These Ready Steady Questionnaires are designed to enable you to check your child’s progress at particular stages of development.

This questionnaire is designed to be used with 2½ to 3½ year old children to see if they have all the skills necessary to participate in nursery. Do not worry if your child cannot do all the tasks, simply focus on the ones that they have not yet mastered and practice these.

The questionnaire looks at different areas of your child’s development including sensory, fine motor and activities of daily living (e.g. dressing and eating) skills.

- Try each activity with your child before selecting a response.
- Make completing this questionnaire a game that is fun for you and your child.
- Make sure your child is well rested and fed.
- If your child shows signs of distress do not continue.
Question 1 - Sensory

Question 1

Can your child participate in messy play without becoming distressed?

Your child explores the world through touch. Not all children like textures and this is perfectly normal, however it is important to give your child plenty of opportunities to experience different touch sensations.

Never force your child to touch something that they find distressing. Do only what your child will tolerate. Tolerance builds up gradually. Overstimulation can result in aggressive behaviour, crying and an increased activity level.

It is essential to approach activities sensitively, starting with less challenging textures (i.e. a texture that is firm and dry) and building towards more challenging textures (i.e. wet and sloppy). Allow your child to control their level of contact and stop when they need to.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are not yet doing the activity

If your child starts to show signs of distress allow them to remove themselves from the activity and wash themselves if they are messy. Here are some activities you might want to try with your child:

- **Feely Bag** - Place different objects in a bag such as plastic animals, building bricks, marbles, textured balls, cotton wool balls, sponge etc. Encourage your child to choose an object from the bag and identify the object starting with allowing your child to look in the bag first then asking them to do this with their eyes closed.

- **Playdough** - Encourage your child to play with playdough. Use shop bought playdoh or why not make your own playdough (see KIDS Scotland for recipe). Use tools such as rolling pins, cutters, spoons, blunt knives, scissors etc.

- **Water Play** - Fill a basin in the kitchen sink with soapy water and a variety of unbreakable bottles, cups, beakers, turkey basters, sponges, egg beaters and toy water pumps. Alternatively, fill a large plastic bowl with water and toys and set it outside on the grass. Pouring and measuring are excellent for developing the tactile system.

- **Sand Play** - In a sandbox or on a sand table, add small toys (cars, trucks, people and dinosaurs), which your child can arrange and rearrange, bury and rediscover. Alternatives to sand are an empty shoe box or ice-cream tub filled with dried beans, rice, pasta, and popcorn.
Question 1 - Sensory

- **Rub-a-Dub-Dub** - Encourage your child to rub a variety of textures against their skin (hands and arms, legs and feet). Offer differently textured items (loofahs, sponges, thick washcloths, foam dish scrubbers, plastic nail brushes etc.). Once your child can tolerate the different textured items add different kinds of soap (bar of cream soap, oatmeal soap, shaving cream, liquid soap).

**Activity Ideas for your child if they are nearly doing the activity**

- **Touch Different Textures** - Let your child feel the different textures of items when you are in the supermarket (i.e. packets of food, fruit, vegetables, tins and items in homeware etc).

- **Bake Together** - Don’t worry if you’re not a great baker, you can bake using a packet mix. Scone dough is a good way for your child to experience something that needs a bit of force to knead and will stick to their fingers. Also scraping out the batter or spreading icing on fairy cakes is another good way for hands to get sticky in a fun and non-threatening way.

- **Make a Jelly** - Make a jelly and before it sets why not place some small toys inside and get your child to remove toys using their fingers. Always ensure you are supervising your child so that they don’t eat the jelly before the toys have been removed.

- **Messy Play** - Play on a plastic sheet with shaving foam, jelly or homemade slime (see KIDS Scotland for recipe). Your child can squeeze, pull, poke or draw with their fingers. This can get very messy so think about where you are playing and wear old clothes.

- **Garden Play** - Play in the garden making mud pies, planting bulbs or collecting leaves and twigs.

- **Playing with Food** - Let your child play in a bowl with lentils, split peas, dry/cooked pasta or rice.

- **Arts and Crafts** - Get your child involved in arts and crafts activities using paint, glitter, glue, paper, card, tinfoil, felt, ribbon, foam etc.
Question 2 - Fine Motor

Can your child point with their index finger?

To be able to point your child has to be able to isolate their pointer finger. Finger isolation is an important stage in the development of grasp. It is the ability to move certain fingers apart from the rest of the hand/fingers.

When children begin using their hands, all fingers move together at the same time. As they grow and develop, they gain the ability to move individual fingers.

It helps with being able to fasten and unfasten buttons, hold and control and pencil for drawing and writing, use scissors, type on a keyboard, play a musical instrument, tie shoelaces, and many other daily living skills.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are not yet doing the activity

- Pressing Switches
  Have fun pressing doorbells or light switches.

- Place objects on fingers
  Small hollow cylinders are great to put on index fingers, encouraging the child to take them off and put them back on again, e.g. Smarties tubes. You can also put Hula Hoops on individual fingers.

- Playdough
  Get your child to poke their index fingers into playdough (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe).

- Read a Book
  Read a book with your child and get them to point to different items in the book with their index finger.

- Use an Old Glove
  Cut the index finger off an old glove to help your child to use their index finger for drawing in shaving foam, sand and on steamy windows.
Question 2 - Fine Motor

- **Finger Puppets**
  Make a finger puppet out of paper or fingers cut off old gloves.

**Activity Ideas for your child if they are nearly doing the activity**

- **Drawing with your Index Finger**
  Get your child to use their index finger for drawing in shaving foam, sand and on steamy windows.

- **Finger Songs**
  Playing finger songs with your child, e.g. ‘Tommy Thumb’ song, ‘Two Little Dickie Birds’, ‘Round and round the garden’ and ‘Incy Wincy Spider’.

- **Finger painting**
  Get your child to draw a picture with paint using their index fingers instead of a paintbrush.

- **Blow Bubbles**
  Try blowing bubbles and getting your child to pop them with their index fingers only.

- **Finger Football**
  Play ‘finger football’ with scrunched up pieces of small paper or cotton wool balls by flicking them across a table to score a goal.

- **Water Play**
  Have fun with your child using spray bottles and water squirters using their index finger on the trigger.
Question 3 - Fine Motor

Question 3

Can your child use their thumb and index finger only when picking up a small object e.g. raisin?

The development of grasp is influenced by a child’s growing interest in objects and desire to hold them. The pincer grasp is an essential grasp to develop as it is the basis for many functional tasks e.g. fastenings and tool use e.g. pencil grasp.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are not yet doing the activity

- **Use an Old Glove**
  Cut out the thumb and index finger of an old glove and get your child to do things with these fingers only e.g. unwrap a sweetie or pop the bubbles in a piece of bubble wrap.

- **Finger Food**
  Fill a bowl with a mix of dried pasta, raisins, dried beans, etc and then ask your child to sort them into jars and cups. Make sure you supervise your child at all times. Also give your child small food items for snack or cut food up small when they are finger feeding. Try cut up grapes, raisins, apple, carrot etc. They could help you to dish the snack out into a bowl or onto a plate.

- **Scribbling**
  Get your child to scribble on paper with short chunky crayons or the pavement with short chunky chalks.

- **Playdough**
  Hide small toys in the playdough (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe) and have your child find them and pull them out, you could use marbles or 5p pieces. Making small balls with the playdough and flick them to a goal.

- **Tongs and Tweezers**
  Get your child to pick up items using salad/kitchen tongs and tweezers. Start with tongs and larger items e.g. balls of cotton wool or balled up tin foil or paper and move onto smaller items using the tweezers.
Activity Ideas for your child if they are nearly doing the activity

- **Threading**
  Carry out a number of threading activities by using:
  - Cotton reels and laces.
  - Dried pasta tubes and wool.
  - Large beads and thick laces.
  - Drinking/crafting straws cut into small pieces and laces.
  - Buttons and thin laces.
  - Lacing cards (or a piece of card with holes punched into it). Always encourage your child to hold the lace and the item being threaded between ‘Tommy Thumb’ (thumb) and ‘Peter Pointer’ (index finger).

- **Coin Races**
  Ask your child to place coins in a piggy bank (or a box with a slot cut in the lid). Encourage your child to pick up the coins with their “Tommy Thumb (thumb) and “Peter Pointer” (index finger) and use their helping hand to hold the piggy bank.

- **Pegs Races**
  Ask your child to place clothes pegs on the side of an ice-cream tub as fast as they can. Encourage them to use their ‘Tommy Thumb’ (thumb) and “Peter Pointer” (index finger) to squeeze the pegs open. They should use their dominant hand to hold the pegs and their helping hand to hold the tub.

- **Tongs and Tweezers**
  Get your child to pick up items using salad/kitchen tongs and tweezers. Start with tongs and larger items e.g. balls of cotton wool or balled up tin foil or paper and move onto smaller items with tweezers.

- **Craft Activities**
  Gluing and sticking are great fun. You and your child could make collages with pieces of a magazine, dried pasta, rice, wool, string, tissue paper etc. Ripping and tearing and scrunching tissue paper is a great way to develop pincer grasp.
Question 4

Does your child create new things from everyday objects?

Construction play involves manipulating one or more pieces of play materials to create something new. This may involve a variety of methods – stacking, sticking, putting together, taking things apart, sorting or moulding, to name a few.

Construction play develops all types of skills and behaviours:

- The motor skills necessary to create and manipulate the items.
- Imagination skills.
- Planning and ideation skills; the ability to try out and test ideas.
- Perseverance when things don’t work.
- When working with others turn taking and collaboration skills.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are not yet doing the activity

- **Create Opportunities from Everyday Objects**
  Give your child plenty of opportunity to play with construction toys; not just Duplo or building blocks but playdough (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe) and making things from everyday objects e.g. toilet roll tubes and shoe boxes.

- **Building**
  Build things with your child, talking to them all the time. Introduce them to new worlds through your imagination.

- **Construction**
  Construct an obstacle course together using pillows, cushions, furniture and duvets.

- **Play at Home Books**
  Have a look at your ‘Play at Home’ books, which your Health Visitor provided you with, for other ideas.
Further Suggestions

- Putting together a train track.
- Making cars, rockets or houses out of cardboard boxes.
- Building sand castles.
- Building models with recycled materials.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are nearly doing the activity

- **Building**
  Add new materials to your child’s building block set- empty plastic tubs, pieces of fabric, balls of wool, shells, bottle tops, lengths of ribbon, stones etc.

- **Construction**
  Make models from a cereal box or toilet roll tube adding lollipop sticks, buttons, googly eyes, string, sequins, felt tipped pens, tape, cotton wool and paint.

- **Playdough**
  Add new materials to playdough (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe) e.g. matchsticks, lollipop sticks, googly eyes, buttons, sequins etc.

- **Create a Den**
  Build a den from sheets, chairs, large boxes, etc.

- **Lego**
  Create a Lego model by following the instructions.
Question 5 - Fine Motor

Question 5

Can your child thread large beads onto a string?

To thread large beads your child needs to be able to use both hands together (another name for this is bilateral integration). Bilateral activities involve using both hands at the same time but require different movements. We use these movements all day in everyday situations for example holding a jar still whilst twisting a lid open, using a knife and fork, and tying up shoelaces.

Before your child can master using both hands for different movements at the same time they must first learn to use both hands doing the same thing at the same time.

Activity Ideas for your child if they are not yet doing the activity

- **Playdough**
  Roll out a ball of playdough to make sausages using both hands together (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe).

- **Bubbles**
  Burst bubbles using both hands together.

- **Play with a ball**
  Throw and catch a large ball with both hands - if your child struggles with this then try using a balloon instead.

- **Draw Patterns**
  Get your child to use both hands at the same time to draw patterns on a large piece of paper, chalkboard or pavement.

- **Posting**
  Get your child to carry out some posting activities, e.g. coins into a piggy bank, picking up raisins or rice crispies and dropping them into a small necked bottle. Make a small hole in the top of a crisp tub and get your child to post rolled up pieces of small paper through.

- **Baking**
  Roll out pastry using a large rolling pin and then press out different shapes with cookie cutters using both hands together.
Activity Ideas for your child if they are nearly doing the activity

- **Helping with Housework**
  Get your child to help with housework (e.g. using a dustpan and brush, duster to polish, etc.) and also help in the kitchen (e.g. opening containers, chopping and mixing, etc.).

- **Threading**
  Try using something rigid such as a pipe cleaner or a piece of dry spaghetti and get your child to thread large beads or uncooked penne pasta onto it. Once your child is able to thread easily with a rigid cord substitute this with a shoe lace.

- **Sing Songs**
  Sing along to songs where both hands are making different movements at the same time (i.e. Incy Wincy Spider).

**Additional Activities**

- Sharpen a pencil with a pencil sharpener.

- Pour water from one receptacle (jug or cup etc.) to another using both hands.

- Bounce a ball using alternate hands.

- Putting toothpaste on a toothbrush.

- Place one hand on paper and use the other hand to draw around it.

- Playing a card game (e.g. Snap).
*Question 6 - Activities of Daily Living*

**Question 6**

**Can your child drink from an open cup?**

*Mealtime are an important aspect of family life. Children begin to develop self-feeding skills from birth. Drinking from a cup is a complex task and takes a number of years to master. Between 2 and 5 months a baby will move its hands to the breast/bottle while feeding. Between 6 and 9 months a baby can hold a bottle in both hands. They can often drink from a cup with both hands and take a few sips without help. By 18 months they can use a straw and by 3 years a child can drink from a cup (without a lid) without spilling.***

**Hints and Tips**

It is important that your child is well positioned when they are learning any new skill. Initially ensure your child is well supported in a high chair or on your lap. You can use cushions or rolled up towels to help your child to stay sitting up straight in their high chair.

As they grow it is important that their feet and back are supported so that they can use their hands freely. Whenever possible ensure that your child is sitting at a table. You could use a sturdy box under their feet and cushions on the chair to make sure they are well supported.

Think about the cups you are using. Try a variety of cups with lids at the early stages and move towards using an open cup or beaker. Try a beaker/cup with a rim. Sometimes using a cup which is heavier is easier, a beaker/cup with a weighted bottom can help. Use cups with handles (one or two). Avoid light plastic cups which are easily knocked over.

Also think about how much liquid you put in the cup. Too little and your child will have to tip the cup and their head back. Too full and your child may be unable to control the flow of the liquid and any spill will be messy.

Take your time and be consistent. Learning a new skill takes time so persevere with giving support until you feel that your child is making progress.
Question 6 - Activities of Daily Living

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!! Give your child opportunities for practice every day.

A good way to teach your child a new skill is to break down each task into small steps and teach them the last step first (this is call backward chaining). Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second last step, the third last step and so on. For drinking from a cup the following steps may be appropriate:

- Put the cup to your child's lips and tip. Your child has to take a sip from the cup.
- Put the cup to your child's lips and your child then tips the cup and takes a sip.
- Your child lifts the cup to their lips and then tips the cup to take a sip.

Children learn in different ways so you might need to vary your approach. There are a number of ways in which you can help:

- Physically assist your child - Use the hand-over-hand technique by letting your child grasp the cup while you put your hand over the top of their hand to guide them.
- Show your child - Do the task alongside your child.
- Tell your child - Talk your child through each step of the process.

Your can use each of these ways individually or any combination depending on what suits your child. Please be aware that some children cannot look and listen at the same time so limit the amount of information your give.

Ways to physically assist your child using a cup:

- Your child can hold onto your hand as the cup is brought to their mouth.
- Hand-over-hand - your child grasps the cup while you put their hand over the top of your child's hand.
- Your child grasps the cup whilst you hold the bottom to guide the movement.
- Your child grasps the cup while you help by supporting and guiding from the elbow.

You can also practice using a cup during other activities e.g. during pretend play, during craft activities, water or sand play etc. Give your child the opportunity to practice pouring and making drinks. Use smaller bottles and smaller jugs.
Question 7 - Activities of Daily Living

Can your child use a spoon independently?

Mealtimes are an important aspect of family life. Children begin to develop self-feeding skills from birth. Self-feeding is a very complex task and it is common for children to have difficulty using cutlery to feed themselves. It usually takes until a child is 7 years old before they can successfully use cutlery to feed themselves without being too messy.

Babies are usually keen to get involved with feeding between 6 and 9 months. They will hold and mouth food from this age and will often be keen to help with feeding and play with a spoon by banging it and mouthing both ends. Between 9 and 13 months they can finger feed with soft foods or those that melt quickly in the mouth. By 14 months children can usually dip a spoon into food and can also move the spoon to their mouths (this is very messy and involves lots of spills). Children then learn to scoop with a spoon to feed themselves. By 24 months children are usually keen to feed themselves and be independent. Between 2 and 3 years children further develop their spoon feeding skills.

Hints and Tips

It is important that your child is well supported when they are learning any new skill. Initially ensure your child is well supported in a high chair or on your lap. You can use cushions or rolled up towels to help your child to stay sitting up straight in their high chair.

As they grow it is important that their feet and back are supported so that they can use their hands freely. Whenever possible ensure that your child is sitting at a table. You could use a sturdy box under their feet and cushions on the chair to make sure they are well supported.

Always set the dishes and utensils out in the same way to develop a routine and help your child locate items at each meal.

Think about the utensils you are using. Spoons with thick and/or textured handles are easier to hold. A spoon with a short handle is easier to control. Consider the weight of the cutlery. Sometimes something heavier can be easier to control. Use a bowl or plate with a raised edge so the child has something to scoop against. Place a non-slip mat underneath the bowl to prevent it sliding when your child is learning to scoop.
Question 7 - Activities of Daily Living

When encouraging your child to use a spoon use foods that stick to the spoon (e.g. yoghurt, porridge, mashed potato). These are less likely to spill, so the child has more chance of succeeding.

Take your time and be consistent. Learning a new skill takes time so persevere with giving support until you feel that the child is making progress.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!! Give your child opportunities for practice every day.

A good way to teach your child a new skills, is to break down each task into small steps and teach them the last step first (backward chaining). Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second-last step, then the third-last step and so on. Here is one way to break the task down into steps:

- Start by supporting the action completely. Gradually reduce the amount of physical support you provide as the child becomes more independent.

- Start by encouraging your child to hold a spoon or cup whilst feeding so they get used to handling feeding tools.

- Help your child scoop the food, bring the spoon up to their mouth and put the spoon into their mouth. Your child is responsible for removing the food.

- Help your child scoop the food and bring the spoon up to their mouth. Your child is responsible for putting the spoon into their mouth and removing the food.

- Help your child scoop the food. Your child is responsible for bringing the spoon up to their mouth, putting the spoon into their mouth and removing the food from the spoon.

- Your child can now try using the spoon independently – expect some mess!
Question 7 - Activities of Daily Living

Children learn in different ways so you might need to vary your approach. There are a number of ways in which you can help:

- Physically assist your child.
- Show your child - do the task alongside your child.
- Tell your child - talk your child through each step of the process.

You can use each of these ways individually or any combination depending on what suits your child. Please be aware that some children cannot look and listen at the same time so limit the amount of information you giving.
Question 8

Can your child take their socks and slip on shoes off independently?

By one year your child should be able to help you as you dress them by pushing their arms and legs through items of clothing. By 2 years they should be able to remove an unfastened jacket.

By 2½ years they can put on easy clothing such as a jacket or open front shirts without zipping/buttoning.

By the age of 3 they should be able to assist with zipping and unzipping and separating the zip at the bottom of a jacket. Between the ages of 3 to 4 years your child should be able to put their hands through both armholes and down the sleeves in front opening clothing (e.g. jacket). They should also be able to take the same item off completely.

By 4 years children should be able to get their clothes on and off independently but will not be able to manage fastenings (e.g. zips and buttons) for another year or two.

Hints and Tips

It's much easier for your child to learn how to undress before dressing. Therefore practice taking off their socks and shoes first.

A good way to teach your child how to get dressed is to break down each task into small steps and teach them the last step first. This technique is called backward chaining (more information is available on KIDS Scotland). Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second last step, then the third last step and so on. Push your child’s sock down until it is just covering their toes and encourage your child to pull the sock off and offer lots of praise when they succeed. Once they have mastered this push the sock down to their heel and encourage them to pull it off again giving praise when they succeed. Finally teach them to remove their sock independently by teaching the first step by putting your hands over theirs and showing them what to do.

If your child is struggling it can be tempting to take over. Give your child time to work it out for themselves and give loads of encouragement. If necessary, talk them through what to do and only intervene if they get really stuck. It is often better to practice these things when you are not in a rush so weekend mornings are better than when you are rushing out to nursery/work.
Question 8 - Activities of Daily Living

Here are some activities you might want to try with your child:

- Play dress up with your child; use a variety of oversized clothes.
- Practice putting socks on a doll or teddy bear.