

# Starting school: When knowing how to do up buttons on your clothes makes a big difference to your day

Submitted by: Catherine Lane PR

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New app supports parents in giving their child the best possible start at school

10th February 2016 – With a child's social skills and confidence topping parents' list of concerns when it comes to starting school\*, a new app has been launched to help equip pre-schoolers with the core skills they'll need in Reception.

Using fun games, activities and parents' own observations, Ready for School offers ideas and activities to help parents ensure their child makes the transition to school with ease.

The app contains sections on basic literacy, numeracy and phonics. However, as 'school readiness' also refers to softer skills – taking turns, concentrating and self-care – extensive emphasis is given to personal and emotional skills too.

"Soon after my daughter started school, she began pretending that she was ill on Wednesdays and not wanting to go to school," says Katie, a mother from Camden.

"After talking with her, she eventually told me it was because she had PE and was the slowest to get changed into her PE kit. This really affected her feelings about school and what was an otherwise smooth start. I just did not think that practising putting on or taking off clothes would be an important pre-school skill."

Ready for School is authored by Paul and Ann Broadbent, two highly experienced teachers and advisors who have written in excess of 600 educational books. Paul comments: "We all want our children to settle in well at school and forge firm friendships. Most parents recognise the crucial part they play in preparing their child for this new environment, but may not know the best way to go about it."

Ready for School has lots of suggestions for observing children, for example when playing with friends, to see if they join in or just watch. There is practical advice for boosting skills too, like putting time aside during the day when your child has to wait, which helps to develop concentration.

It's not bossy or prescriptive and many activities have been designed simply to create ideas for conversations between parent and child, such as what clothes they would wear on a cold or hot day. These activities can help children understand and accept new rules when they start school, such as the need to wear a sunhat in the playground on a hot day.

Paul says: "Basic letter recognition and counting is important in Reception and we cover these in the app, but at this age, it isn't about giving your child a competitive academic edge. {{ It's the little things that can make a big difference. Being able to get dressed easily for PE, for example, can boost a child's confidence and prevent any easily avoidable upsets. Doing up buttons or knowing the right order to get dressed in is easily practised at home.

“Ready for School enables attention to be given to all the different aspects that get children off to a happy start. This means parents can be confident in the knowledge their child is well-prepped to adapt to the new demands of school life.”}}

Ready for School is divided into three categories – Personal (such as dressing and friendship), Attitude (including being considerate and concentration) and Learning (maths, writing and phonics). Parents are encouraged to work with children as they are asked a series of questions by the app. This allows them to use the activities as opportunities for discussion. The child or parent can then respond, either verbally or by interactive screen, to the questions.

Results are recorded in different ways, according to the questions, and analysed before being fed back to the parent. This builds up a cumulative score to give a whole picture of a child’s readiness for school.

If skills in certain areas need development, the app gives suggestions for further practical activities, such as specific card games to improve attention span, or role-playing ideas to increase confidence in communicating.

The app usually costs £3.99 but is available at £2.99 as an introductory offer until midnight on 29th February. It is available to download from iTunes <http://apple.co/1nV3HqG>

Web site: [www.readyforschool.co.uk](http://www.readyforschool.co.uk)

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Twitter cue: New #StartingSchool app helps parents ensure their child is ready for school  
<http://apple.co/1nV3HqG>

Notes for Editors:

- Paul and Ann Broadbent are available for interview
- If you would like a free copy of Ready for School to trial, please contact Catherine Lane PR for a free app store redemption code (details below)
- \*Source: SurveyMonkey Questionnaire, amongst 34 parents, October 2014

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