

# early years

## Cambridgeshire Principles of School Readiness

The **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage** (2017) “promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ ” (page 5). There is no national definition of ‘school readiness’ although the term is widely used. It can be interpreted in a number of different ways by parents, professionals and communities.

Children usually reach the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in the academic year that they become five years old before entering Key Stage One and accessing the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The Statutory Framework states that providers must work in partnership with parents and/or carers “to promote the learning and development of all children in their care, and to ensure they are ready for school” (page 7). Therefore, Cambridgeshire defines being ‘ready for school’ as the transition from Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

The UNICEF document ‘School Readiness: A Conceptual Framework’ (2012) identifies three dimensions which are important for a smooth transition:

1. Children’s readiness for school
2. Schools’ readiness for children
3. Families’ and communities’ readiness for school

Cambridgeshire have considered these aspects of ‘school readiness’ and have the following advice to ensure the transition to Year 1 is successful.

To be ‘school ready’, **children** need opportunities to:

- ❖ Feel socially, emotionally and physically secure to enable them to behave appropriately and become confident active learners;
- ❖ Develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning;
- ❖ Initiate activities, show initiative and make independent decisions about their learning;
- ❖ Have time to explore their own ideas and interests in depth, to make links and discuss their learning;
- ❖ Develop their concentration and become deeply involved in activities;

- ❖ Learn in different ways and recognise when they have learnt something new;
- ❖ Play co-operatively, learning to accept other's differences, to be resilient and to persevere when something is a challenge;
- ❖ Play and learn independently, at times without close supervision, taking responsibility for keeping themselves safe and healthy;
- ❖ Communicate with others in a wide range of contexts including asking and answering questions about their own learning;
- ❖ Become self-regulated learners who are motivated to have a go at things and ask for help when needed.

To support children in becoming 'school ready' **adults** should provide:

- ❖ Effective care for children's physical, social and emotional needs ensuring that high levels of well-being and involvement are supported, enabling deep level learning to take place;
- ❖ A 'Key Person' approach in which adults are sensitive to children's needs and ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs;
- ❖ An inclusive approach that meets the diverse needs of all children;
- ❖ Well planned, purposeful activities based on accurate assessments that engage, interest and challenge the children;
- ❖ Opportunities that widen children's knowledge, skills and horizons through the use of visits, visitors and group experiences;
- ❖ A stimulating environment inside and out where continuous provision is sufficiently flexible to meet individual needs, interests and motivations;
- ❖ A balance between children making purposeful choices about their activities (child initiated) which consolidate learning and adults directing (adult directed / initiated) what they do in order to teach specific skills;
- ❖ Opportunities to extend children's speaking skills through language rich environments;
- ❖ Active opportunities to teach positive behaviour through high expectations, intrinsic motivation and supporting children to look after themselves;
- ❖ Opportunities for children to be independent rather than doing things for them;
- ❖ Opportunities to develop positive relationships with parents and/or carers so that they can be active participants in their learning.

In addition, the role of **parents and/or carers** in supporting children to be 'school ready' is:

- ❖ To demonstrate an enthusiasm for lifelong learning, including a curiosity and desire to keep learning at any age;
- ❖ To provide a language rich home environment where talking, stories, rhymes and songs are of high importance;
- ❖ To provide opportunities for children to be sociable by interacting, sharing, playing and taking turns with others;
- ❖ To provide a wide variety of experiences at home, in the local environment and further afield where possible e.g. cooking, gardening, visits to local amenities;
- ❖ To encourage children to independently manage their own self-care including getting dressed, using the toilet, eating healthy foods and to be able to ask for help when needed;
- ❖ To prepare children for periods of transition by supporting their emotional well-being and being sensitive to their questions or concerns about change;
- ❖ To ensure children are physically well-prepared to get the most from the school day by having sufficient amounts of rest and nutrition.