



School Readiness

E-Book

Get your child reading-ready
for school!



- 7 Good Habits to Start Now
- Top Benefits of Reading Aloud
- Fun Games to Build Early Reading Skills
- 10 Things to Tackle Before School
- First Day Survival Skills
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SPECIAL 30-DAY FREE TRIAL

www.readingeggs.co.nz/getready

Let's Get Ready for School!

Time certainly flies doesn't it? One minute your little one is learning to take their first steps, the next they're almost ready to head off to school.

For many parents it can be a time of mixed emotion—excitement, apprehension and even a tinge of sadness (boy, do they grow up fast!). It can also be a confusing, overwhelming and stressful time. Endless questions start popping into your head—is my child ready for school? How can I prepare them in the best way possible?

Although school readiness involves a range of skills, studies have found that early exposure to reading has a direct impact on a child's schooling outcomes.

Other than reading regularly with your child, we've put together this handy e-book to help give your child a flying start in school and let you send them off on their next big adventure with confidence.

Happy reading!



7 Good Habits to Start Now

Studies show that reading is key to success. It enhances imagination, builds vocabulary and helps people learn more about the world. In fact, there's a direct link between toddlers being read to and their future school successes. Good early reading habits make for lifelong readers, so today's the best day to make new reading habits.

1. Regular reading at home

Education experts recommend reading with your child every day. Make it an enjoyable time. Choose a comfy place to sit and show excitement at the story.

2. Let your child choose their own books

Pick from your home library or visit the local library. Your child will be thrilled to have chosen a special book for reading time together.

3. Expose your child to new words

Reading a wide variety of books introduces new vocabulary. Use funny voices to create a lasting memory. Research links a larger vocabulary with greater reading success.

A few writing tips...

4. Practise writing letters

Young children see letters as shapes of straight and curved lines. It takes time to recognise and name letter shapes, and longer to link these to sounds. That shouldn't stop writing time! Ask your child to read their "writing" aloud and always praise efforts.

5. Take your time

Many children struggle with writing because they try to do it too quickly. Encourage your child to take their time to form letters, and let them know it's okay to make mistakes—which also means teaching them how to use an eraser!

6. Develop motor skills

A great activity to start your child writing is to trace over dotted lines in the shape of letters. This will help them develop their motor skills while learning letter formation at the same time.

7. Encourage proper pencil grip

The ideal way to hold a pencil is with the thumb, index and middle fingers holding the pencil, known as the 'tripod grasp'. Holding a pencil this way ensures greater movement and keeps the hand stable.

Top Benefits of Reading Aloud

1. Develops your child's vocabulary

Young children acquire language through listening. Reading aloud lets children regularly hear new words in new contexts, building vocabulary.

2. Builds connections

Point to the words on the page as you read aloud. This models to children the link between spoken and written language.

3. Provides enjoyment

Children (and many adults) enjoy being read to. Great storytellers use different voices and pace to make reading enjoyable.

4. Increases attention span and listening skills

Being read to allows events to unfold slowly. This encourages children to listen carefully to follow the story. This increased concentration boosts overall attention span.

5. Promotes bonding

Reading aloud with children provides benefits for adults too. The quality time spent together promotes bonding and strengthens relationships, making it easier for children to develop their social, communication and interpersonal skills.

“One of the greatest gifts adults can give – to their offspring and to their society – is to read to children.”
— Carl Sagan



3 Ways to Give Your Child a Strong Start in Reading

There are five pillars in reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. Children need to develop strength in all five areas to have reading success. Here's how you can give them a fantastic head start.

1. Develop listening skills

One of the earliest reading skills a child will develop is **phonemic awareness**. This is a listening skill. It is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to form words.

Simple nursery rhymes can really help your child develop an ear for language. Read and sing nursery rhymes regularly and have fun with it. Sing the same rhymes over and over, and add in children's songs and poems.

The first sound can be the easiest to hear so highlight the same sounds in everyday chatter. *"We're going to put milk on your cereal, Mickey. Milk and Mickey both start with the mmm sound."*

Another fun idea is to play games like **I Spy the Sound** where you ask your child to spy words beginning with a certain sound. For example, *"I spy with my little eye something beginning with mmm."*

As they get more confident, you can ask questions about beginning sounds.

- **Snake and scissors start with ssss. What else starts with sss?**
- **What's the beginning sound in butter?**
- **What words start with the t sound?**

"Phonemic awareness is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to form words."



3 Ways to Give Your Child a Strong Start in Reading

2. Connect letters and sounds

Phonics makes the connection between letters and spoken sounds. It's knowing that letters represent sounds. For example, knowing that the letter b represents the sound /b/, and that it is the first letter in words such as ball, boots, bear and bee.

One of the best ways for young children to begin learning phonics is through playing phonics games and activities that make the learning process fun and engaging.

Fun Phonics Games to Play at Home

Letter Races

1. Find a magnetic board, magnetic letters and a bit of space.
2. Set up the magnetic board on one side of the room and place the letters in a basket or bowl on the other side.
3. Call out a sound and ask your child (with a 'ready, set, go!') to pick out the correct magnetic letter and run over as fast as they can to stick it on the board.

Phonics Hopscotch

1. Get a piece of chalk and find some space outside.
2. Draw hopscotch markings on the ground. It's up to you how many squares to include, start with 4–6 letters.
3. In each square draw a letter of the alphabet.

There are a number of ways to play the game:

- One way to play is to call out a letter, or a combination of letters, and ask your child to jump on the correct squares. As they do this, they should sound out each letter.
- A second way to play is to call out a word and your child needs to jump to the correct initial letter.
- The third way to play (which also builds counting skills) is to roll a die and ask your child to jump to the square that matches the number rolled, counting the squares as they jump and sounding the letter out at the end.



3 Ways to Give Your Child a Strong Start in Reading

3. Build comprehension skills

Choose books that interest your child and read together on a daily basis. Once you've read a book, discuss the story and ask questions. Talk about the characters, re-tell the key parts of the story, and predict what might happen next.

These discussions will develop your child's comprehension abilities and build vocabulary, language and emergent literacy skills.

Another fun and effective way to build your child's comprehension skills is by enacting or visualising main ideas through role-play.

Encourage your child to act out a story in the right order and take on different roles. Role-play is also a great way to expand your child's vocabulary. Act out scenarios that involve different characters to introduce new words.



10 Things To Tackle Before Starting School

Research shows that children who are well-prepared for their first year of school have a much better chance of settling in.

Here are ten skills that will help your child feel confident and ready for their biggest adventure yet.

1. Listen to and follow simple instructions

What you can do: Give your child daily tasks around the house, like putting away their toys or setting the table for breakfast in the morning.

2. Communicate their needs

What you can do: Encourage your child to speak in complete sentences of five to six words, such as *"I would like some water, please."* or *"I need help with this word."* Always encourage them to explain how they are feeling: *"I am hungry."* *"My leg hurts."* *"I would like to play outside."*

3. Getting ready

What you can do: Help your child practise dressing each morning until they can do it independently. This includes zipping trousers, buttoning shirts, putting on socks and taking off gloves and jackets. At lunch and break time, your child will need to get out their lunch and water bottle. Teach them how to open and pack away their lunchbox as well as opening food packaging and containers.

4. Share toys with others and take turns

What you can do: Play board games at home to help your child become familiar with taking turns. If you have more than one child, encourage them to work on projects and tasks together at home.

5. Understand and retell simple stories

What you can do: If you don't have a regular reading routine at your house, it's never too late to start. Numerous studies have found that children who are read to regularly at home will have a much better chance at succeeding in school overall. Encourage your child to retell stories you have read by drawing pictures, using puppets and role-playing.

6. Match and sort objects

What you can do: Use books, songs, and play guessing games that teach your child about matching and sorting. Start by pairing up socks or their own shoes. Then they can move to sorting. Sort by colour, size, shape or feel.

10 Things To Tackle Before Starting School

7. Identify patterns, shapes and colours

What you can do: Help your child point out patterns when you're out together (e.g. in clothing, along a footpath, in a picture) and turn it into a fun game. Hang up colour and shape charts at home and let your child experiment with watercolours, crayons, blocks, playdough or clay to get familiar with colours and shapes.

8. Identify some numbers

What you can do: Help your child point out numbers on a regular basis, like on the television, in books, on a keypad or on a phone. There are also many children's books and online games like Mathseeds that teach children to count. Show your child how numbers are used in everyday activities, like following a recipe, keeping score during a game, or measuring and weighing objects.

9. Identify some letters

What you can do: Use alphabet charts that include uppercase and lowercase versions of each letter. Games like letter races and phonics hop-scotch (see page 6) are great ways to build your child's understanding of the relationship between letters and their sounds.

10. Begin to identify some sight words

What you can do: The first 100 high-frequency sight words make up more than fifty per cent of primary level reading texts, so the sooner your child masters sight words, the more confidence they will have, and the faster they will progress towards reading fluently. While learning a handful of sight words before school is highly beneficial for developing early reading skills, parents shouldn't be too worried if their child doesn't grasp this until later.



First Day of School: Top 7 Survival Skills

1. Visit the school with your child

Find out if your school runs an open day or tours of the buildings. If not, you can drive past the school with your child or even walk through the grounds after checking in with the administration office. This is a great way to get your child excited about beginning a whole new journey in a brand new place. Afterwards, you can get them to draw a picture of what they remember or what they are looking forward to most about starting school.

2. Meet the teacher

Meeting the teacher is a helpful way to make your child's transition from your care into another's much easier. If they know who they will be spending each day with from the get-go, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed or upset. Before the meeting, ask your child if there are any questions they would like to ask their new teacher, and encourage them to ask questions on their own.

3. Arrange play sessions

Arrange play sessions with other children who will be starting school together with your child. By seeing familiar faces and having already established some friendships, they will be less likely to feel alone and nervous on their first day.

4. Complete your school supplies checklist

Instead of feeling overwhelmed the night before, prepare a few days in advance to tick off all of the school supplies you'll need. These include things like a pencil case, crayons, erasers, pencil sharpener and child-safe scissors. Lunch essentials include things like a durable lunch box, plastic drink bottles with non-drip caps and food for packed lunches. Don't forget to label everything with your child's name.



First Day of School: Top 7 Survival Skills

5. Practise putting things in their bag

Before their first day, your child should know how to put things into their school bag, or at least feel comfortable asking their teacher for help. Other ways you can improve your child's independence before starting school is by helping them to practise putting on their shoes, eating and drinking without help, going to the toilet on their own, and using a tissue to blow their nose.

6. Play board games and practise taking turns

Children need to understand to take turns, especially when they're about to be put into a situation with a larger group of children. Playing board games with the whole family or with other children is a great way to encourage your child to wait patiently and understand the concept of fairness.

7. Set a daily routine

Daily routines can help children understand what they need to do, when to do it each day, and why it's important. To help prepare your child for school, get them into a routine which includes going to bed early, waking up at a certain time and eating a healthy breakfast. Before your child starts school, make sure you talk to them about what to expect. Remember to be flexible, as it may take some time for them to understand their new routine and adjust comfortably.



Five Fabulous First Day of School Ideas

We've put together five fabulously fun ideas to help you celebrate your child's first day of school and mark it as a truly memorable occasion!

1. 'First Day of School Breakfast'

For a very simple and traditional first day of school idea, what better way to mark the occasion than with an extra special breakfast?

A great way to let them know how special they are on their first day of school is by whipping up a surprise 'First Day of School Breakfast' filled with all of their favourites!

2. Say cheese!

Images are a powerful way to evoke special family memories, and every parent wants to capture a great shot of their child's first day of school.

You can capture your child stepping onto the school bus for the very first time, or have them holding a sign written with all of their favourite foods, toys, books and activities that year. Another popular idea is to have them posing by the same tree, swing or mantel each year to put together a beautiful series of them growing up, all the way from primary school to their last day of high school.

3. Launch your brand new homework station

Your child's new homework station should be prepared in advance. You can even unveil it as a special surprise when your child comes home from their first day.

Set aside a quiet space in the house, or in your child's room, for their homework station. You want a place with few distractions, and include a desk, some shelves, pencils, highlighters, folders, books and a comfortable chair.

When they come home from school, arrange an official 'Homework Station Launch' by decorating their chair with balloons and tying a ribbon over their desk for them to cut (with their new pair of safety scissors of course!).



Five Fabulous First Day of School Ideas

4. Create a time capsule

A time capsule creates a fun and very special opportunity to record your child's feelings and thoughts about their first day of school experience, from the months or weeks leading up to the day, to their very first few weeks.

Ask your child to help you decorate an old shoebox or used jar and label it with their name and date. Then have them draw a picture about what they're feeling or what they enjoy doing most.

Now for the tricky part – pop everything into the time capsule and try to forget all about it! You can choose to keep it hidden until the new school year or give it to your child when they finish high school.

5. Make a Schultüte ("School Cone")

This is a long-running German tradition where parents or grandparents give their child a large cardboard cone, decorated and filled with toys, chocolates, sweets and school supplies. The purpose of the tradition is to make the anxiously awaited first day of school just a little bit sweeter!

To make your very own Schultüte, take a large sheet of poster board and hold the shorter end facing you. Roll the paper into a cone shape (ensuring the bottom is nice and pointy) and tape it closed with heavy duty tape.

Trim the edge with scissors to straighten it and once your cone is ready, pack it with your child's favourite treat and toys, plus some handy school supplies.

Close the Schultüte by gluing or stapling a cloth or coloured tissue paper to the outer rim of the cone and tying it together with a ribbon.

However you choose to celebrate your child's first day of school, we hope it's filled with excitement and joy (and maybe just a few happy tears!) for the brand new journey ahead.



Learn to Read in 30 Days FREE!

Give your child a strong start in school with **Reading Eggs**, the multi-award winning online reading programme for ages 2–13.

Designed by experienced primary educators, Reading Eggs is **based on solid scientific research** to make learning to read easy and fun for young kids. The programme teaches the essential reading skills children need to succeed in school, including **phonics, phonemic awareness and sight words**, and has been used by **over 10 million children worldwide**.

Lessons **match your child's ability** and feature colourful animations, catchy songs, entertaining characters and exciting rewards, which really motivate them to keep learning and improving.



AGES 2-4 First Steps

- ✓ Phonics
- ✓ Letter recognition



AGE 5 Fun Practice Makes Perfect

- ✓ E-books
- ✓ Spelling



AGES 6-7 Ready for School

- ✓ Sight words
- ✓ Vocabulary



AGES 7-13 Continuing the Journey

- ✓ Comprehension
- ✓ Live games

See how fast your child's reading skills improve in just 15 minutes a day!
Take advantage of our special **30-day FREE trial** below.



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