

Solihull School Readiness

This document has been written and amended with the Solihull community to support our shared understanding of the term 'School Readiness'. It is for schools and settings, parents, and the wider health and education community as well as Councillors and external partners.

What is school readiness?

We have chosen to adopt and adapt the UNICEF's (United Nations Children's Fund) definition from '[School readiness: a conceptual framework \(UNICEF 2012\)](#)'. **So that we see school readiness as the readiness of the individual child, the school's readiness for children, and the ability of the family and community to support the best early child-development.**

Why do we need a Solihull School Readiness definition?

The term "school readiness" features in many reviews of health and education recommendations and national guidance. The precise characteristics of school readiness and the age of the child to which it applies are interpreted differently. There is no nationally agreed definition. The Solihull community recognises the importance of the early years ages 0-5 years and that a person's future mental health and well-being is most likely affected by their development in the early years.

Our definition sits within the principles and commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS Statutory Guidance sets the standards for promotion of care, learning and play including the equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice that ensures every child is included and supported.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child includes the right to express their views and have these considered. Children communicate in different ways, and we need to be prepared to listen to these. Children also have the right to health, play and protection.

Solihull parents, settings including schools, and health, education partners and children were asked to contribute to a Solihull definition to ensure a broad understanding and principles to guide our support for every child, family, and early education setting.

This builds on the fundamental premise that all parents, carers and schools and settings want to do what is best for each and every child.

Solihull School Readiness *further reflections:*

This is about children, families and the school community being 'ready' to best access and support the care, learning and play of a child as they begin statutory school in Reception.

We have chosen to adopt the UNICEF definition so that we recognise school readiness as the readiness of the individual child, the school's readiness for children, and the ability of the family and community to support the best early child-development. Schools will need to be ready for all children at different levels of development. Children develop at different rates and in different ways, physically, emotionally, and academically, and this needs to be borne in mind. Their pre-school experiences will vary. Children should be supported by their carers and settings to understand and celebrate the differences between children in school and in life. This is most effective when everyone communicates and shares together.

School readiness is a journey that starts at birth with the support of parents and caregivers, when young children acquire the social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and life. It is about lots of things including being away from home, being with other children, learning skills including independence as well as communication, reading, and writing. It is about a child being able to thrive. Readiness for each new phase of a child's education enables them to be prepared to tackle the challenges they will face at each transition on their journey. Children enter Reception year between age 4 to age 5 years, and so there is a large age range and experience which contributes to readiness needs.

The current measure of school readiness is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile summary of a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. EYFS practitioners will summarise the child's attainment against early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language (prime areas of learning) and in mathematics and literacy (two of the specific areas of learning). This builds upon the observations made by parents, child-minders, and nursery practitioners as well as those made jointly with health professionals such as health visitors. In Solihull we believe that early year's provision should build upon both the knowledge, skills and understanding in the EYFS education programmes but also the characteristics of effective learning behaviours.

Children's readiness for school.

Children being ready, willing and able to learn.

The following list of words were created by Solihull's community of parents, schools, settings and education and health professionals. The larger words are those words mentioned most by contributors.



This is about us working together to improve a child's learning and development. As we chat, play and read, relax, cuddle and respond together to support your child to play, learn, act, move and communicate.

Schools' readiness for children.

In Solihull schools are prepared and pre-empt children's needs based on communication in range of ways. Schools seek out information and encourage information sharing to work together in partnership with others involved in the child's education and care. Schools get to know me (the child) and look out for me, so I feel secure.

Families' and communities' readiness for school.

Ready families, focuses on parental and carer attitudes and involvement in their children's early learning and development and their on-going transition to school. To engage and respond appropriately with agencies involved with a child.

The transition to school from home or early years settings can be a very stressful time in a child and family's life, and school readiness has a substantial impact on children's future life chances. The best outcomes for children and families are delivered when all key stakeholders work together, including health, care, and education. We need to work together to recognise and share expertise.

Well-being is the foundation on which learning can happen. This is about building secure, respectful, and shared relationships among those involved in working together to give the best start to children in their new school environment.

What Solihull School Readiness is not

It is not about the community of pre-school settings becoming more academic to meet perceived demands of school readiness.

Nor is it a check list of experiences and skills children are expected to acquire before they are five years-old such as being able to sit still or to write their name.

It is not something that just happens as children reach statutory school age but on-going through a joint responsibility to ensure children, families and schools feel connected, valued, respected, and supported.

It is about everyone working together to achieve the best outcomes for children.

What did children tell us about being ready for school?.....

'Making new friends, meeting my teachers, finding new things to learn, being kind to each other, playing'

'School ready means I can go to school now' 'I want people to be kind to me about my nappy's' 'I like my friends'

'We need to know ...how to work hard, be honest, be brave, be nice and share, be kind, listen, be friends, hang up my coat, get ready for PE.'

It is about helping children to be successful today and to be prepared for tomorrow.

Where to get support

- The Early Years Foundation Stage guidance for settings and families- <https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf>
- Five to Thrive in Solihull - <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/fivetothrive/>
- Healthy Under Fives - <https://healthforunder5s.co.uk/>
- Tiny Happy People - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/tips-and-advice>
- Solihull Family Information - https://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/Synergy/Live/SynergyWeb/Solihull_Childcare/
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>