

Starting Reception

Wednesday 11th February 2026

9:30-11:30am

Preparing 3- and 4-year-olds for a
successful school start

Alison Rae (EYFS Adviser) & Laurie Johnson (Quality
improvement and learning coordinator EY)

Aims

1. Be aware of the national 'Starting Reception' publication that Shropshire has adopted.
2. Discuss transitions with other settings and schools
3. Develop an awareness of the complexity of transitions for all involved
4. Know and use the transition document developed by Shropshire council incorporating the Starting Reception information





Perceptions of school readiness in 2024

1.1 The extent of the problem

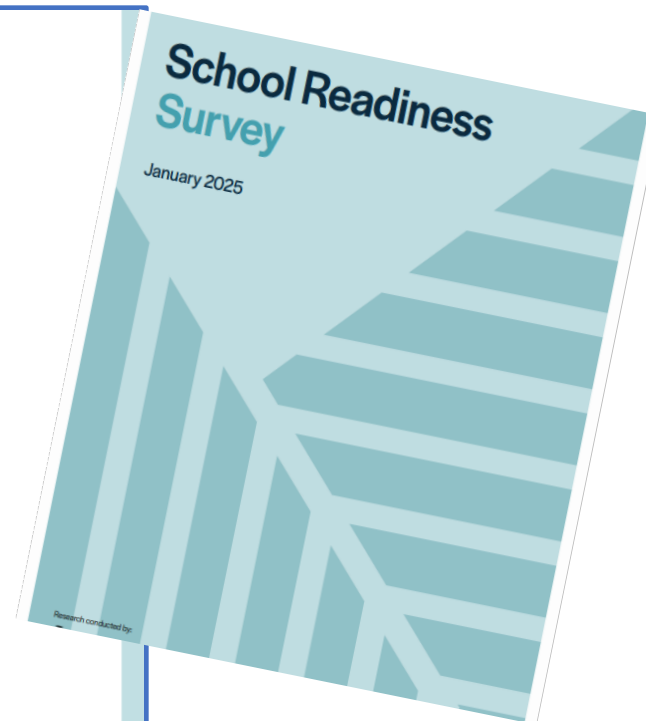
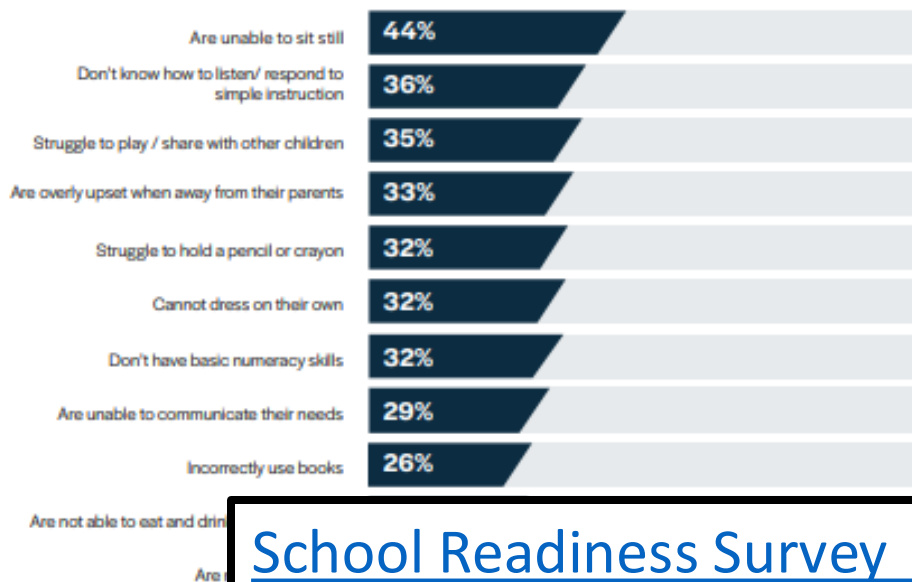
Five years on from our first report on school readiness, teachers tell us that significant numbers of children are starting school behind before they begin.

This continues to impact children, teachers and schools across the education system, storing up long-term problems for society and the economy.

According to teachers, in an average class of the 2024 Reception cohort:

44% of children are unable to sit still.	36% don't respond to simple instructions.
35% have difficulty playing or sharing with peers.	24% are not toilet trained.

Figure 1: Proportion of Reception children that cannot do each of the reported skills according to teachers



Starting Reception

Your child's journey to school starts at home.



The Government has set a national target 75% of Reception children to have a good level of development by 2028 and an LA target of 77%

In Shropshire 68% of children got the good level of development in 2025

Home - Starting Reception

Transitions

Transitions are change and when thinking about change we all handle it differently .

anticipation
excitement
curiosity
anxiety,
uncertainty,
fear

and a sense of bewilderment



What a difference it makes if we have a sense of being eagerly awaited, of knowing that we will be treated with respect and allowed to take some control over what happens to us in our new situation.

Transitions

It is crucial that everyone works together, in the best interests of the child, to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Each person has valuable information to share about the child's strengths, and areas where extra help is needed

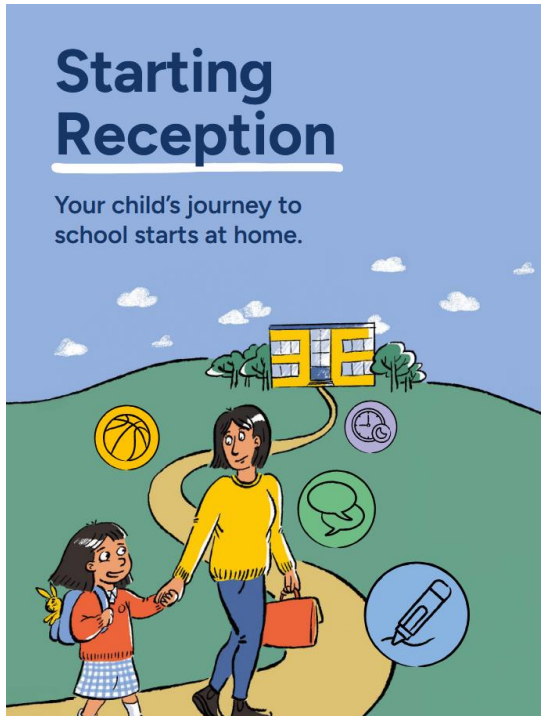
Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice

Julian Grenier





The importance of transition



Were your children school ready this year ?

What are you doing differently this year?

It needs to be planned- given time.

It needs to be thought of as a process and not an event or even series of events

Parent Partnership

Research supports the belief that we can only do our best for the children in our care if we involve their parents and families.

We need to listen to what parents can tell us about their children and accept that as their child's first educator, they have a wealth of knowledge.

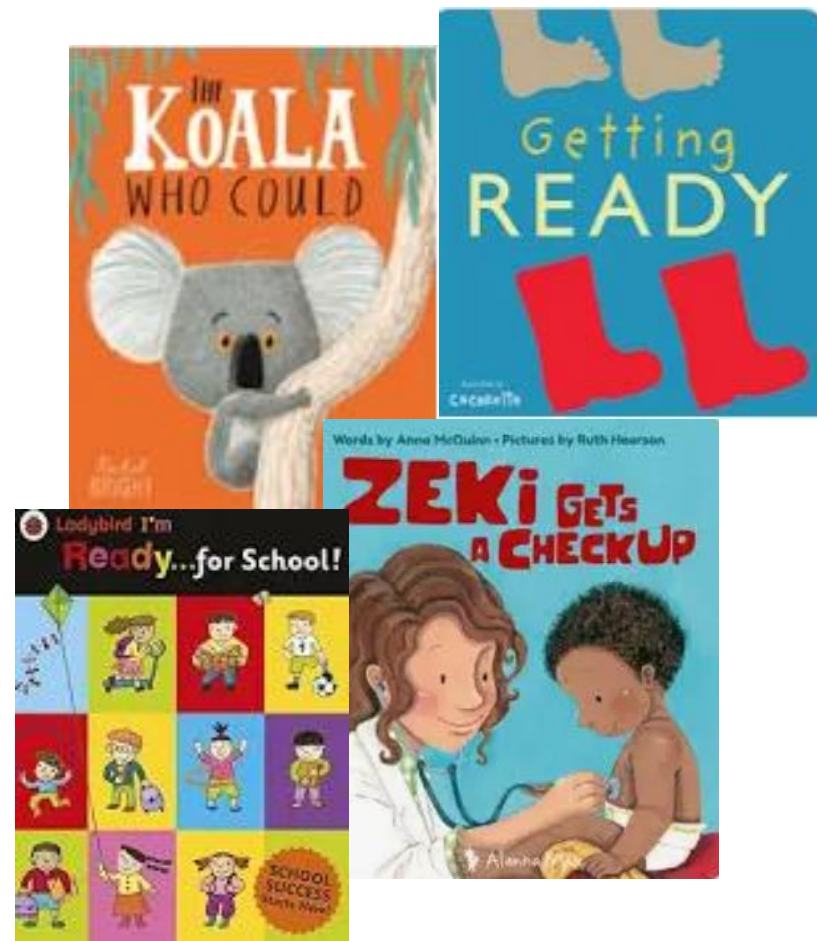


Let's Get Ready Bags

The 4 titles in the bag have been chosen by professional librarians.

- These can be borrowed for 3 weeks from any Shropshire Library.
- *The Koala Who Could* by Rachel Bright
- *Getting Ready* (Tactile book) by Child's Play
- *I'm Ready for School!* by Ladybird
- *Zeki Gets a Check Up* by Anna McQuinn

Information sheets for parents/carers





Value of Frequent Informal Visits

Smooth Transition Support

Frequent informal visits help children transition smoothly by offering low-pressure experiences with trusted adults.

Reducing Sensory Overload

Repeated exposure helps young children become familiar with space, noise, and activity, reducing sensory overload.

Building Internal Confidence

Informal visits allow children to observe and participate gradually, boosting their confidence before starting school.

Parental Engagement Benefits

Parents model calm behaviour and can ask questions during visits, supporting children's sense of safety and belonging.



Purpose and Impact of Home Visits

Building Comfort and Trust

Home visits create a comfortable environment where children feel at ease and families build trust with educators.

Observing Natural Interactions

Educators observe children's natural behaviours and routines to tailor personalised support strategies at school.

Enhancing Family-School Partnerships

Informal home visits promote open communication, setting the foundation for strong family-school collaboration.

Reducing Separation Anxiety

Recognising a familiar adult reduces children's separation anxiety, fostering confidence and readiness for school.



[Home Visits in the Early Years: Why We Need to Bring Them Back](#)

Benefits of Relaxed and Staggered Starts

Gradual Parent-Child Separation

Relaxed starts help ease separation anxiety by allowing gradual goodbyes away from group pressure.

Child-Paced Engagement

Children choose familiar, open-ended activities to start their day comfortably and confidently.

Individual Staff Attention

Staggered arrivals allow staff to provide personalised support to each child during busy mornings.

Promoting Emotional Security

These practices build independence, confidence, and positive feelings about school attendance over time.



Ensuring Flexibility in the Setting



Unique Transition Experiences

Every child and family experiences the transition to school differently, requiring personalized support strategies.

Adaptive Support Strategies

Practitioners must observe and adjust routines and expectations to meet individual children's needs effectively.

Flexible Settling Arrangements

Flexibility includes modifying session lengths, group sizes, and activities to maintain child engagement and security.

Building Trust and Positivity

Individual support fosters trust and ensures a positive transition for children and their families.



Recognising and Supporting Friendships

Friendships Ease Transition

Having familiar friends in new classes significantly supports children's emotional wellbeing and adaptation.

Mitigating Challenges

Friendships help reduce difficulties faced by youngest students, boys, and English as additional language speakers.

Intentional Peer Grouping

Gathering parental and prior setting information allows tailored class organisation and transition activities.

Building Friendship Networks

Creating opportunities to interact with peers and gradually develop friendships encourages confidence and engagement.



Creating Predictability Through Routine



Role of Predictability

Predictability reassures children by providing consistency in needs, routines, and learning experiences.

Balance and Flexibility

Effective predictability supports play and exploration without rigid schedules or unnecessary interruptions.

Supporting Self-Regulation

Predictability helps children anticipate transitions and prepare emotionally and mentally.

Balanced Daily Rhythm

Maintaining a balanced rhythm prevents cognitive overload and keeps children engaged throughout the day.



Developing Physical Independence

Physical Independence Skills

Teaching children to manage belongings and self-care builds confidence for school transitions and reduces stress.

Support for Confidence

Providing support during early stages prevents stress and helps children associate transitions with success.

Intellectual Independence

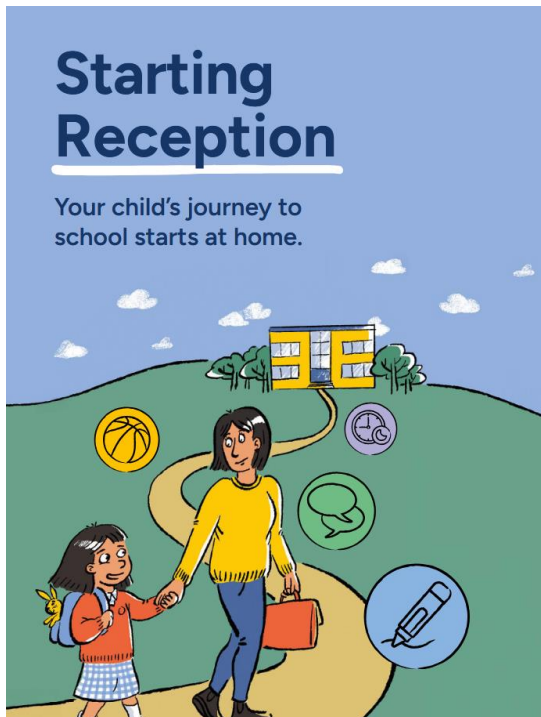
Encouraging curiosity and problem-solving helps children develop decision-making and self-directed learning skills.

Ownership of Learning

Allowing children to choose tasks and express thinking fosters initiative in structured learning environments.



The importance of transition



Parent Partnership

Value of Frequent Informal Visits

Purpose and Impact of Home Visits

Benefits of Relaxed and Staggered Starts

Ensuring Flexibility in the Setting

Recognising and Supporting Friendships

Creating Predictability Through Routine

Developing Physical and Intellectual
Independence



Transition document from setting to school

Name of main setting and contact details:			Name of Key Person: Date completed:	
Child's name:		D.O.B.	Start date at setting:	
ECHNA: - Request in - No to - Yes to - Yes to - assess	Date:	EYPP: Yes / No	Sessions attended and timings:	
			Monday	
			Tuesday	
			Wednesday	
			Thursday	
			Friday	
Contact with other professionals: Please list and see last page for more details:				
Please highlight the age band the child is currently working in, commenting in the areas where there maybe concerns.				
CL	0-3 3-4	Comments:		
PSED	0-3 3-4	Comments:		
PD	0-3 3-4	Comments:		

All About Me @ 4			
What I would like you to know about me:			
Other professionals who help me:	Please mark the appropriate box below:		
	On-going contact:	Previous contact:	No contact:
	Comments:		

All About Me @ 4	
All about me:	My friends:
	My family: who are special to me?
	Things I am good at:
	Things I find difficult:
Things I like to do:	What do I like to do at home?
	What do I like to do when I am in my setting?
	Where do I like to play, indoors and outdoors? Where are my favourite places?
Comments:	

Transition document from setting to school

Please discuss the statements below with parent carers. These are taken from the Starting Reception website and will support parent carers and children in their readiness in transferring to reception class.

Skills / activities:	Comments:
Growing Independence: Taking care of themselves <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Putting on / taking off their coat and shoes-Using the toilet and washing their hands-Getting dressed with little help-Using cutlery and drinking from an open cup-Spending time away from you, learning they can be looked after by caring adults.	
Play, creativity and curiosity <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Taking part in imaginative play (e.g. role play)-Drawing, painting, colouring and sticking-Sharing story books with caregivers, looking at pictures and talking about the characters-Exploring the world around them (e.g. looking closely at the natural world or playing safely with objects at home).	

Transition document from setting to school

Please discuss the statements below with parent carers. These are taken from the Starting Reception website and will support parent carers and children in their readiness in transferring to reception class.

Skills / activities:	Comments:
Building relationships and Communicating: Being with others -Practising sharing and taking turns with toys -Talking about feelings and reasons -Discussing storybook characters' emotions -Beginning to recognise others' feelings -Encouraging self and peer boundaries.	
Communication and language -Singing songs and nursery rhymes -Talking about activities, experiences and the world around them -Clearly asking for help -Recognising the pattern of time.	
Listening and engaging -Paying attention for short periods of time -Listening to and following simple instructions -Carrying on with a task even when it is difficult and bouncing back if things go wrong.	

Transition document from setting to school

Please discuss the statements below with parent carers. These are taken from the Starting Reception website and will support parent carers and children in their readiness in transferring to reception class.

Skills / activities:	Comments:
Physical Development: Getting moving <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Walking up and down steps-Climbing, running, jumping and playing-Catching a large ball-Sing simple puzzles and craft activities; strengthening grip with cutting and sticking.	
Healthy routines <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Maintaining a regular bedtime and wake-up routine-Limiting screentime to recommended amounts-Eating a healthy diet and trying new foods-Brushing teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice daily.	

Transition to Starting School

Preparing children for their educational journey ahead

[Home - Starting Reception](#)

[Development Matters 2020](#)

[School readiness - Best Start in Life](#)

[Starting primary school - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize](#)

[About the campaign - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Starting primary school | Family Lives](#)

[Best start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning - GOV.UK](#)

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

[Home Visits in the Early Years: Why We Need to Bring Them Back](#)

[Ready Steady Stoke: A second year evaluation of improving school transitions - Thrive At Five](#)



Next steps:

**Starting Reception
29th April 2026**

[Early Years CPD | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)

