

SCHOOL READINESS – Lincolnshire Early Years and Childcare – Putting Children First

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. EYFS2017 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>)

The United Nations World Fit for Children (WFFC) mission statement (2002) states **a good start in life, in a nurturing and safe environment enables children to survive and be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn.** It highlights the importance of a caring, safe and stimulating environment for the holistic development of young children.

Lincolnshire County Council has adopted Unicef's 2012 'School Readiness' conceptual framework ([https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/Child2Child_ConceptualFramework_FINAL\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/Child2Child_ConceptualFramework_FINAL(1).pdf)).

Ready children – focusing on children's learning and development

All children are born learners; exploring the world as babies long before they start school, continuing to learn; beyond the classroom in their everyday lives. Through:

- Learned behaviours – showing an interest in the world around them, sharing their ideas
- Attitude and emotional competence – resilience, listening to others, be interested to learn, being motivated to find out and discover and behaving in an appropriate manner
- Developmental maturation – fine and gross motor development

A child who is ready for school has the early skills and knowledge that will enable them to be successful in school including motivation to learn, curiosity, self-regulation, the ability to create their own ideas, work well with other children and engage in learning activities through playful experiences. Ready children are those who are able to learn in a range of ways:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Ready schools and early years provision – focusing on the learning environment, and smooth transition to primary school

Schools and early years provision must guide the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in their care complete the Foundation Stage ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them. Their readiness for children is defined in terms of environments that support a smooth transition for children and families:

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

Creating continuity and maintaining learning expectations for children between early learning and primary school environments is a defining characteristic of ready settings; the greater the gap, the greater the challenge to transition.

Ready settings seek to involve the child, their family and community through:

- High-quality learning environments that are safe, secure, inclusive and inspire awe and wonder
- Responsive, respectful and reflective teaching
- Child-centred practices focused on holistic development and learning
- Inclusive practices, that are fair, transparent and non-discriminatory.

Ready families – focusing on parents' and caregivers' experience and involvement in early learning/development

. There will always be stresses and strains to deal with in life, particularly when you have young children. Stress can get in the way of relationships and disrupt a calm home atmosphere. It is important to manage worries and stresses and not let them build up.. All professionals working with families have the responsibility to encourage :

- Loving safe caring homes that help children to develop Adults in their life to play an active role in their learning
- Awareness of what individual children need to grow and develop
- Steps to ensure positive maternal mental health.

Early intervention directly increases the wellbeing of families and their communities and that increase in wellbeing can have a positive effect on a range of other indicators, from children's educational progress to their parents' ability to get into work.

Why is school readiness important?

It has direct gains for children, families and schools including the positive impact on educational achievement, children's development and learning, school completion and success in adulthood.

It supports social equity and economic development: improving equity in access to education and in learning outcomes, with increased access to higher education and greater earnings benefits.

Health, education and development are intimately linked at several levels. Since child health is one of the main predictors of school readiness, investment in children's health improves education outcomes. In turn, investment in education improves health outcomes, developing basic health skills and the future health workforce.

What are the potential outcomes from positive action

Having a strong early years strategy, high quality services and a well trained workforce leads to better outcomes for children. Good antenatal care can help reduce poor nutrition, low birth weight and lack of routine immunisations. This can help support children to keep up with their friends. Parents will know how and when to best support their child to ensure they are ready to learn and ready for life

Access to a holistic approach to school readiness helps all adults to champion learning and foster curiosity . Working in partnership with other settings, other professional and with individual groups in the community positively supports children's development and progress.