

# RISE & SHINE

RISE NI (NHSCT) PRESCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the summer edition of the RISE NI NHSCT Preschool newsletter! It's hard to believe that we are coming towards the end of the school year and that the summer holidays are almost here. The 'holidays' will probably feel 'strange' again this year, but as lockdown measures are relaxed, hopefully we will be able to enjoy more time outdoors with family and friends. Given the global pandemic, your child's preschool year has not gone as planned and their transition into primary school will be very different. This edition of RISE & Shine will focus on what you, as parents/carers/families can do, to promote your child's readiness for school over the summer months. We hope you have an action packed and fun-filled summer, trying out some of our suggested activities. But first....

## WHAT DO WE DO?



RISE NI stands for the Regional Integrated Support for Education NI. We work with mainstream settings in the Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area to support staff and children from preschool through to the end of year 4. The service focuses on the following areas of development:

Social,  
emotional  
and/or  
behavioural

Speech,  
language  
and  
communication

Sensory  
processing,  
fine motor  
and visual  
perception

Gross motor

## FOR PARENTS...

The new RISE NI Parent Website can be accessed as follows:

<https://view.pagetiger.com/RISENI/parents>

On the website you'll find lots of useful information, leaflets, video demonstrations and training opportunities. Please check it out!



Welcome to RISE NI  
Parent Website



## RESILIENCE

When we talk about resilience, we're talking about a child's ability to cope with ups and downs, and bounce back from challenges e.g. moving house, going to primary school... Building resilience helps develop the basic skills and habits that will help them deal with challenges in later life. The following links may be of interest...

- "I Can Do It!" - Raising a Resilient Preschooler - [www.education.com/magazine/article/raising-resilient-preschooler/](http://www.education.com/magazine/article/raising-resilient-preschooler/)
- 'Five Ways to Build your Child's Resilience' - [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zy4rn9q](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zy4rn9q)

**Building resilience is important for school readiness...**



## WHAT IS 'SCHOOL READINESS'?

School readiness refers to whether a child is ready to make an easy and successful transition into primary school. While many people think of academics (e.g. writing their name, counting to 10, knowing colours) as the important school readiness skills, school readiness actually refers to a much broader range of skills. In addition to some academic basics, school readiness skills also include self care (independent toileting and opening lunch boxes), attention and concentration, physical skills (e.g. having the endurance to sit upright for an entire school day), emotional regulation, language skills and play and social skills.



## WHY ARE SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS IMPORTANT?

Without these basic skills already being established upon starting school, children can very quickly find themselves playing 'catch up.' Children who begin school with these building blocks (or foundation skills) in place, tend to progress more quickly than those who start school, only then to begin the process of developing school readiness.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S READINESS FOR SCHOOL?

- **Parenting expectations:** Increase your expectations of your child around self-care tasks such as dressing, toileting, eating, and getting ready to leave the house. Provide only verbal rather than physical 'help' to complete the tasks where possible.
- **Social skills:** Encourage your child to develop relationships with other (unfamiliar) children of a similar age, and arrange suitable 'play dates' for social interaction practice where the adults actively facilitate this play practice.
- **Books:** Expose your child to books to prepare them for literacy so they learn to sit through the entirety of a book.
- **Early preparation:** Start preparing your child for school by talking about expectations at school, appropriate behaviour, and regularly engaging in 'sit down' activities.

The next few pages give you lots of practical activities and ideas to build your child's foundations for learning and hence their school readiness. HAVE FUN!

## REMEMBER!

Every child is different and will start school with different skills and abilities...and that's OK!



## EMAIL US:

If you have any comments on the content of this newsletter or indeed any queries, please send an email to us at [riseni.nhsct@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:riseni.nhsct@northerntrust.hscni.net)



**Wishing everyone a very happy summer!**





## LET'S GET READY FOR SCHOOL

Children develop speech and language and communication at different rates, but during their P1 year they will be learning to:

- Understand spoken instructions, without stopping what they are doing
- Take turns in longer conversations
- Understand more complicated language e.g. first, last
- Use sentences that are well formed. However they may still have some difficulties with grammar e.g. saying 'mouses' for mouse, or 'eated' for ate
- Use most speech sounds correctly so their speech should be mostly understood by both familiar and unfamiliar listeners

(For further information on speech and language ages and stages, visit [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk))

## ACTIVITIES AND GAMES TO HELP GET YOUR CHILD READY FOR SCHOOL

## LISTENING WALKS

Listening to sounds helps develop attention and listening skills and encourages vocabulary. Go on listening walks e.g. in your home, back garden, town. Say to your child:

- Listen with your ears
- What sounds can you hear?
- Talk to them about the sounds - is it loud/quiet? Long/short?



## PICNIC TIME

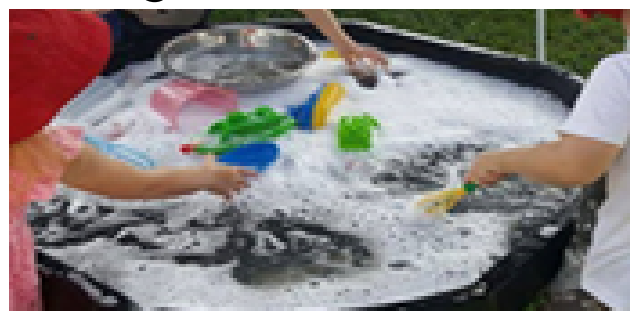


Plan a picnic with your child. Name things e.g. basket, food, rug. Talk about how you use these objects e.g. rug to sit on; bottle to pour the juice. Talk about how the food tastes e.g. sandwiches are soft, crisps are crunchy. Talk about what happened e.g. the plate is empty, the juice is finished etc.

## WATER PLAY

Have fun with water. Use a water tray or just a basin.

Water play helps your child to learn lots of describing words e.g. wet/dry, empty/full, light/heavy and action words e.g. washing, dripping, floating and sinking.



- **Follow your child's lead** - follow their lead and join in
- **Face-to-face play** - allow them to see your face and feel connected to you

## SCAVENGER HUNTS



## SUMMER READING

Reading allows time to cuddle up together and enjoy books away from everyday distractions e.g. mobiles and TV. Language learning is closely linked to reading and is a great way to get your child ready for school.

## Top tips to help enjoy books together:

- Let them choose their own book. It's ok to hear the same story lots of times!
- Let them hold and turn the pages
- Have fun using the voices of the characters or making the animal or vehicle noises in the story
- Talk about who is in the story, what they are doing and where they are
- Talk about what happened first, next, last while looking at the pictures
- Let your child retell the story e.g. what happened to the straw house, how did the little pig feel?
- Extend story time by acting out and dressing up

Free access online:

[www.libraries.org.uk](http://www.libraries.org.uk) - sign up and download ebooks

[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk)





# SENSORY MOTOR & PERCEPTUAL

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND PHYSIOTHERAPY

## GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

Have a think about what your child's day will be like when they start school in September, and what sort of things they will have to do for themselves. They will have to put their coat on and take it off to hang it on a peg; they may have to change their shoes and jumper for PE; open and close their lunch boxes; go to the toilet by themselves; manage cutlery in the dinner hall; cut with scissors; hold a pencil to start to form letters and numbers; complete PE activities such as throwing and catching a ball; and remain settled in a chair or on the floor for longer periods. Being able to complete these basic every day activities will allow your child to focus more on the new learning and social challenges that the move to school will bring. These are activities that you can teach and practise with your child over the next few months to build up their confidence and readiness for school.

## ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR CHILD GET READY FOR SCHOOL

### SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S INDEPENDENCE SKILLS

One of the best things you can do to help your child get ready for school is to make sure they feel comfortable doing simple tasks by themselves:

1. **Going to the toilet** – practise being able to clean themselves and getting their clothes fixed after toileting.
2. **Getting dressed** – if possible practise this during the holidays when there are less time pressures. Teach your child that the school logo goes at the front when putting on their jumper. Practise fastenings e.g. zip on coat.



3. **Putting on shoes** – practise getting the shoes on the right feet and managing the fastenings whether that's velcro straps or buckles.

4. **Eating** – using a fork to eat their dinner, being able to open their lunchbox and everything in it e.g. yoghurt tubes.

5. **Hanging up their coat** – this is something that your child should be encouraged to do by themselves.

6. **Recognise their name** – this is something that will come with practise. Most schools have names on coat pegs and at the child's desk to ease confusion and keep track of their own belongings.



### GETTING READY TO CUT

Give lots of opportunities to practice snipping/cutting - playdoh sausages, straws, junk mail, magazines etc.



"Thumbs up!" - encourage them to put their thumb in the top and middle finger in the bottom.



Allow your child to practise using child safe scissors. They will be using these in school!



### GETTING READY TO STAY SETTLED IN SCHOOL

It's hard work for our muscles to stay in one position for a long period. To do this they need to be strengthened:

- **Get to the park!** Climbing, running, swinging, sliding, jumping will all strengthen our big muscles we use for sitting.

- **Complete activities** e.g. jigsaws, colouring, construction games etc. **in positions other than sitting.** See the pictures below to give you ideas.



<https://www.toolstogrowot.com/blog/2016/01/11/primitive-motor-reflexes-their-impact-on-a-childs-function>



## GETTING READY TO USE A PENCIL:

Children need strong shoulders, arms and hands to hold and use their pencil well. Try these activities to help get muscles stronger for school:



### BALLS AND PEGS:



Have your child make little balls out of play dough, or spread some frozen peas on the table. Your child can pick them up, one at a time, using a clothes peg or tongs to put in a bowl.

### CONSTRUCTION GAMES:

Any activity that your child has to use their two hands to build something is good for developing their hand strength and also their ability to use their two hands together. E.g. Duplo, Lego, K'nex etc.



### THREADING:



Practise threading some Cheerios onto a pipe cleaner!

### TENNIS BALL MONSTER:



### BALLOON BASKETBALL:

Put a bucket or a bin up high e.g. on a windowsill. Aiming high will strengthen shoulders.

### SPRAY BOTTLES:

Spray plants/ windows/ paper/ objects using a trigger spray bottle.



## MAKE YOUR OWN PLAY DOUGH

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 tablespoons veg oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- Up to 1.5 cups boiling water (add in gradually until it feels just right)
- Food colouring (optional)
- A few drops of glycerine (optional)

#### Method:

- Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl
- Add the food colouring to the boiling water; then add to the dry ingredients
- Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough
- Add the glycerine
- Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead vigorously for a couple of minutes until the stickiness is gone.

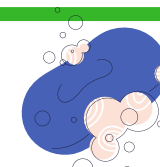
### PAPER TEARING:



Use different textures and thickness of paper e.g. card, paper, tissue, magazines etc. to increase hand strength. The torn paper could be scrunched up to play "finger football" or to make a collage.



## LEARNING HOW TO WASH OUR HANDS



Use this helpful song from Therapies.org to help your child learn how to wash their hands by themselves!

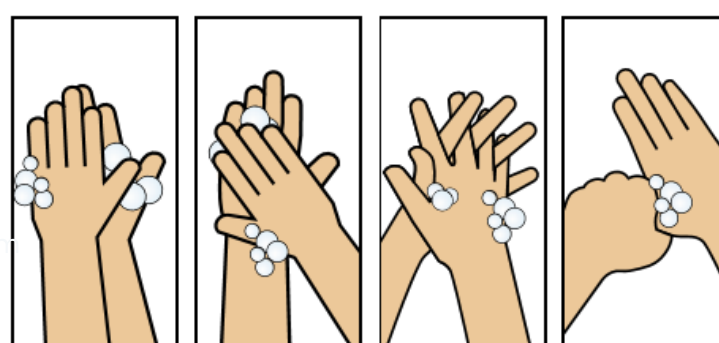
Sing to the tune of Row, row, row your boat (x3).



First I wet my hands,  
then I add some soap



now I'm going to  
make some bubbles  
rub and rub and rub.



Rub the front, rub the backs,  
between the fingers too,  
don't forget to rub your thumbs  
now you're ready to rinse.



Run the water over my hands,  
rub the bubbles away,  
all those germs go down the drain,  
now I'm clean again!





# SENSORY MOTOR & PERCEPTUAL

PHYSIOTHERAPY

## GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL



Physical activities and working on gross motor skills over the summer can help children get ready for PE and playground games once school resumes. They can also develop social skills, improve speech and communication skills and work on concentration, attention and listening. Physical activity is vitally important to develop postural control, balance, coordination and strength and can be worked on doing everyday activities with household items. Here are some activities you can try at home to help develop your child's gross motor skills!

## CORE STRENGTH AND STABILITY



### FOLDING LARGE SHEETS/TOWELS



### TIDYING TOYS



### ARTS AND CRAFTS



### SWEEPING/HOOVERING



### PUSHING TROLLEY (with supervision)



## BALANCE

### CLIMBING STAIRS



### REACHING FOR OBJECTS



### DRESSING



### TIPTOE WALKING



### RIDING A BIKE/TRICYCLE/SCOOTER

### PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

## SHOULDER AND ARM STRENGTH



### HELPING IN THE KITCHEN



### WASHING THE CAR/WINDOWS



### OPENING JARS/BOTTLES



### CARRYING SHOPPING BAGS



### PULLING/PUSHING HEAVY THINGS



## GAMES

There are also a number of games you can play with friends and family to help develop these areas as well. These include:

### TIME CHALLENGES



How long can your child balance on one leg without falling over?

### SIMON SAYS

#### SIMON SAYS

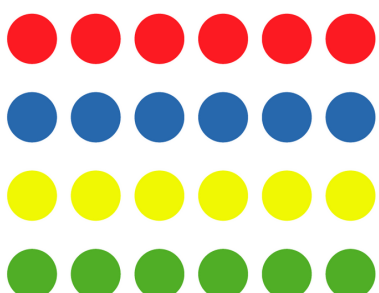
SIT DOWN  
TURN AROUND IN A CIRCLE  
JUMP UP AND DOWN  
HOP ON YOUR RIGHT FOOT  
HOP ON YOUR LEFT FOOT  
CLAP YOUR HANDS  
TOUCH YOUR NOSE  
WIGGLE YOUR FINGERS  
PUT ONE ARM IN THE AIR  
FLAP YOUR ARMS LIKE A BIRD  
SLITHER ON THE GROUND LIKE A SNAKE  
QUACK LIKE A DUCK

PRETEND LIKE YOU ARE SLEEPING  
ROLL ON THE FLOOR  
DO A SOMERSAULT  
SKIP AROUND THE ROOM  
GALLOP LIKE A HORSE  
MEOW LIKE A CAT  
HOP TO THE RIGHT  
HOP TO THE LEFT  
MAKE CIRCLES WITH YOUR ARMS  
TOUCH YOUR EARS  
STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE  
DO JUMPING JACKS  
DO A SILLY DANCE

### MUSICAL STATUES

#### TWISTER

hasbro.com



### BUILD A DEN







# SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND/OR BEHAVIOUR

## WHAT IS SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

This area of development involves learning to interact with others; and being able to understand and control your own emotions. Babies start to develop relationships with the people around them right from birth; but the process of learning to communicate, share and interact with others can take years to develop. Children continue to develop their social and emotional skills well into their teenage years or even young adulthood. When children are focused they are better able to learn. Most schools incorporate social and emotional programming into their curriculum, but parents and families can get involved too, especially during the summer months.

## DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Between the ages of 3-5, your child should:

- Develop friendship skills such as sharing toys and taking turns
- Enjoy playing games and following simple rules
- Begin to show more independence
- Become aware of their own and others' feelings
- Stick with a difficult task for longer
- Listen while others are speaking
- Show an understanding of right and wrong

## ACTIVITIES AND GAMES TO PROMOTE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS

### RELAXATION

Relaxation exercises help children to manage their reactions to stress, anxiety and worry. Exercises, such as the ones below, are a good distraction from worrying thoughts and help reduce tension in the body. Ensure your child is in a quiet comfortable position and read the script in a calm voice, repeat as required:

"Close your eyes and become as still as possible, become aware of your breathing. Feel the softness of your breath going in and coming out again. Spend a few moments watching your breathing. Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out. Imagine that you are lying in the ocean. The sun is shining and you are floating. Can you smell the sea air? Your whole body feels so relaxed it almost feels as if you are floating in the water. As you lie there, see if you can make your whole body become like flowing water. Your legs become so relaxed that it feels as if they are melting into the warm water. Allow your legs to become floppy and free. Now let your arms become so relaxed that they too become like water. Let all your muscles go. Let all the stiffness in your arms soften and melt away. Now let your neck become soft and let the warm water support your head as it relaxes gently. Relax your eyes, relax your ears, relax your cheeks, relax your forehead, and relax your jaw and teeth. Let everything go. Let the warm water support your whole body and relax. Enjoy the feeling of being free, floating through the ocean."

### TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

Check in with your child's feelings. Simply asking, "how are you feeling?" every day shows your children that their emotions matter. This also helps children learn to label their emotions and promote emotional literacy. Make this more fun by getting your child to draw out the facial expression showing their emotion onto a paper plate. Your child can then have fun decorating this.



### PLAY DATES

Create cooperative learning opportunities such as play dates. This is a great way to reinforce social and emotional learning concepts such as, cooperation, understanding others, and promoting the development of friendship skills e.g. turn taking and sharing. Help your child to practise these skills by giving them a fun, safe space to play with other kids. Provide guidance if conflict arises, and work together to find a solution to the problem.

### SINGING

Sing "If you're happy and you know it," but each time, choose a new feeling e.g. angry, sad etc. Ask your child to think about something s/he does when feeling that way. If your child can't think of something, make a suggestion such as "I notice when you were angry at your brother you took a deep breath" then demonstrate the angry emotion in the song example, "if you're angry and you know it take a breath." This activity encourages a fun way for your child to identify and manage her emotions.

### READING

Visit your local library and read a book with a social emotional learning aspect such as 'How are you feeling today?' by Molly Potter. Remember to discuss the feelings and behaviours shown in the book. This will help your child identify with their own feelings and help recognise the feelings of others.

