

## What else is important?

### Getting Dressed

- Encourage your child to dress independently. This skill will be required when changing for PE.
- They should be able to put their coat on and have a good go at zipping it up.
- Practise taking their shoes on and off; a very important skill when wanting to play dressing up!

### Toileting

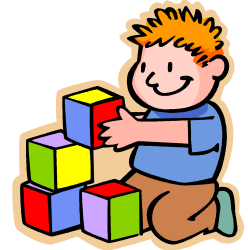
- Support your child to become independent in using the toilet, flushing it and washing their hands.
- Ensure they are able to recognise independently when they need to go to the toilet before it is too late!

### Using a knife and fork



- Help your child to use cutlery correctly. Make sure that it is an appropriate size for their age.
- Count down clocks, timers to beat and sticker/reward charts are all great ways to support your child to develop these skills. Have fun!

## How can I help to prepare my child for school?



Handy hints and tips to support your child at home.

## Developing thinking and a culture of enquiry

At Deeping St James we are very passionate about allowing children to develop their knowledge by asking questions and exploring the world around them using first hand experiences. We want them to become independent thinkers and learners.



- Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Pose questions for them to think about too. Open ended questions allow your child to think creatively and explore their knowledge.

E.g. What do you think that box is for?

Odd one out questions can also be lots of fun and show children there can be more than one answer to a question.

E.g. Which is the odd one out the knife, the fork or the spoon?

## Counting and Recognising shapes

Use the world around you to expose your child to numbers and shapes. Encourage them to begin to count and recognise numbers (up to 20). Talk about the shapes that you can see.

- Look at the numbers on houses or number plates.
- Count body parts, jars, worms, flowers; you name it and ask your child to count it!
- Find shapes in the house, garden or at the supermarket and talk about what they are.
- Use shapes to make pictures or patterns.

## Sharing books and Reading

Exposing your child to books and writing will support their ability to read and develop their knowledge of the world around them.

- Read stories together, allowing your child to follow the text with you (don't forget to use expression and get into the characters!)
- Allow them to handle and explore the book independently.
- Look at and discuss signs, posters, lists, notices and labels.

## Gross and Fine Motor Skills

Developing gross and fine motor skills are the first steps in learning to write. Children need to have developed the correct muscles and grips before they can be expected to use a pencil.

### Gross motor skills

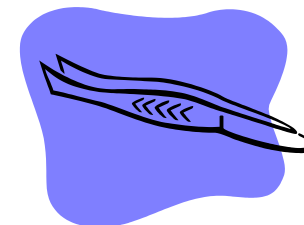
Here are some activities and ideas to support your child in developing their gross motor skills:

- Go to the park and play on the monkey bars or stepping stones.
- Throw catch and kick a large ball.
- Ask them to move around like a different animal e.g. slither like a snake, stretch tall like a giraffe.
- Balance on one leg and then the other. How long can you do it for?
- Lift tins/toys into different places.
- Ride bikes or scooters. Encourage them to push their legs.
- Create obstacle courses from pillows, chairs, boxes etc.
- Push and pull different materials or toys.

### Fine motor skills

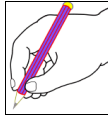
Here are some activities and ideas to support your child in developing their fine motor skills:

- Thread beads onto a shoe lace.
- Pick up small items with their thumb and finger or use a pair of tweezers.
- Move and manipulate playdough or plasticine.
- Play with pegs.
- Explore screwing and unscrewing with screws and nuts.
- Sort buttons, or even sweets, into colours.
- Threading or weaving with pipe cleaners or laces.
- Stretch all of their fingers with a rubber band around them.
- Peel off stickers and press them down to make pictures.



## Making Marks and Learning to Write

Please do not worry about ensuring your child can write but if your child is ready and wants to write please support them and encourage the correct pencil grip and letter formation (see letter formation guidance provided in your pack).



Here are some ideas to support and encourage the early stages of writing:

- Use a stick/finger to make marks/form letters in the mud.
- Use a paintbrush/fingers and water to make marks/form letters outside (great because it also 'magically' disappears!).
- Make marks/form letters in the bath using soap suds.
- Draw on paper or slabs with chalks.
- Use fingers, paints, crayons, pens, pencils and anything they can get their hands on to make marks, scribble or even write letters.

Remember any mark making is good mark making!

- Don't dumb down the answers; you will be surprised how much they take in.
- Find out answers together; allow them to see you 'learning' too.
- Explore the world around you. Take opportunities to use your senses: discuss what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch.
- Encourage imaginative play and role play. Allow children opportunities to explore fantasy worlds as well as real life situations. This promotes lots of creativity, thinking and talking.

It can be as simple as making a den with a sheet under the table or working together to paint a space rocket!

Simply talking to your child is a fantastic way for them to learn, whether it be talking through the shopping list or explaining why there are clouds in the sky!