

For Early Years settings, schools and children centres this could mean:

- A named contact with responsibility for transition
- Regular opportunities for dialogue and sharing best practice across the locality
- Sharing information and data to ensure that local needs of children and families are met
- Improved working relationships between Early Years settings and schools – particularly those settings based on school sites

The Harlow Pledge For Educational Attainment

Supporting every Harlow child to aspire, learn and achieve

The Harlow Strategic Partnership for Educational Attainment pledge to work together to give every Harlow child every opportunity to fulfil their potential.

To achieve this, the Partnership will support every child and family -

- Before school – ensuring that every child starts school equipped with the skills to learn
- At school – helping schools to improve where required and to provide the very best education for every child
- Post-16 – supporting opportunities to ensure that every young person can carry on learning and achieve their full potential

Ready for school, ready to learn, ready for life.



The Harlow School Readiness Project

Supporting Harlow children to be ready for school

The Project

Harlow Council, Essex County Council, Children's Centre's and other agencies are working together to address the issue of 'School Readiness' in order to help ensure that Harlow children have appropriate opportunities to acquire the skills they need to be ready to learn once they start school. Collectively, this work is known as the Harlow School Readiness Project and is targeted in three geographical areas - Little Parndon, Potter Street and Staple Tye.

What does it mean to be 'school ready'?

There has been much discussion about the term 'school readiness' and there is currently no one definition that is recognised nationally. The revised Early Years Foundation Stage September 2014 "promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life"

The 2014 Ofsted report 'Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness' draws the conclusion that there are various responses to the definition of school readiness and whether the term refers to readiness to start school on entry to Year 1 or at the start of entry into Reception. The report states that where providers had developed close partnerships they were more likely to have developed a localised mutual understanding of what was expected in terms of children's readiness as they transferred. It also states that defining what school readiness means is an essential factor in ensuring that children can be well prepared for starting school.

In June 2014 Harlow Council and Essex County Council co-facilitated an event at the Civic Centre, Harlow, where the views of Early Years Professionals were sought to determine what being school ready means to them and their organisation. Staff from pre-schools, day nurseries and one school attended the event and there was representation from Harlow Children's Centres. As a result of discussions at the event the following attributes were considered to be the most important to enable a child to be ready for school.

- Have a confident sense of self worth
- Be independent by using self-care skills
- Be aware of other children's feelings
- Be excited, enthusiastic and curious about learning
- Be resilient and ready to take on all that is on offer
- Ask questions, take risks and find solutions
- Feel safe, secure and cared for
- Know that they are at the forefront of the adult's mind
- Feel that the contributions they make are valued and respected
- Have a broad range of knowledge and skills gained through everyday experiences
- Be active and healthy
- Feel that their efforts will be recognised and celebrated
- Be comfortable to communicate their thoughts, ideas and needs in their own way
- Start to develop an awareness of their own emotions and behaviour as well as being able to reflect upon them
- Start to develop their turn taking and co-operative skills
- Be comfortable in approaching others

For children, this will mean that they are

- Confident and eager to learn
- Curious about what they find at school
- Able to enjoy playing and exploring
- Able to make choices
- Showing a sense of independence in taking care of themselves
- Friendly and helpful
- Responsive to praise and encouragement
- Unique
- Ready for school

For parents this could mean:

- Recognising that they are their child's most important teacher and role-model
- Knowing that their child is learning whilst they are playing together
- Using every day experiences as learning opportunities
- Doing familiar and different things together and showing an interest in discovering new things
- Ensuring their child is as active and healthy as they can be
- Supporting their child's self-help skills so that they learn to do things for themselves
- Singing songs, nursery and finger rhymes and making time for talk with their child
- Having fun with their child - playing, talking and sharing together regularly and frequently