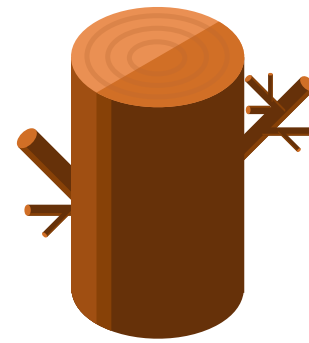


## Supporting your child's imagination and thinking skills in readiness for school



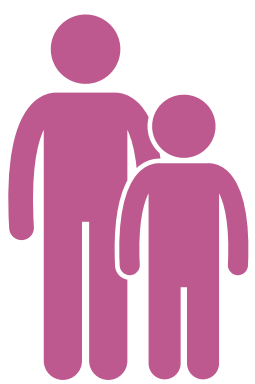
In the early years children learn best when they are excited and motivated about what they are learning. The types of play where children have to think for themselves, solve problems and use their ideas and imagination help children develop their thinking skills ready for school.

Many adults have the idea of ready for school as being ready to sit down and listen to learn but reception classes are full of opportunities for children to play and explore and follow their own ideas and not just the teacher's instructions.



Lots of toys only do one thing. Try to find things to play with that can be used in lots of different ways. Good examples are wooden blocks, small logs, tubes, an empty cardboard box (can be so many things!) and dressing up clothes like hats and capes that can be used to create different characters.

### How can I prepare my child for this type of learning?



Find opportunities for your child to explore their own ideas. Child-directed play (Play where the children have the ideas and the adult follows along) is great for this. Let your child take the lead.



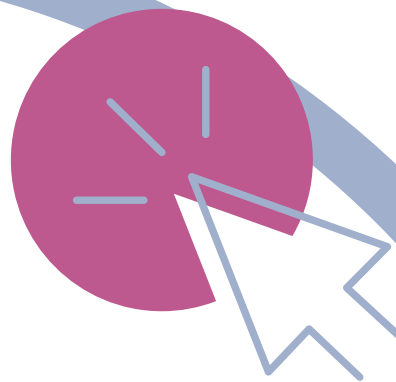
Talk, talk talk with your child. Talk about their ideas, what they are doing, and ask open questions such as

- What ideas did you have?
- What could you do next?
- How do you think we could do it?
- What do you think is happening?
- What do we need to find out?



Find play opportunities that include challenges and things for your child to work out for themselves. (See our examples in the video and over the page)

### Why not try....



**Open ended play ideas you can do at home**  
[Click for link](#)

**A drawing challenge game**  
[Click here for link](#)

### Did you know?



Praise makes a big difference. For your child to feel confident to have a go themselves and think of ways to solve problems they need to feel that it is ok to make mistakes and that their ideas will be valued.

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets out how children should learn and includes the reception year of school. Children in nursery and reception should be learning through play in ways that enable them to:

- Play, explore and 'have a go'
- Learn actively through 'doing'
- Create and think critically - have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

## Supporting your child's imagination and thinking skills in readiness for school



### Skills for school superheroes

Challenge your child to build something incredible using recycled materials such as cardboard boxes, tubes and packaging



Den building is a great problem solving activity. Let your child make the decisions about what to use and how to create it. Can they make it big enough for the whole family to get in?



### Thinking about Numbers

Early years maths is about more than just being able to recognise and write numbers

For children to be ready for maths in reception they need to know what numbers are for. Let them see and hear you using numbers in everyday situations like shopping, cooking and watching sport.

Find as many ways as you can to introduce the idea of counting. Sing counting songs and rhymes with your child.

Some children will show an interest in trying to write numbers. These may not look like numbers to start with and that is fine. The fact they are trying to record numbers is a brilliant thing so give them lots of praise



#### Why not try....

Sharing the story of The Hungry Caterpillar - it's full of counting!

[Click here for the video](#)

Setting up a number hunt

[Click here to find out how](#)