

Guidance

Help primary school children continue their education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Advice for parents and carers looking after primary school children.

Published 19 April 2020

Last updated 21 May 2020 — [see all updates](#)

From: [Department for Education](#)

Applies to: England

Contents

1. [Structuring the day](#)
2. [Using digital devices](#)
3. [Reception, year 1 and year 2 children](#)
4. [Year 3 to 6 children](#)

From the week beginning 1 June 2020, at the earliest, we'll be asking primary schools and childcare providers to bring back children in nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6.

Vulnerable children and the children of critical workers continue to be eligible to attend, and we encourage them to do so where appropriate. Other children will continue to be supported to learn at home. [Further information on which children can attend school](#) is available.

While staying at home due to coronavirus (COVID-19), parents and carers may be concerned about their children's education and the effect of missing school.

No one expects parents to act as teachers, or to provide the activities and feedback that a school would. Speak to your school, which will be planning work for your child to do. Parents and carers should do their best to help children and support their learning.

Alongside any work your child receives from school, try using these [online educational resources](#) which have been recommended by teachers and school leaders.

[Educational programmes to help primary school children learn at home](#) are available from the BBC.

Structuring the day

Do not worry about trying to keep your child to the full routine they had at school. However, children will feel more comfortable and learn better with a predictable routine to the day, even if this is difficult.

When schools provide your child with work they may give you advice on how to structure the day. However, you should try to make sure that they:

- get up and go to bed at the same time each day
- have regular meal times
- have regular breaks
- make time to be active – children are used to regular play at lunch and break times

Using digital devices

Your child's school may set them work to do on a digital device such as a laptop, desktop, tablet or smartphone.

Set age-appropriate parental controls on any devices your child uses and supervise their use of websites and apps. See [advice on keeping them safe online](#) and talk to your child about online safety.

Reducing screen time

Digital devices are not the only way to learn. Manage screen time with a timer and break up screen time by getting your child to:

- use books and other printed materials that their school has provided or that you have at home
- write by hand – try asking them to complete work by hand, write a diary, a summary of things they have done each day or 'to do' lists
- be active and get away from the screen regularly – see these [physical activity resources](#) for primary school children
- stop using digital devices at least an hour before bed

Reception, year 1 and year 2 children

Children in reception and year 1 are expected to be able to return to school from 1 June, based on the latest scientific advice. The youngest children are being prioritised as they're at the start of their school lives and are mastering the essential basics, including:

- counting
- reading and writing
- learning to socialise with their classmates

The best way to help children aged 4 to 7 learn is to:

- sit with them as they work
- do active and practical things, rather than trying to make them sit and listen for long periods
- try to break down the work into shorter periods, based on how long they can concentrate
- take frequent breaks
- praise or reward them when they do well

Talking

Talk with your child throughout the day and explain new words. For example, discuss the things you are doing and pick out words that might be new to them.

Reading together

When you read with your child try to:

- express the emotion in the story
- give colour to the characters using voices, tone and pace
- discuss the things you are reading
- explain any new words and ask your child to say them out loud

You can make a story more interesting and help your child develop their understanding of a book by linking what you are reading to real life. For example, while reading about Cinderella going to the ball, talk about how a ball is similar to a birthday party.

Ask your child questions about what you are reading as you go. For example:

- ask some questions that only need a short answer, such as what colour something is, or the name of a character
- ask some questions that need a longer answer, such as how a character is feeling
- ask them to tell you what has happened in the story so far and what might happen next

Libraries are currently closed, but you can find digital services they are providing at [Libraries Connected](#).

Phonics

Phonics is a method schools use to teach children how to read quickly and skilfully.

Contact your school, which will be working on ways to help you with this. Try to sit with your child and practise with them, following the advice you get from their school.

Writing

Help your child to practise their writing. For younger children this might include forming letters and being familiar with pens and pencils, while for older children it could include writing stories.

Ask your child to write about their day-to-day experiences of being at home, or to write letters to send to family members.

Numbers

Practise counting and numbers with your child. This does not always have to be a planned activity. For example, count things around the house while you are doing other things like cooking or cleaning.

For older children learning sums, ask your school for help.

See a [list of resources to help with maths](#) recommended by teachers and school leaders.

Year 3 to 6 children

The best way to help children aged 7 to 11 learn is to:

- give them support and direction, but encourage them to do work independently too
- include active and practical things, rather than trying to make them sit and work for long periods
- try to break down the work into shorter periods, based on how long they can concentrate
- take frequent breaks
- praise or reward them when they do well

To check if they're learning try to:

- ask them questions as they go
- talk about things they learned

Reading

Talk to your child about what they're reading. This will help them understand what they have read. Try to encourage them to read for fun, as well as reading for school.

Ask your child questions about what they're reading. For example:

- ask questions that make them think about the story, such as how a character is feeling
- ask them to tell you what has happened in the story so far

Libraries are currently closed, however, you can find digital services they're providing at [Libraries Connected](#).

Writing

Try to help your child practise their writing. They may be set work by their school to do on a digital device, but using pen and paper as well will help them be ready for when they return to the classroom.

Additional information for parents of year 6 children

Children in year 6 are expected to be able to return to school from 1 June, based on the latest scientific advice. They're being prioritised because they're finishing key stage 2 and preparing for the move to secondary school. As such, they'll benefit from time with their friends and teachers to make sure they're ready.

In the meantime, follow any advice given to you by school and continue helping your child to learn at home.

To prepare for going to secondary school this can be a good time for them to follow their own interests. For example, for:

- history, by visiting the [English Heritage](#) website to explore England's history
- geography, by researching other countries
- science, by finding out more about the human body on [BBC Bitesize](#)
- art, by trying the activities on [TATE Kids](#)

Ask your primary school about how you can help your child prepare for moving up to secondary school.

Read [advice for parents of children in other age groups](#).