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 3½ to 5 year old children to see if they have all the skills necessary to participate in school. 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.
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Question 1 - Fine Motor

Can your child snip with scissors?

Developing scissor skills is an important milestone in your child’s life. By learning to use scissors they practice using a tripod grasp (i.e. using thumb, index and middle fingers together) which then develops into the ideal grasp for writing.

It is important that your child uses the appropriate scissors for their dominant hand (left or right handed scissors).

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

Pre-scissor Activity Ideas

- Use salad tongs to pick socks off the floor and put in laundry basket.
- Use salad tongs to drop cotton wool balls into a box.
- Use tweezers to pick up tiny things like raisins, beads and rolled up pieces of paper.
- Peg clothes pegs all around the edges of a shoe box.
- Use a turkey baster or medicine pipette to squirt water in the bath.
- Get your child to pinch his thumb and index finger all the way along a playdough (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe) sausage to make indentations.
Question 1 - Fine Motor

- Make a sock puppet with your child and get them to open & close his mouth to ‘feed it’.

Activity Ideas for Correct Grasp

- When holding a pair of scissors for the first time reinforce your child’s hand position by getting them to do the ‘thumbs up’ sign. Remind your child each time the correct way to hold the scissors, reinforce the ‘thumbs up’ and give them plenty opportunities to practice. Place a small sticker on your child’s thumb so that they can look at it before they start cutting.

- Get your child to hold a beanbag (or small soft toy) between their elbow and side whilst they practice cutting to ensure that their hand and arm position remain correct whilst cutting.

- Try marking the thumb hole with a piece of coloured tape so your child knows where to place their thumb.

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

- Ask your child to snip a playdough sausage (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe) into pieces with their scissors.

- Try getting your child to cut a plastic drinking straw into pieces to make ‘beads’. They can then lace them together to practice their threading skills.

- Get your child to snip along a piece of thick card (as this is more rigid for a child to hold). Then get them to try snipping different textures before moving onto paper.
Question 2 - Fine Motor

Question 2

Can your child hold a pencil near the tip with their thumb and fingers?

As soon as your child stops putting things in their mouth give them little pieces of chalk or crayon and big sheets of paper to scribble on. It is important to encourage a good grip from the start so make sure your child is able to identify and name their thumb, index finger (pointer finger) and middle finger so they can start to use them together.

When your child can hold a mark maker (i.e. pencil, crayon, chalk etc.) using their thumb, pointer and middle finger only; start to reinforce a good tripod grasp. Children develop bad habits and it is much harder to break these habits once they become established. It is important to use a tripod grasp as it is the most efficient method. As your child gets older and the volume of work increases they may be susceptible to pain or fatigue if they are not using the proper pencil grip.

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

- **Sing a Song**
  Sing the Tommy Thumb song (see KIDS Scotland for lyrics).

- **Colour in Pictures**
  Use a variety of different mark makers (e.g. thick felt pens, chunky crayons, chunky chalk etc.) and encourage your child to colour in pictures.

- **Paint**
  Finger paint with your child and encourage them to use a different colour for each finger (thumb, pointer (index) and middle fingers only).

- **Marbles**
  Pick up marbles using the thumb, pointer (index) and middle fingers only.
Activity Ideas for your child if they are nearly doing the activity

- Use short pencils or crayons to encourage your child to only use their thumb, pointer (index) and middle finger.

- Put an elastic band around the pencil (2cm from the tip) and encourage your child to always place their thumb and first two fingers on the band, or alternately you can buy pencil grips that will encourage your child to develop a good tripod grasp.

- Use chunky triangular pencil/crayons which will encourage the correct pencil grasp.

- Give your child plenty of opportunities to try using a pencil/crayon. Let them score off items on your shopping list as you put them in your trolley. Encourage them to do dot-to-dots and mazes.

- For any of the above activities it can be helpful to encourage your child to hold a small cotton wool ball (or another small object) in the palm of their hand using their ring (ruby ring) and pinkie (baby small) finger as this will ensure these fingers do not become part of the pencil grasp.
Question 3 - Fine Motor

Question 3

Can your child draw a horizontal line, vertical line and circle?

Pre writing skills are required before your child learns to write. They need to know how to hold and use a pencil to draw, write, copy and colour. Letters, numbers and early drawings are made up of a number of pre writing shapes. It is important that your child masters these shapes prior to learning to write as these shapes are used to form legible letters and numbers. Children tend to learn the shapes in the order below.

Activity Ideas

- Get your child to trace over vertical, horizontal lines, and circular shapes on a large sheet of paper using items such as building blocks, beads, playdough (see KIDS Scotland for homemade playdough recipe), string, pipe cleaners and stickers.

- Encourage your child to draw all the shapes using their pointer (index) finger in a baking tray which can be filled with wet sand, dry sand, rice or lentils. You can also use shaving foam or foam soap on the tiles in your bathroom or on a baking tray.

- Get your child to paint the shapes using their pointer (index) finger or a paint brush.

- Get your child to draw the shapes using a variety of different tools (e.g. chalk on pavement, crayons at an easel or felt tip pens).
Question 3 - Fine Motor

- Place two small toys at either side of a large sheet of paper and get your child to draw a horizontal line between them. Then move the toys to the top and bottom of the paper so your child can practice a vertical line. To encourage your child to draw a circle, place a plate, cup or any other round item on the paper and ask your child to draw around the object.

- Encourage your child to complete basic dot-to-dot puzzles, mazes, drawing trails, etc.
Question 4

Can your child draw a person?

By 2½ years your child will start to draw people that resemble a tadpole/amoeba, with arms and/or legs attached directly to the face. The face may not have any features.

By 3 years your child will start to include some features e.g. eyes and mouth. It is not until after the age of 4 that your child will start to draw a separate body.

Drawing is a way for your child to be able to show their thoughts and understanding of the world. Drawing develops through a number of stages and by the age of 4 a child should be able to draw a basic representation of a person.

- **Name Body Parts**
  Make sure you always name body parts when washing or dressing your child to reinforce them. Also sing songs that encourage naming body parts (e.g. ‘Head, Shoulder, Knees and Toes’).

- **Play a game of ‘Simon Says’** and get your child to touch different parts of their body including facial features.

- **Drawing Faces**
  Try getting your child to draw a face on a paper plate to make a mask or cut out different facial features from a magazine and stick them on a paper plate to create a face.

- **Draw somebody together**; you draw a circle on a piece of paper and get your child to add the facial features and then limbs.

- **Ask your child to lie on the back of a large piece of wallpaper and draw round them**. You can then get your child to draw on features and clothes to the outline and name the body parts whilst they are doing this.

- **Get your child to trace round their hand or foot on a piece of paper**, also try doing self-portraits or a family portrait.
Question 5 - Activities of Daily Living

Question 5

Can your child take off and put on their jacket (they may need assistance with fastenings)?

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 zips or buttons.

By the age of 3 your child should be able to assist with zipping and unzipping as well as separating the zip at the bottom of the jacket. Between the ages of 3-4 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 old your child 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 is much easier for your child to learn how to undress before dressing. Therefore practice taking off their jacket first.

- 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
  - Tell your child

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 give.
Question 5 - Activities of Daily Living

- A good way to teach your child how to get dressed is to break down each task into small steps and teach him the last step first. This technique is called backward chaining (more information is available on the website). Once they can do the last step of the task, teach them the second-last step, then the third-last step and so on.

- 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 school/work.

- Your child needs opportunities to practice putting their arms into sleeves. This can sometimes be easier when using larger items of clothing so let them practice on your jacket.

- There are a number of methods that can be used to put on a jacket. Try all methods to see which way your child has more success with. Once you have identified the method that suits your child share this with other people (e.g. school, grandparents, child minder etc.) so that everyone uses the same method.

**ACTIVITY IDEAS**

- Play a game by taking an adult sized shirt/jacket, seal the cuffs with elastic bands and then hide small toys down each sleeve. Ask your child to put their arm in and pull out the toy.

- Play dress up with your child; use a variety of oversized clothes.
Can your child use/go to the toilet independently by doing the following:

1. Do they let you know they need to go to the toilet?
2. Can they get to the toilet on time most occasions?
3. Can they manage their clothing?
4. Can they flush the toilet?

If your child is not yet fully toilet trained then speak to your Health Visitor or GP, remember it is not uncommon for children to still have accidents at night at this stage.

Independent toileting is a very complex task with lots of complex steps. By 3 years your child may be able to use the toilet during the day with few accidents, but still need help with wiping and managing their clothes.

Hints and Tips

- It is important your child feels secure when they are sitting on the toilet. Using a toilet step or a sturdy box under their feet will make them feel safer and therefore concentrate on the task at hand. A toilet set insert may also help your child feel safer.

- Practice and Patience; as with all new skills this task will take time to learn so don’t expect your child to master it straight away. Break the task down into its separate parts (e.g. managing clothes, wiping or washing hands etc.) and only tackle one part at a time with you offering support with other aspects of the task.
Question 6 - Activities of Daily Living

- As with any new challenge, the use of a reward chart can be very motivating for a child. You can set a goal at the beginning of the week or fortnight around what your child is to complete (e.g. final wipe without physical assistance); if they achieve success with this they receive a sticker for their chart which can be used for a reward at the end of the set time period.

- Ask nursery or school staff for their advice as they have a large amount of knowledge and experience in this area.
Question 7 - Activities of Daily Living

Question 7

Can your child wash and dry their hands independently?

*Hand hygiene should be part of every person’s daily routine. Learning this skill early reduces the risks of illness and infections. Now that your child is attending nursery it is important that they can complete this task independently as there may not be an adult present at all times to supervise.*

Hints and Tips

- Your child learns best when they can copy you, so give them plenty of opportunities to watch. Tell them what you are doing as you wash your hands and then ask them to copy you.

- Make sure your child can reach the sink; use a toilet step or stool.

- There are a variety of different types of soap e.g. bar, liquid, foam and hand gel. Some children do not like the texture of soap therefore try each variety and see what suits your child best.

- There are also a number of ways for your child to dry their hands. Some children can be scared of hand dryers therefore offer them alternatives like paper towels. It is important that you do not completely avoid hand dryers as when your child is exposed to these unexpectedly they may become overly distressed. Make sure you continue to use public toilets with hand dryers but allow your child to choose whether they use them or not.

- It is a good idea to sing a short song whilst you and your child wash your hands to ensure that you carry out the task for the recommended minimum 15 seconds.

- Visit [Health Protection Scotland](https://www.healthprotection.scot) for downloadable resources, techniques and animation with song.
Question 8

Can your child use cutlery independently e.g. can they use a spoon for yoghurt or a fork for pasta?

Children begin to hold a spoon around 9-10 months. By 12 months they can take a spoon to their mouth. They start to manage a fork around 2 years of age. By 4½ years they can use a spoon and fork together. At 5 years they can master spreading with a knife. It is not until your child is 7-8 years that they can use a knife and fork together.

Hints and Tips

- Whenever possible ensure that your child can reach the work surface. They may need to stand on a chair or step. You want the work surface to be at the height on their elbow. If seated at the table ensure their feet are supported so they can use their hands freely.

- Think about the utensils you are using. Knives with thick and/or textured handles are easier to hold. A knife with a short handle is easier to control. Use a plate with a raised edge when spreading and use a non-slip mat under a chopping board when cutting.

- Encourage a good cutlery grasp right from the start; your child’s index finger should point down the back of the knife towards the blade.

- Work on one aspect of using a knife at a time e.g. spreading or cutting.

- 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, the child grasps the knife while the adult puts their hand over the top of the child’s).
  - Show your child
  - Tell your child
Question 8 - Activities of Daily Living

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.

- Start off with soft spreads and firm foods when spreading. Spreading very soft butter or jam onto toast and spreading runny icing onto fairy cakes etc. As they become more proficient at this start to use spreads with firmer consistencies such as peanut butter or Nutella.

- Start off with chopping soft foods and move to firmer foods. For example practice chopping mushrooms and bananas before moving onto apples and potatoes.

- You can also practice cutting and spreading during other activities e.g. when playing with play dough or during craft activities.

- 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.