



First Steps Into Foundation Stage

**A guide for parents and carers on preparing
children to succeed in Foundation Stage**



HORDLE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
WHERE LEARNING MATTERS

Foundation Stage is a special year at school where children begin to develop a wide range of skills. In order to make the transition from pre-school to primary school as smooth as possible, it will be essential to consider the following useful tips:

Personal development



Toileting

Foundation stage classrooms can be busy places with many exciting activities for your child to participate in. Please encourage your child to leave plenty of time to get to the toilet in order to try to avoid unnecessary accidents from occurring.



Your child will need to ask a grown up before going to the toilet at school. Please help them to practice communicating these needs appropriately over the Summer holidays. For example 'Please can I go to the toilet?'

Reception classes often have fewer staff than pre-school settings. For this reason it is important that your child is able to manage their own personal hygiene. Please help your child with this to ensure they can wipe themselves after they have used the toilet and that they can also wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.

Some accidents are inevitable, please teach your child to tell an adult that they have had an accident – we will of course help them get changed. We do have a limited supply of spare pants and clothes at school but we ask that ALL children have a change of clothes in a named plastic bag which will stay on their peg.



Dressing

Your child will need to be able to put their jumper, coat and Nature Discovery kits on independently. It may help them to have a few tries at this over the holidays so that they are confident to do this at school.

They should also be able to put on and take off their own shoes and socks. Shoes with a Velcro fastening may make this task easier.



School lunches

If your child is going to be having a cooked school dinner they will be given help to cut up their food by the lunchtime supervisors. However, children are expected to eat their meal with a knife and fork. Please encourage your child to practice using a knife and fork over the summer.



Children bringing a packed lunch will be given any necessary help to open any packets or wrappers. Any uneaten food will be returned in the lunch box so that you can see what your child has had for lunch. No nut products are allowed in packed lunches due to children with severe nut allergies attending our school.

English, Communication and Languages

Communication and language are true gifts: they allow children to understand the world around them and to express their thoughts and opinions. They are the keys to unlock all aspects of learning.

Here are a few useful tips to develop your child's communication and language skills before they arrive in September:



Listening Walks

When going for a walk with your child, ask them to share with you the sounds they can hear such as: cars, birds or people. Once they get good at this, encourage them to listen out for all the sounds they can hear and then tell you after about ten minutes. This will help to develop their memory skills.



Hide and Seek

Choose a number of items with recognisable sounds, for example: a rattle, a tambourine and saucepan. Then, get them to close their eyes while you hide one of the objects. They need to guess (from the sounds you made) what the object is and where you have hidden it.

Expanding Sentences

When your child communicates with you using a few words, model how to expand these words into a sentence:

Child: Daddy gone.

Adult: Yes. Daddy's gone to work.

In particular, some children in Foundation Stage need help to express the following:

Child: Toilet.

Adult: Please can I go to the toilet?

Child: Coat.

Adult: Please can you help me put my coat on?

Be Conversational

Use your child's comments as conversation starters. Listen carefully to the child and then repeat back what they've said. This will encourage them to keep talking.

Child: Good day.

Adult: You had a good day, did you?

Child: On the bikes.

Adult: You were playing on the bikes? What did you like about playing on the bikes?



Reading Names

Children in Foundation Stage will be allocated a peg with their name on. It is important that your child can recognise their first name by sight so they can hang up their coat and book bag and learn to become independent. This will also be useful when checking they have the right jumper or lunch box.

Letters

It is a wonderful idea to introduce your child to letters by putting up a poster or an alphabet display in their bedroom. However, it is essential that children are taught the sounds which the letters make and NOT the letter names. When they arrive at school in September we will continue to teach letter sounds and it can be confusing for some children if they are only familiar with the letter names.



a = a a a a and not ay
b = b b b b and not bee
c = c c c c and not see

Reading Books

Your child will be introduced to stories and books when they first arrive in Foundation Stage. Initially, all children will start with picture books as these encourage children to talk about what might be happening in the story and develop the use of picture clues and make predictions, essential skills in learning to read. It is a great idea to sit with your child regularly and interact with picture books, learning to turn the pages and make up stories together.



Nursery Rhymes

Nursery rhymes are a great way of developing your child's language. Not only are nursery rhymes enjoyable but they also demonstrate how basic stories are structured. Even 'Humpty Dumpty' is a simple story with a beginning, middle and an end. Over time, children will learn more complex rhymes and stories which build on these basic features. It is these patterns of language which children will draw on when they begin to write stories of their own. Therefore, it will help to develop your child's language skills by enjoying a wide range of nursery rhymes both at school and at home.



Every Day Print

Point out signs which you encounter in everyday life such as 'Fire Exit' signs and 'Open' and 'Closed' signs and the lights at pedestrian crossings. It is useful for children to understand that we are surrounded by words in real-life which are important for us to read.



Early Writing

Becoming a writer requires the ability to hold a pen or pencil and this is a skill which many children in Foundation Stage can find difficult. In order to help your child feel like a confident writer, they need to do lots of activities which will develop the muscle control in their hands and fingers. Why not try a few of these:

- Use playdough to make lots of different shapes/objects;
- Use scissors to cut along a line;
- Use crayons or colouring pencils to colour inside a line;
- Help to peg out the washing (using pegs can be something that many children struggle with);
- Use tweezers or tongs to pick up objects and sort them;
- Playing with finger puppets;
- Hold a pencil and grip it accurately;



Handwriting Movements



It is important not to push children into handwriting unless they seem keen and interested in learning how to do this. If they show interest in writing, it is a good idea to give them a tray of sand or rice so they can experiment with making patterns using their fingers. Encourage them to move more than one finger at a time through the sand.

Writing Your Own Name

It would be useful if your child arrived in Foundation stage able to write their first name so they can independently label their work. They should use a capital letter for their first name but lower case letters for the rest.

Making Writing Real

If your child is feeling confident about writing, encourage them to use it in real life situations, such as:

- Putting their name on the bottom of a postcard;
- Adding their name to a Christmas or birthday card;
- Signing their name in the corner of a painting;
- Give them a variety of paper and lots of writing tools to play with;



By following some of the tips in this guide, your child will arrive in the Foundation Stage as a confident individual, equipped with the skills which will allow them to understand the world around them and express their thoughts, opinions and passions. With the care and guidance from our Foundation Stage team, your child will flourish, developing all the skills they need to become learners for life.