

Support and advice for parents and guardians

The school entry screening aims at ensuring your child gets the best possible start to school life. This document contains practical examples for supporting your child in the best way possible as necessary. To ensure success, parents and families should follow the framework within their environment.



1. Phonology

Phonological awareness describes the ability to separate words into syllables, make rhymes and recognise sounds in words. The understanding of speech sounds is particularly important and normally develops in conjunction with early writing experience. Phonological awareness, together with the ability to recall words quickly, is an important skill as your child begins to learn to read.



Possible everyday support for this skill set:

- **Counting-out rhymes:** Counting-out rhymes are offered by adults or selected and said/practised by the child individually, for example “Bee, bee, bumble bee, stung a man upon his knee...”
- **Dice games:** Find one, two and three-syllable words by “throwing” the number of syllables (maximum number “3” – e.g. one-syllable: dog; two-syllable: ra-bbit; three-syllable: e-le-phant)
- **Letters:** Using a thick pen, draw the letter clearly on an A4 sheet of paper and then stick this sheet to an object using sticky tape, e.g. stick “T” to the table.

2. Letters and sounds

When you read aloud to your child, these are their first experiences of writing. This awakens an interest in letters and children begin to understand that these form individual sounds. Children often ask about specific letters or are excited to recognise the letters they know in everyday life. To support this area as well as possible, letters should be offered as part of games for phonological awareness.



Possible everyday support for this skill set:

- **Creating letter jars:** Letters are written on pieces of card and stuck to jars. The jars are then filled with small objects which begin with the respective letters.
- **Wordplay:** “Animals” word family, which animal names can you think of? Taking turns, animals are

named. The last letter is repeated clearly by the child/adult and becomes the first letter of the new animal name, e.g. Elephant – T: Tiger – R: Rhinoceros – S: snake, etc.

(**other word families**, e.g. foods, clothing, toys, tools, etc.)

3. Knowledge of quantities and numbers

Babies are aware of quantities (“*how much*”), long before they understand numbers. In everyday life, children come into contact with numerals from very early on. If there are three slices of cake left on the plate, and the number (= *three*) is said, then this number can be associated with the quantity the child can see. Children understand the words “*more*” and “*less*” or “*bigger*” and “*smaller*” and can apply this knowledge when comparing quantities as well as when comparing spoken and written numbers.



Possible everyday support for this skill set:

- **Counting, parts, recognising different quantities:** E.g. when shopping, the child puts the goods in the trolley and says the number out loud: **2 (two)** apples, **1 (one)** bottle of milk, **3 (three)** eggs, etc.
- **Spontaneous understanding of quantities based on everyday materials:** Children should be excited to spontaneously count/estimate the number of items and then re-count them to check.

4. Counting

The processes of counting and structuring quantities are essential for developing mathematical skills. Even before they start school, children know that every object they want to count has to be assigned a number. They also already know the sequence of numbers up to 10 or more. With practice, the counting ability of a child becomes more flexible.



Possible everyday support for this skill set:

- **Collecting natural materials:** (e.g. leaves, twigs, flowers, etc.) when out for a walk and **then counting them**.
- **Everyday situation:** E.g. laying the table: “How many plates will we need today?”

5. Working memory

The working memory describes the ability to retain important information over a short period of time in order to use it to solve tasks. If a child wants to talk about an experience, for example, their working memory must remember the things they have already shared and what they still want to report. This ability is important for many everyday activities, but has particular importance when it comes to learning to read, write and count.



Possible everyday support for this skill set:

- **Packing your suitcase:** “In my case, I put a...”. Then the next person says a new item and all the items that have already been packed. The game ends when the child gets the sequence of items wrong or forgets one.
- **Memory game:** This game can be played with the same or different everyday items. Lay out, for example, 5 coloured pens. The child should take note of the items and their sequence; then the child closes their eyes and the number or sequence of the items is changed; the child then opens their eyes and has to say what has changed.

6. Attitude to work (attention) – persistence and care

Even before they start school, children develop attitudes to work, which enable them to carry out tasks which they have not chosen to do themselves and to complete these with persistence and accuracy.

7. Attitude to work (attention) – motivation

In the year before starting school, children get better at completing activities, even when their motivation wanes. Initially, they are still dependent on the friendly support of their adults, but develop increasingly improved strategies to motivate themselves.



Possible everyday support for the attitude to work:

The skill sets for persistence & care and motivation should always be encouraged together. **If possible, do not interrupt what your child is doing** (for example, because you have become impatient)!

- **Support independence in everyday activities:** Getting dressed and undressed independently, pouring drinks, making a sandwich, helping at home (e.g. laying the table).
- Encourage your child **to complete any activities that they start** (e.g. making a building, finishing a drawing, completing a game).

8. Graphomotor skills

Graphomotor skills describe the ability to draw symbols and shapes on paper using crayons. More than creative painting, which is also very important in pre-school development, well-practised graphomotor skills make it easier to learn to write.



Possible everyday support for this skill set:

- **Provide a multitude of drawing, painting and crafting tools**
- **Painting, drawing and crafting together**
- **Strengthening the hand and finger muscles,** e.g. by kneading dough or modelling clay, tearing paper

Framework for everyday support

What should parents/guardians pay attention to?

- Support should be fun and playful!
- Build the support into your everyday family routine!
- Support should be given in small stages that are easy to manage.
- Frequent repetition is advantageous!
- Be patient and don't put any pressure on your child.
- Make sure you praise and motivate your child directly and frequently.
- Correct any errors gently. Your child should have a continuous sense of achievement.

