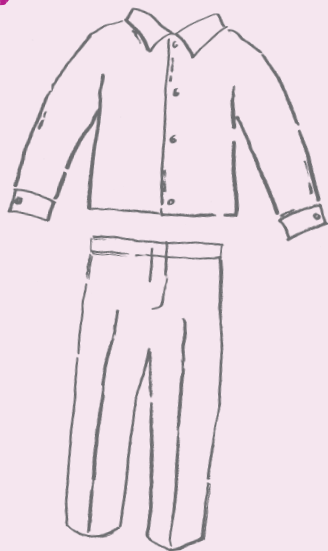


PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical development is important as part of being school ready. Here are some child development stages to think about and some ideas of things you can do with your child. This is not an exhaustive list and not a tick list either – remember that all children are unique – they will have their own interests and will develop at different rates.

TOP TIPS



BEGINNER PHYSICAL SKILLS

- Is your child independent using the toilet?
- Can they manage their own personal hygiene and independently wash and dry their hands?
- Why not give your child some practise sessions of getting dressed into their school uniform (if you do not have a uniform it might be a good idea to decide on what will be their 'school clothes'). This will reduce any upset and stress on your first day of going to school and also builds up your child's ability to dress and undress for when they need to do this at school for PE sessions.
- What about putting their shoes on the right feet and managing the fastenings? This is something to think about when buying their school shoes and PE pumps.
- Give your child some tube shaped dried pasta to thread onto a length of string. This develops hand eye co-ordination - a useful start to so many other skills.
- Try build a tower with blocks or stacking cups – how tall can your child build (you could also practise counting at the same time)! Who can build the highest tower? You could use empty formula milk tins (etc) if you do not have any blocks.
- Can you play cafés and give your child a small tray to carry things on – they will need this skill when it comes to school lunchtimes.
- Can your child use a knife, fork and spoon confidently?

INTERMEDIATE PHYSICAL SKILLS



- Some of the larger physical skills are important too. Can your child ride a tricycle? Walk up the stairs using alternative feet (i.e. one foot per step). Manoeuvre around various obstacles? Run around and 'stop'? Jump landing safely on two feet? Stand on one foot? Hop? Your child needs these types of skills to be well balanced – this will help them to be able to sit still!!!
- Show your child how to swirl the ribbon around their head and round and round from their shoulder. Larger physical skills like these are also important and need to be developed/used before your child can hold a pencil using the tripod grip and start to form letters to learn to write

ADVANCED PHYSICAL SKILLS



- Once these large movements become easy your child will be ready for the more advanced fine or small physical skills. Can your child use a pair of (child-sized) scissors? Notice when mark making how your child holds a crayon – there are several stages that they go through before they reach a comfortable tripod grip required for writing. For more information and ideas why not read the **parent factsheet about mark making**? Picking up small objects using their first two fingers and thumb also helps them to build and strengthen the muscles in their hands. You could try plastic tweezers to pick up dried peas (for example). Who can get most peas from one side of an area to another?
- Additional things can really help your child to be physically and emotionally prepared for school. Do you have a clear bedtime routine? Establishing a good routine in the weeks/months leading up to starting school will help. Your child will probably be very tired having been at school – starting a good bedtime routine before they start school will help. Also establishing (or maintaining) a good breakfast and getting dressed routine will be helpful to be organised in time to get to school. Changing routines after they start school may lead to more confusion.

PACEY IS THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS

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