



Eaton Square Schools

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MISS ZANNA'S TOP SIX TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR RECEPTION

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As a Head of **Eaton Square's Nursery Schools** for over 20 years, Miss Zanna Clarke, now Principal of Miss Daisy's Nursery, shares her top tips for parents with children starting in Reception this year.

"For all Early Years skills, it is important to remember that – prior to starting in Reception – perfection is not needed; simply familiarity and an initial interest. Parents can help instil this by facilitating as much practice as possible, doing so in simple, fun ways from home."



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1. GETTING DRESSED

Children starting in Reception may sometimes still find it tricky to get themselves dressed. This is a major independent living skill, and a process parents can ease by getting coats/blazers/jumpers in a slightly larger size when choosing school clothing for their little one. Far easier for your child to slip on and off themselves; and by allowing room to grow they will hopefully last longer too!

Likewise, it is helpful for some to have shoes with Velcro fastenings; and to avoid wearing belts or braces.

By learning to dress and undress themselves, they are not only learning independence, they are also working on improving their logical thinking and motor skills.

2. GOING TO THE BATHROOM

Encourage your child to manage their own hygiene routines, particularly washing their hands and going to the toilet. The more they do this in their familiar home environment, the easier they will find this in their 'new' school environment.

3. EATING MEALS

Practice using a knife and fork and drinking independently from a cup at mealtimes. If your child is reluctant, perk up the process by setting challenges for how many bite-sized chunks they can cut their food up into.

4. READING AND WRITING

While your child will have had some exposure to reading and writing while at Nursery School, Reception is where these skills will take far greater form. Do not worry if your child is still at the mark-making stage – their writing skills will be honed by their specialist, qualified Reception teacher. There's no harm in practicing, but there's no need to pressurise the process.

Read to your child and let them read to you – irrespective of what the text says. Your child's reading skills may be minimal at this stage, so, as you read together, ask them questions about their thoughts on the story: Who, what, why etc. Not only does this stir imagination and creativity, it also helps instil a lifelong love of reading and storytelling.

5. PURPOSEFUL PLAY

This is one of the best ways to prepare your child for many aspects of Reception. In the kitchen, messy play is a fantastic, fun way to train their hand muscles required for writing. As an at-home activity, ask your child to thread pasta on a string, growing in size (rigatoni, penne, macaroni etc). Similarly you could task them with using tongs of varying sizes (such as kitchen tongs or tweezers) to transfer things like Cheerios, raisins or dried peas – going from left to right where possible, which encourages children to work from left to right naturally. Fantastic preparation for both reading and writing. Both are simple, highly effective ways of developing fine motor skills.



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6. GETTING OUTSIDE

You can use the garden, the park, nearby fields and other outdoor areas to really hone the gross motor skills needed in the Early Years. If these skills are strong, the fine motor skills (required for writing) will come even more easily. Encourage your child to climb, to swing, to run around, to dig, to hang, to slide – all are beneficial! Also encourage them to listen. Be it birdsong, traffic, the rustling of leaves – the more trained their ear is; the more open they will be to listening to instructions in the classroom.

My main piece of advice to all parents on their child's first day or week at school is: **Do not be afraid to leave them.** This can naturally feel tricky at first, but all Reception staff are professionals and your child will be in the safest possible hands and, at [Eaton Square Prep School](#), a truly exceptional learning environment.

To find out more about Eaton Square Prep and Nursery Schools, please click [here](#). If your child is looking for Reception 2022 onwards entry, Eaton Square are holding an open Morning on Thursday 14th October. To secure your place, please click [here](#).