening



Reading



Speaking



Number



Listening:

- Be a good listener yourself. Give your child lots of opportunities to talk. Chat about what they have been doing and ask for their views.
- When you are talking to your child, make eye contact. Get down to their level.
- Chat in a quiet environment away from distractions. Turn off the TV or radio.
- When you finish reading a book or watching a TV programme together, ask your child to tell you about it. Can they recall the storyline?
- Make up a story together with your child. Take it in turns to say the next line and keep alternating.
- Play Simon Says.
- Play 'What can you hear?' Ask your child to close their eyes and listen carefully to all the sounds around them.
- Play a silly rhyme game. Say nursery rhymes with deliberate mistakes. Your child will probably enjoy spotting the mistake and putting it right.



Reading:

- Help your child recognise the letters of the alphabet and say the sound they make (not the name). To see how to pronounce sounds with your child, see the guide on the Little Wandle website: <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>
- Make a scrapbook collection of things beginning with each letter. For example: f for fire, fish, feather. Show your child how to write the word next to the picture.
- When saying a word, emphasise the initial sound. When your child can hear the initial sounds of words, play alliteration games with them. Choose objects from around the home and use describing words beginning with the same letter. For example, 'silly sausage' and 'cuddly cat'.
- Play a silly game where you pick up an object but use the wrong sound for the initial letter e.g. show your child a cup and say 'tup' or 'pup'. Ask them to help you say the word correctly.
- Play blending games, where you say the sounds of words and your child has to 'blend' to make the word. For example, show your child several toys. Choose a toy and say the sounds. You say |c| |a| |t| and your child says "cat". Then reward your child by letting them have the toy! You can see examples of blending on the Little Wandle website: <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>



Mark Making:

Before children start writing letters and numbers, they usually start making marks. Mark making is a way of children expressing themselves and portraying the world around them. If they are confident with mark making, they will be much more prepared for learning to write letters and numbers.



- Help your child to make marks using sticks or fingers in the sand.
- Make shapes with play dough.
- Play 'decorators' and allow your child to 'paint' the fence or patio with a large paintbrush and water.
- Draw with outdoor chalks on tarmac.
- Draw with fingers in flour, shaving foam or 'gloop' (cornflower mixed with water)
- Let your children paint each other's faces (or yours) with face paints.
- Draw in the bath with bath crayons.
- Use apps on a tablet which encourage mark making, E.g. Paint sparkles or Pixie Dust.
- Try giving your child chunky pencils and gently encourage them to hold their pencil using a 3 fingered 'tripod' grip.
- Try doing 'dot to dots' and colouring in.
- Support your child to strengthen the muscles in their hands which will support their mark making. Any fine motor type of activities will support this, such as colouring in, cutting, threading beads or using play dough.
- Painting and printing are brilliant for immediate and effective mark making.
- Gross motor activities will strengthen the muscles in the shoulders, arms and wrists which will help prepare your child for writing. Activities such as sweeping with a broom, digging in the garden or sand and using a dustpan and brush are good for this.
- Show your child how to write their name and support them to have a go. Even if they only get the first letter, this is a good start. Write your child's name and they trace over it with different coloured pencils to make a 'rainbow name'.
- Try doing handwriting patterns with your child. These prepare your child for cursive, or joined writing, but are fun to do. Zig zags or wavy patterns are good to start with. Make rainbow patterns.





Number:

In their first year of school, children will be working mainly with the numbers to 10 and then 20.

- Play 'spot the number'. Focus to begin with on the numerals 0-9, and then to 20 and beyond if your child is ready. Look for numbers everywhere. Look at numbers on phones, clocks, remote controls, on signs and anywhere else they appear!
- Count everything! Count the stairs, teddies, the plates on the table and anything else you can think of!
- Sing counting songs such as 5 Little Ducks or 10 Green Bottles.
- Let your child pay for items in shops. Show them the coins and help identify the value of the coins.
- Help your child to play with counting apps on your phone or tablet. There are many great apps available such as TopMarks as well as Whiterose Maths.
- BBC Numberblocks is also an invaluable resource for supporting your child with their maths learning.



Speaking:

- Give your child lots of opportunities to make decisions. Ask them questions where they have to provide an answer.
- Encourage role play. When your child engages in fantasy play by dressing up, using small world figures or just pretending to be someone else, they are developing their language and listening skills. Join in with this play to extend it and help them learn new words and ideas.
- Read with your child each day and then ask them to recall the story.
- When you play with your child, ask them to tell you about the decisions they are making. For example, "Why did you use that brick to make the bridge?", or "What would happen if you used this one?" Giving children opportunities to explain their reasoning really helps them to consolidate and build on their knowledge and understanding.
- Talk with your child about anything and everything and introduce them to exciting vocabulary!

