

Starting Reception

Key messages

'Starting Reception' provides an agreed set of skills and activities that families can use to help their children feel confident and prepared for school.

The definition is backed by Government and was developed by a unique collaboration of leading early years organisations and experts.

It is designed to close the gap between teachers' and parents' understanding of school readiness, highlighted in [Kindred Squared's annual School Readiness Survey](#) as well address the fact that there is currently no official definition of school readiness, despite increasing recognition of its importance in a child's early development, and a Government pledge to increase the number of children who are school-ready.

The [Starting Reception website](#) features a number of supporting resources including a downloadable version of the definition, links to information and guidance on helping children develop each of the key skills and customisable marketing assets such as flyers and posters.

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Useful quotes

Stephen Morgan, Minister for Early Education: 'Improving school readiness is the cornerstone of our Plan for Change, because we know giving children the best start in life is vital to break the unfair link between background and opportunity. This new website [Starting Reception], developed by experts across the early years sector, offers families clear, trusted advice on building key skills through everyday routines and play. It is a great example of the remarkable expertise and dedication across this sector. Their work, alongside that of parents, is instrumental in helping children grow, thrive and take those first steps into school with confidence'

Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education: 'Giving every child the best start in life is my top priority, and is a cornerstone of our Plan for Change which will ensure tens of thousands more children are school ready by the end of the parliament. Children arriving at school without the skills they need not only limits their opportunities, but the opportunities of every child in that classroom. That's why we have already started urgent work on new school-based nurseries, extending early learning support, and strengthening join-up of family services – but this issue can't be tackled by government alone. This new resource will be a vital tool for parents as they navigate the myriad information out there to support their child's early development, and it's brilliant to see Kindred Squared and the wider sector coming together on something so central to children's life chances.'

Felicity Gillespie, Director, Kindred Squared: 'Our annual school readiness reports consistently highlight a persistent problem. There is a deeply worrying gap between what teachers expect children starting in Reception to be able to handle from day one when compared with what parents say their children are able to do. Too many parents say they don't know what sorts of skills their children should be developing prior to starting school or where to go for help. I'm delighted this partnership of leading education groups and charities is trying to close that information gap to ensure all children get an equal start from their very first day at school. We want to see official backing for this new definition and for it to become the definition adopted by every local authority, primary school and early education and childcare setting in the UK as well as parents and carers. This new definition, backed by many leading experts and trusted partners, will help parents and carers ensure their children reach school readiness milestones so that they can be confident they are ready to start school and thrive from day one.'

Molly Devlin, Director of Early Years at Ark Start: 'The Starting Reception website is an important resource for parents and carers, with clear, practical guidance on what starting school involves and how to help children feel confident and ready. At Ark Start, we work very closely with families and see the positive impact that the right support at the right time can make.'

Catherine McLeod, Chief Executive of Dingley's Promise: 'We are delighted that the 'Starting Reception' definition considers the needs of children with SEND and their families. As an organisation which supports children with SEND in the early years, we are acutely aware of the importance of taking a collaborative approach. Sharing information around developmental progress and needs ensures that education settings are ready to support children, and helps parents with the vital preparation of key skills in the home.'

Jason Elsom, Chief Executive of Parentkind: 'Starting school is a big moment for any child but it's a big moment for parents too. We wanted to make sure the voice of parents was heard loud and clear in a new national definition of what it means to be school ready. Experts, including those at Parentkind, have come together to work out what children do and don't need to know before they start school. Most importantly, parents have had their say on this new definition of school readiness. It's not a standardised test, every child is different and not every child will be able to achieve everything set out in this new definition at the same time, but the most important thing is we help parents understand what will help their child thrive when they begin at school.'