

Parents:

Partners in Learning



The
Basic Skills
Agency

SureStart

department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Primary
National Strategy

Primary education



Primary education is vital to children's development, laying the foundations for life and providing them with rich experiences and a broad and balanced curriculum in a happy, safe and supportive environment.

How Primary education is organised

Stage	Age	Year
Foundation Stage	3–5	Range of early years settings – including pre-schools, approved childminders in accredited networks, early years centres, nurseries, and nursery and reception classes in primary schools.
Key Stage 1	5–6	Year 1
	6–7	Year 2
Key Stage 2	7–8	Year 3
	8–9	Year 4
	9–10	Year 5
	10–11	Year 6

Children transfer to Key Stage 3 at the end of Year 6; most children will move to a secondary school, though in some areas a system of middle school education exists with children transferring at the end of Year 4 or Year 5.

Transferring from one key stage to another can be a time of uncertainty for a child, even if they are not moving to another school. It is important for all concerned to be aware of this and to provide support to help children make the move as smoothly as possible.

Parents make a real difference



You play a crucial role in the education of your children. You are your child's key educator and know your child better than anyone else.

There is a wealth of research evidence which shows that children do better when:

- ▶ there is a close working partnership between home, early years setting and school
- ▶ information about children's learning is shared between everyone involved in the child's successful development
- ▶ parents show a keen interest in their children's education and make learning a part of everyday life
- ▶ children are actively involved in making decisions about their own learning.



**YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE: YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT
TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN**

Children learn from birth



From the moment they are born, children start to learn and begin to acquire the most important skills in life, such as forming relationships and communicating.

Many will spend time with a childminder or attend an early years setting where the adults who care for them will encourage and support this learning.

Between the ages of 3 and 5, children constantly learn as they experience the world around them. They grow, develop, and learn rapidly.

Play is central to children's learning, providing opportunities for them to explore, develop their imagination, communicate with others and extend their language and thinking.

► **Talking with your children and listening to what they have to say**

telling them stories and sharing books, teaching them rhymes, involving them in any writing that takes place at home and in any activities involving mathematics, will all help to ensure that children grow and develop successfully.

► **As children move through primary school, they continue to need your interest and support.**

► **Find out what your children are learning at school**

encourage them to develop their interests, help with homework, but most of all, talk with them and listen to them.

Sharing information



You have seen your child develop from birth and so have a wealth of knowledge about their talents, their needs and how they learn.

The adults working with your child in early years settings and schools have the knowledge of the curriculum and its assessment. They can help you to build on your knowledge to support your child's learning. Similarly, sharing your knowledge of your child with practitioners and teachers can ensure that learning is as effective and enjoyable as possible.

Your early years setting or school will keep you informed about what your child is learning, how you can best provide support and how you can build on this learning at home. This will enable you to work in partnership so that your child's education is happy and successful. If you need more information, ask to discuss this with staff.

- ▶ **Don't forget:**
your child will be a more successful learner when his or her views and opinions are taken into account and when they are considered to be full partners in their learning.
- ▶ **Don't forget:**
your child can help you to understand what they are learning. Encourage them to explain current teaching strategies, e.g. ask them about the mental and oral starter to their mathematics lesson, or ask them to show you how to use a number line to help with addition.
- ▶ **Don't forget:**
the setting or school may provide written guidance on the curriculum areas being covered each term and specific information on homework. Many parents find this helpful when planning outings, holiday activities or choosing appropriate presents.

Working together to support your child's learning

Learning takes place anywhere and everywhere



Learning doesn't only take place in schools and helping your child to learn doesn't only mean sitting down to do homework with them. Learning can take place anywhere – in the home, in the street and in the wider community.

Take advantage of everyday opportunities to help your child develop the skills, so essential to their learning-solving process, asking questions, increasing their vocabulary, gaining confidence.

Play 'I Spy' on the bus to help recognise the first sounds in words.

Get your child to help work out the cost of that holiday you're planning.

Write the shopping list together, check the items off as you select them at the shop, count them as you unpack the shopping at home.

Introduce your children to as wide a range of experiences as you can. Have you thought about:

- ▶ **Visiting the local library?**
Many libraries run activities for children, from story reading to computer clubs – they offer story tapes, videos, DVDs, music tapes and CDs as well as books.
- ▶ **Visiting a nearby museum or art gallery?**
Most museums and galleries provide specific activities and facilities for children and are often free of charge.
- ▶ **Visiting the park or an historical site?**
Children learn best when they are active and are having fun.
- ▶ **Joining your children in regular exercise – walking, running, swimming, cycling?**
It is important that children are always encouraged to be physically active.

Work on the Internet together to plan a research project or to e-mail relatives and friends. Get your child to show you their favourite websites.

When watching a film or TV programme, talk about the characters and predict what they might do next, or discuss the plot.

Learning is
for life:
it starts
from birth
and continues
throughout our
lives



There are many ways that families can learn together. Family time is time with your children when you can enjoy each other's company. It is a good time for talking, listening, or just having fun together.

Many early years settings and schools have family learning programmes where parents and children learn together, where parents can further develop their own skills and where you can find out more about your children's education.

Many early years settings and schools provide Storysacks.

A Storysack contains a book together with supportive materials, e.g. soft toys of the book's main characters, an audio-tape of the story, a game or a non-fiction book on the same theme. Find out whether your early years setting or school has a Storysack programme and take part!

"Amy was helping me work out how many tiles we needed for our new bathroom – by using the methods she had been taught in school. We solved it together and I learnt something new!"

Amy's Dad

"I was always frightened of teaching her in the wrong way – it's all so different now. The best advice I was given was to get Usha to explain it to me. I learned something new and she said this helped her to understand it better."

Usha's Dad

"I had to interview someone in my family. I chose my granddad and he told me all about the first moon landing – he watched it live on television – he made it sound really exciting. I didn't know he was such a good storyteller."

Andrew

"I was surprised at how much Jack could teach me about using the Internet, but he needed my help in understanding what was relevant to the project."

Tom's Dad

Information page



How can you find out more?

- ▶ Talk to teachers and other adults at your child's early years setting or school. They will be happy to discuss your child's strengths, interests and needs.
- ▶ Attend parent and family workshops and meetings to find out what your child is learning and how you might best support them.
- ▶ Find out about any courses that are being offered by your child's early years setting or school which would be of interest to you.
- ▶ Get involved – join the Parent/Teacher Association or Parent Association, become a Parent Governor, volunteer your help in other ways. Contact the headteacher to find out what opportunities there are.

Some useful materials: **Learning Journey**

Learning Journey, ages 3–7 (Ref: 0122/2000)

Learning Journey, ages 7–11 (Ref: 0123/2000)

Help your children learn

A series of 8 leaflets providing information and guidance for parents (ref: HYCL/1–8)

Acknowledgement is made to Sally and Richard Greenhill for photograph bottom left on the cover, top of page 3 and on page 6.

▶ Log on to one of the following websites:

www.parentcentre.gov.uk

The Parents' Centre website provides a wide range of information about your child's education.

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement

This website provides information on all aspects of parental involvement including partnerships between schools and parents, Parent/Teacher Associations, the role of Parent Governors and about the curriculum.

www.surestart.gov.uk

This website provides information about the SureStart programme, covering early education, health and family support.

www.basic-skills.co.uk

The Basic Skills Agency provides guidance on teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. Support is provided to enable parents to help their children and a range of resources are available to help develop parents' own skills.

www.parentsonline.gov.uk

An interactive site which offers support to parents and provides a register of useful websites of interest to children of different ages.

SureStart – Birth to three matters

A framework for parents, carers and professionals to support children in their earliest years (ref: BIRTH)

All available to download from

www.parentcentre.gov.uk/publications or by telephoning 0845 6022260