



**livewell**

in the Braintree District

# Ready Steady Startwell

Getting the best start  
from birth to school

includes  
FREE TLC  
PULL-OUT  
POSTER



# Welcome!

Are you starting a family,  
or have children aged from 0-5?  
Then this booklet is for you!

Here you will find information and ideas to help you get your child off to the best start, and to help you as a parent or carer. In addition, wherever you see a star, this means there is a voucher or free offer for you. Check the information next to each star, to see where and how to redeem.

## Acknowledgements

This publication is a partnership production involving the following organisations:



We would also like to thank Fusion Leisure, who have generously supplied offers or vouchers for Braintree families.



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# Services and support

# Support for you and your family

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Being a parent is a wonderful thing, but it's also hard work, and can be lonely. You may not be able to see friends or work colleagues as much as you used to. Your relationships with your family or partner may also change. You may worry about feeling isolated, or not able to cope.

Luckily there is lots of support, advice, information and fun activities available for you and your child in Braintree.

**Braintree Child & Family Wellbeing Service** provides a range of services for families and others caring for children. It offers services suited to the needs of local families from the main Hub, delivery sites or outreach sites in community venues.

These services include: family support and outreach services, information and advice on childcare and early learning and health services.

The Child & Family Wellbeing Service can provide information or advice on all aspects of family life so drop in to visit or call one of the staff team.

**Carousel Hub**, Braintree: 01376 556863  
**Acorn Delivery Site**, Halstead: 01787 477162  
**Harlequin Delivery Site**, Witham: 01376 535270  
**Silver End Delivery Site**, Silver End 01376 587974

**Some of the services delivered across the District include:**

**Outreach Support / Health Visiting Service** – Support to families delivered on a 1-1 basis in the family home. Referrals in to this service via Health Visitor, GP, Early Year's Setting or self-referral

**Parenting Support** – Courses or 1-1 sessions to support with challenging behaviour, routines, boundaries etc.

**Domestic Abuse Support** – Courses delivered in partnership with Safer Places to support mums who have or are experiencing Domestic Abuse

**Self Esteem Programmes** – To support parents to become more confident, raise self-esteem and aspirations.

# Your health and wellbeing

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Every new mum is asked about their mental health at certain points in their child's life, but these are not the only times! You can arrange a private or home visit with your Health Visitor to talk about your worries or concerns. We are here to listen and help. Call us.

**Health Visiting Service:**

**Carousel Hub**, Braintree: 01376 556863  
**Acorn Delivery Site**, Halstead: 01787 477162  
**Harlequin Delivery Site**, Witham: 01376 535270  
**Silver End Delivery Site**, Silver End 01376 587974

Every new mum is asked about their mental health at certain points in their child's life, but these are not the only times!

**Did you know around 1 in 10 new mums experience mild to moderate post-natal depression?** You can arrange a private or home visit with your Health Visitor to talk about your worries or concerns.





A photograph of two young children sitting at a light green table. The child in the foreground, a young boy with curly hair, is focused on stacking colorful rings (red, purple, blue, green, orange) onto a central rod. He is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. Another child, a young boy with dark hair, is partially visible behind him, also looking down at the toys. The background is slightly blurred, showing a shelf with various items.

# Finding childcare and free early learning

## Looking for childcare?

Contact the Essex Family Information Service on **0800 055 6874**  
[fis@essex.gov.uk](mailto:fis@essex.gov.uk) or visit  
[www.essex.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.essex.gov.uk/earlyyears)

**Ofsted** regulates and inspects services that provide childcare. When you are looking for a childcare provider, we recommend that you check their Ofsted report to ensure your child will be receiving good quality provision.

Did you know that if your child attends a high quality childcare setting, they will be more likely to do well at school?

## Types of Childcare

**Pre-schools** (including playgroups and nursery schools) offer play and early education. This is usually provided during term time for children aged between two and five years old.

**Day nurseries** provide full or part-time care and early education for babies and children up to the age of five. Some may also offer a provision for older children before/after school and in the holiday period. They generally operate all year, including school holidays.

**Childminders** provide care for children, usually in their own home. They often offer flexible hours while providing a wide range of learning opportunities in and out of the home.

**Out-of-school clubs** provide care and activities to fit around school hours. Out-of-school care includes breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and holiday play schemes.

All three and four-year-olds and some two-year-olds are entitled to up to 15 hours of free early learning and childcare per week. Some eligible three and four-year-olds are also entitled to claim up to an additional 15 hours per week (up to 30 hours in total).

For more information and to find out what support you could be entitled to, visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

Family Hubs can provide support to complete free early learning and childcare applications, and can provide information on the different childcare opportunities available in your local area.

# The Local Offer for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

The Local Offer is a website containing information on all services and support available for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Essex. The Local Offer also has a Facebook page to keep you updated with news about events in your area for children with SEND.

[www.facebook.com/theEssexLocalOffer](https://www.facebook.com/theEssexLocalOffer)  
[www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk)

## The Local Offer is for:

- Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Children and young people from birth to 25 years
- Their parents and carers
- Practitioners and professionals



# Your child's physical development

## Fun family activities

- Exercise helps children develop healthy bones, muscles and joints
- It can help all of us maintain a healthy body weight
- Exercise helps children concentrate and sleep better
- Exercise reduces anxiety - for children and parents!

Having an active child encourages healthy behaviour for life. Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should have the opportunity to be physically active for at least 3 hours a day (spread throughout the day).

The Active Essex website [www.activeessex.org](http://www.activeessex.org) is a good place to find local clubs and activities available to you. The library also holds leaflets on what's on in your area which includes free walks, sport clubs and activity days.

**Great Notley Country Park** near Braintree covers some 100 acres of open space and provides lots of things to do free of charge. The site is home to Essex's longest play trail – 1.2km - including a giant see-saw, climbing forest, tyre swings, sand pits, rope climbers, slides and forts. There is also an exciting water play area, so be sure to bring them a change of clothes!

The park is also popular for birdwatching, walking, cycling, fishing, horse riding, football, picnics and kite-flying.

There are also the Sky Ropes Junior and high ropes adventure course where for £4 or £10 tots and older children/adults can test their nerves! The park has a footpath that runs through it so pushchairs are welcome plus there is a café for snacks and refreshments.

*"It's easy to spend a whole day here exploring."*

Did you know that exercise helps children concentrate and sleep better?







## Braintree swim centre

01376 333833

The small fun pool is open all week for under 3's and parents to attend with a slide and floats/toys.

**Parent & Child swimming lessons and Pre-school lessons**

## Witham Leisure centre

0345 260 1535

**Crèche** available Mon - Fri 09:30 -12

**Toddler world inflatable fun** – Call the centre for details of times.

**Parent & Child swimming lessons and Pre-school Lessons**

## Halstead Leisure Centre

0345 260 1535

**Toddler Splash** Monday 10:00-12:00 & Friday 10:00-12:00 A Public session for parents and young children to attend with access to floats and toys, to build confidence in the water for younger children.

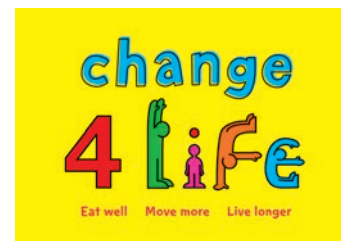
**Parent & Child swimming lessons and Pre-school Lessons.**

Crèche available Mon-Fri 09:30-11:30 £3 for 1 hour £5 for 2 hours Use the crèche facilities so you can relax in the pool, attend the group exercise classes or use the gym.

**Buggy fitness classes** are available across the district – these are classes which usually take place outdoors where you bring your baby along with you. Contact the leisure centres or Family Hubs for details.

## Change for Life [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

The Change 4 Life campaign site offer a vast range of resources, including shopping tips, recipe ideas, sugar and snack swaps. Change 4 Life have also developed the Fun Generator and the Activity Planner, designed to encourage fun physical activity, as well as a series of smartphone apps where information is available at the touch of a button.







# Ear, eye and dental care for children

## Looking after your child's teeth

Take your child to the dentist, even if you think their teeth are fine. Just getting used to the environment and opening up their mouth for the dentist is good practice for the future!

All dental treatment for children is free. Search 'NHS children's teeth' online for more guidance.

Did you know that last year  
**163 children** in the  
Braintree District had to have  
teeth surgically removed in  
hospital?



Did you know that there are a number of parks, nature reserves, open spaces and river walks in an around Braintree, Witham and Halstead that are free to use?

For toddlers, even the smallest green space can be an exciting 'jungle', ready for them to explore and discover! Playing outdoors in green spaces helps children develop their physical skills and learn about the world around them.

For a directory of local nature reserves and open spaces search for '**Braintree nature reserves**' online.



## Your child's hearing

Most cases of hearing impairment are identified early, but if you have a concern, please do contact your child's Health Visitor or School Nurse, who will be able to arrange a hearing test for you. Contact details are on page 6.

## Your child's eyes

Some signs that your child may need their eyes testing include:

- sitting too close to the TV
- rubbing their eyes a lot
- holding objects very close to their face
- blinking a lot
- one eye turning either in or out

If you have any concerns, please take them to an optician or contact your health visitor who can make a referral to the hospital optometrists.

Once they start school, they will then be offered a routine vision screen as part of the school entry health assessment.

For more information, search for 'NHS children's eyes' online.



# Talk, Listen, Cuddle: Supporting your child to learn to talk

## A little bit of TLC can make a big difference

As parents you are the experts offering support and guidance to your young children. The opportunities you have to talk with your child are special. Try to make talking a part of everything that you and your child do together, whether it's at bath time, cooking, shopping, even when watching television!

## Your home language is important

Language is one of the most important gifts you give your child. But how do you give it? The answer is simple. Speak your language with your child at home every day!

For information about raising your child as a bilingual speaker, top tips translated into 20 languages are available on [www.tlc-essex.info/language-communication](http://www.tlc-essex.info/language-communication)

**TOP  
TIPS**

TO HELP YOUR CHILD

- ✓ Focus on what your child is looking at or doing.
- ✓ If your child is pointing at something, tell them what it is!
- ✓ By naming the objects your child sees - this could be their toys or clothes, parts of their body or household objects - you will reinforce their understanding of words.
- ✓ Give choices to increase vocabulary.
- ✓ Join in with your child's play or mirror their actions.
- ✓ Build up your child's sentences by repeating what they say and adding words.
- ✓ If your child says something inaccurately, acknowledge what they have said and repeat back in the correct way e.g. Joe says 'og' and Daddy says 'yes it's a dog'.
- ✓ Avoid asking too many questions, this can put your child under pressure.
- ✓ Have fun together with songs and rhymes.





Playing with your child is one of the most important things you can do to support their development. The time you spend playing together will help them learn all sorts of things – from counting and writing, to exploring and making new friends.

Our list of 50 things to do before you're 5 will give you lots of ideas to support your child's learning through play - Complete it online or print it off, stick it on the fridge and tick off each activity!

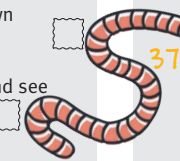
Share and upload photos of you and your little ones achieving each of the 50 things to the TLC Facebook page and once you've completed the list, download your own 50 things to do before you're 5 certificate from the TLC website.



1. Run through long grass (barefoot if you can) ☐
2. Lie in the long grass and feel the grass between your toes, fingers tickling your nose ☐
3. Go on a walk through the woods in all seasons and weathers! ☐
4. Not near any woods? Go for a walk around your neighbourhood, find a tree and watch it change through the seasons ☐
5. Plant and care for a beautiful smelling flower ☐
6. Go on a treasure hunt ☐
7. Have a teddy bear's picnic ☐
8. Climb a tree ☐
9. Play 'pooh sticks' ☐
10. Make an insect house ☐
11. Learn to ride a bike and go on a long bike ride ☐
12. Care for a pet (no matter how small) ☐
13. Play hide and seek ☐



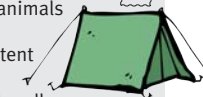
14. Take part in an Easter egg hunt at home ☐
15. Visit the seaside. Explore, and find treasures at the beach ☐
16. Paddle in the sea ☐
17. Build sandcastles ☐
18. Investigate and discover life in rock pools ☐
19. Visit the farm or zoo ☐
20. Paint and create as much as you can ☐
21. Play make believe, and be who you want to be; a spaceman on the moon or a knight in a castle ☐
22. Have a picnic outdoors or indoors with all your favourite treats ☐
23. Be an explorer and hunt for bugs ☐
24. Help make your own dinner ☐
25. Look for worms, and see how they wiggle ☐
26. Go for a walk on a windy day. Take a scarf or a kite and see how they fly ☐



27. Roll down a hill ☐
28. Dig for treasure ☐
29. Try baking a cake and lick the spoon! ☐
30. Make perfume from flower petals ☐
31. Go crabbing ☐
32. Make a snow angel and have a snowball fight ☐
33. Play with water, pour, explore, wash toy cars ☐
34. Use all of the furniture downstairs and all the blankets/towels from upstairs to make a huge den/fort that you can crawl around ☐
35. Have a sleepover in the den you've made ☐
36. Show your grown up how to hit nails into wood, use real tools and be creative with bits and bobs ☐
37. Play in autumn leaves and throw them over your head. Listen for the crunch under foot, then pick your favourites and make your very own leaf man character! ☐



38. Read a book under a tree ☐
39. Go out in the rain and jump in puddles ☐
40. Lie on your back outdoors and watch the clouds ☐
41. Go blackberry picking and eat as many as you can! ☐
42. Make a mud pie ☐
43. Blow a dandelion clock ☐
44. Balance on a log ☐
45. Chase your shadow on a sunny day ☐
46. Catch rain or snow on your tongue ☐
47. Go on a torch-lit walk in the dark, look for stars and night time animals ☐
48. Sleep in a tent ☐
49. Toast marshmallows on a camp fire ☐
50. Join the library and borrow some books ☐





Baby and Toddler Rhyme Time sessions run in all Essex libraries and offer a great opportunity for you and your child to share rhymes, have fun together and join in with other families. To find your nearest session search 'Essex libraries rhyme time' online.

Scan the code below to go directly to the Talk Listen Cuddle website, where you will find lots more tips and nursery rhymes:



Visit our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/talklistencuddle](https://www.facebook.com/talklistencuddle)



**Did you know**  
by the age of five, your child's vocabulary will predict their future educational successes  
– words matter!

For more ideas of how to support your child's development at home, pick up your FREE TLC height chart from your local Family Hub (contact details on p.6)



## Eating well

Home-cooked food is often healthier than pre-prepared and cheaper than takeaways.

Here are five habits that can help you to cook tasty meals that don't cost the earth:

1. **Plan your meals** – when you have a plan, you're able to cook in a smarter way, reducing food waste and saving money
2. **Cook with seasonal produce** – fruit and vegetables are tastier, more nutritious and more likely to be on offer when they are in season
3. **Use cheaper cuts of meat** such as chicken thighs
4. **Have a couple of days a week 'vegetarian'** – using eggs, beans or lentils instead of meat will lower the cost and help give you a balanced diet
5. **Use your freezer** – reduced items and leftovers will keep well in the freezer until you need them



## Fruit crumble



This is a great recipe to give your kids another portion of fruit, as well as being a bit of a treat! The crumble is simple to make and your children can learn lots of early maths skills through helping you weigh and prepare the ingredients.

Prep: 10-15 mins, Cook: 20-25 mins  
Serves 4

### Ingredients

Approx 400g fruit  
(any of the following work well – apples, blackberries, plums, pears, raspberries...)  
50g flour  
50g porridge oats  
50g sugar  
50g butter or vegetable fat

### Method

1. Preheat your oven to 180 C/gas mark 4. Cut up the fruit and put it in an oven-proof dish or tin.
2. Rub all the dry ingredients together in a bowl, until they resemble breadcrumbs. Spread the crumble mixture over the fruit and bake for around 20-25 mins, until your fruit is cooked and the crumble topping is golden brown in colour.



## Easy Turkey Burgers



Make Friday 'burger night' with these delicious turkey burgers!

Prep: 15 mins, Cook: 20 mins - 25 mins,  
plus cooling time  
Makes 8 burgers

£1 per  
serving

### Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil  
1 large onion, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
85g porridge oats  
450g/1lb minced turkey  
100g dried apricot, finely chopped  
1 large carrot, grated  
1 egg, beaten  
Rolls, tomato chutney and cucumber slices, to serve

### Method

1. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a pan and gently fry the onion for 5 mins until soft. Add the garlic and cook for 1 min. Add the oats and fry for 2 mins more. Tip into a bowl and set aside to cool.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients to the cooled mixture and mix well with your hands. Season to taste and shape into 8 patties.
3. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Heat the remaining olive oil in a large, non-stick frying pan and sear the burgers on each side until well coloured (3-4 mins). Transfer to a baking sheet and cook in the oven for 10-15 mins. Serve in rolls with cucumber slices.

## Easy ways to get your 5 a day

- Sprinkle cereal with dried or chopped fruit
- Top toast with banana
- Add crunch to sandwiches with cucumber and tomato
- Add extra vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried or canned) to stews, pasta sauce and curries
- Make a fruity dessert by mixing yoghurt with fresh, dried or tinned fruit



## Dealing with picky eaters

Many children go through phases of not wanting to try new things. Here are some tips to help you:

- **Set clear boundaries and rules.** You should make the decision about what will be served for a meal, where it should be eaten, and when the meal should take place. Your child should be able to choose how much they will eat and whether they want to eat the food that has been prepared.
- **Use positive reinforcement.** Praise your child for being courageous and trying new foods.
- **Model healthy eating.** If your child sees you trying new foods, particularly healthy foods, they will be more likely to try it themselves.
- **Encourage trying new foods up to ten times.** Research shows that it takes up to ten tries of a new food to decide if you like it or not. It has to be ten different times – not ten bites at the same meal!
- **Don't worry!** If your child decides to skip a meal or doesn't eat much, they will be okay! They will not "go hungry" and you are not a bad parent if you do not make a special meal for them. Just try to make sure that the next meal or snack is something that you know they like.

Try this with  
your child:



Look in a mirror and stick out your tongue. See those bumps? Those are your taste buds. They help you taste things like sour and sweet. Our taste buds are connected to our brains. When we try a new food, our taste buds help our brain decide if we like it or not. However, your taste buds need more than one chance to try a new food before they can decide whether they really like it!

## Toileting and sleep routines

### Sleep routines

Sleep routines are important for children of all ages. Getting them into a simple, soothing bedtime routine can be helpful for everyone and help prevent sleeping problems later on. It's also a great opportunity to have one-to-one time with your little one.

Your routine could be:

- having a bath
- changing into night clothes and a fresh nappy
- brushing their teeth
- putting them to bed
- reading a bedtime story
- dimming the lights in the room to create a calm atmosphere
- giving a goodnight kiss and cuddle
- singing a lullaby or having a wind-up musical mobile you can turn on when you leave the room

Too much excitement and stimulation just before bedtime can wake your child up again. Spend some time winding down and doing some calmer activities, like reading. Avoid screen time (tv, computers, tablets) for a couple of hours before bed as the light emitted from screens as well as the content of exciting games or programmes can make it more difficult for your child to get off to sleep quickly.

For advice and help regarding sleep, routines and toileting, contact your Health Visitor or search 'NHS children's sleep' online.



**Did you know** that children who get enough sleep are more likely to be a healthy weight than those that are sleep deprived?



## Toileting

Most parents think about potty training with their toddler after about 18 months or as they approach their second birthday but, like most milestones in childhood, there are no absolutes.

Parents often say it's not worth starting potty training until you're sure that you're both ready and you have the time to focus on it. Major upheavals, both physical and emotional, can affect the success of potty training. Toddlers can pick up the idea very quickly if they're at the right stage, when they have the ability to notice when they need to go and wait to get to the right place.

Many parents will try to wait until the summer months to begin training, as it means there will be fewer clothes to remove if there is an accident. If the weather is warm and you're outside, inevitable accidents will be easier to clean up as well.

For more information search 'NHS potty training' online.

## What other help is available?

Braintree's Child & Family Wellbeing Service can also offer support with parenting, routines and managing behaviour.

For more information please contact:-

**Carousel Hub**, Braintree: 01376 556863

**Acorn Delivery Site**, Halstead: 01787 477162

**Harlequin Delivery Site**, Witham: 01376 535270

**Silver End Delivery Site**, Silver End 01376 587974

Your child's  
personal, social  
and emotional  
development





# Making friends and managing feelings

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There are many ways that you can help your child to develop their friendship skills and manage their feelings, some of these are;

- Take your child to places where they can play with other children. There are lots of free places such as a park or a Family Hub. Or organise for other children to come and play at your home.
- Help your child to find solutions to a problem by asking questions or making suggestions, for example; "I can see you both want to play with the tractor, so what shall we do?" "Shall we take it in turns?"
- Make time every day to play with your child and follow your child's lead. Playing games that involve sharing or turn-taking help your child to learn to wait and to take turns.
- Coach emotional and social behaviours, for example; "Sally you waited patiently for your turn on the swing" because this will help your child to understand and label different feelings and behaviours. It will also encourage these behaviours to be repeated.
- Talk about your feelings simply and label you child's emotions for example; "that made me feel....." "I can see you are feeling....." Show your child how you calm yourself. This will help develop your child's awareness of how others feel.
- Practice friendship skills with your child.
- See the world through your child's eyes.

Always remember that you are your child's role model and use the words and behaviours that you want your child to use.




## Toddler Tantrums

**All toddlers have tantrums, they're a normal part of a child's development at that age. But how to manage them? Here are some tips:**

- If something has to be done that your toddler doesn't want, try giving a simple choice: "We need to put your shoes on to go outside – would you like to wear your trainers or your wellies?"
- A tantrum is actually scary for a toddler – help them feel safe by either holding them gently or moving items out of the way so that they don't hurt themselves or others.
- Comfort your child as they calm down, they need to feel reassured that nothing has changed as a result of their tantrum.
- Don't try to argue or tell your child off – they won't hear or understand your reasoning while having a tantrum.
- Try not to get angry with them. It won't help and the sound of your angry voice is more likely to scare them and make them more upset.
- Don't reward or punish your child for a tantrum - you want them to learn over time that tantrums change nothing.
- Don't let tantrums embarrass you into giving in, for example by buying sweets for your toddler while at the shops. They will very quickly learn to use tantrums as a way of getting what they want.







Did you know that all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to free school meals? All schools have to meet national nutritional standards for their school dinners, so this can be a great way for your child to try new foods and will also help them concentrate better in the afternoon.

# Getting ready for school: how can I help my child?

## The daily routine

Starting school is a big step, both for you and your child! Help get things off to a smooth start by:

Getting into a bedtime routine before starting school – have some early nights and practice getting ready and out of the door in the morning.

Do a practice journey to school and time how long it will take to avoid rushing and help keep the mornings calm and manageable.

## Having lunch at school

Whether they have school dinners or a packed lunch, eating at school will be a whole new experience for your child. You can help them get used to lunchtimes at school by practising the following:

**Using cutlery – If your child isn't yet confident using a knife and fork, try the following:**

- Practice pretend cutting toy food and vegetables that are attached together with Velcro
- Make pretend food from play-dough and practice cutting this
- Let your child help with baking and cutting pastry
- Let your child cut soft chocolate bars into chunks
- Let your child cut up bananas with or without their skins

If you and your child decide they'd prefer a packed lunch, aim for a balanced packed lunch containing each of the following:

- **starchy foods** – these include bread, rice, potatoes and pasta
- **protein foods** – including meat, fish, eggs, beans and others
- **a dairy item** – this could be cheese or a yoghurt
- **vegetables or salad and a portion of fruit**

For more ideas, search 'healthy lunchbox ideas for kids' online.

## Dressing and undressing

Your child will have PE at school, and will also need to be able to take their outdoor clothes on and off. Make independent dressing easier by choosing school uniform with elastic waistbands and shoes with velcro fastenings. Help your child to put their shoes on the right feet by marking the bottom of the pair with a smiley face. Draw half the face on each shoe so they need to be matched correctly to make the picture.

Let your child practice by dressing up in their new uniform and PE kit.

Any queries or concerns regarding your child's development? Speak with your local Health Visitor

**Carousel Hub**, Braintree:  
01376 556863

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## Language Development

Here are some simple things you can do to help your child get ready, in terms of their language and communication development:

- Borrow a 'Starting School Bag' from your local Essex Library. Each book bag contains four specially chosen story and information books for you to explore what it's like to go to 'big' school with your pre-school child. Search for 'Essex libraries parent information' online to find out more.
- Sharing and enjoying books is the first step towards learning to read so visit your local library and sign up for the Summer Reading Challenge at the start of the summer holidays.
- Talk about different noises - traffic, voices, music, birds singing. Ask your child to close their eyes - what can they hear? Helping your child notice and recognise different sounds helps them with learning letters and sounds once they start school.
- Encourage your child to recognise their name, mark their uniform, shoes, bag etc. and show them where the labels are.
- Play simple turn-taking games with your child, such as snap, or I-spy (things of a certain colour). These will help them learn to take turns and understand rules, as well as helping with their language, counting and colour recognition
- Spend time talking about what school will be like and reassuring them if they have any worries. Talk about playtime, school dinners, assembly and who to talk to if they need help.
- Plan what will happen on the first week. Who will take and collect them and what you will be doing while they are there? It is likely that they will be tired after their new experience so prepare an early teatime and bedtime.
- Your child will take their lead from you so embrace this next step and help them enjoy a positive start to their school days.

## What other help is available?

Family Hubs supported by early years settings and schools deliver Transition Courses - support programmes to help your child to be ready for school.

For more information see Family Hubs contact details on p.6



For more top tips on getting ready for school visit  
[www.tlc-essex.info/getting-ready-for-school/](http://www.tlc-essex.info/getting-ready-for-school/)  
or scan below:



For information on childhood illnesses and when a child should or shouldn't be sent to school, visit the following website: [www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services/your-health/childhood-illnesses](http://www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health-services/your-health/childhood-illnesses)

Your child will normally start school in the September of the school year in which they turn five. For information on the application process and dates, visit [www.essex.gov.uk/schools](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schools)





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You can contact us with comments or feedback in the following ways:

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telephone: 01376 552525



## EssexConnects

Do you want to feel more involved in your community,  
meet new people or make some changes to improve  
your health and wellbeing?

Connect Well is an easy way to access a wide variety of support and services  
in the districts of Braintree, Maldon and Chelmsford including:

- Volunteering opportunities
- Befriending and social activities
- Support and self help groups
- Physical activities
- Managing your money
- Community transport

**For more information about how Connect Well can support and help you:**

**T: 01245 351888**

**E: [connect@chelmsfordcvs.org.uk](mailto:connect@chelmsfordcvs.org.uk)**

**W: [www.essexconnects.org.uk](http://www.essexconnects.org.uk)**

