**BookTrust: Why reading stories will help prepare toddlers and parents starting school journey this September**



8th August 2018 – Going to the toilet, tying your shoelaces, brushing your teeth and speaking correctly are all tasks that children should have mastered before starting school, however it transpires that many little ones are lacking these crucial skills, and are even arriving at school without basic hygiene awareness.

According to a recent study, an increasing number of children are starting school without being able to communicate or carry out key tasks for example using the toilet[[1]](#endnote-1). [BookTrust](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/), the UK’s largest children’s reading charity, wants to help time poor parents and urges them to start reading basic life skill stories to little ones now, ahead of their life changing move to primary school in September. Having these skills before they start school, so they won’t fall behind, hold classmates back and to also help ease the burden on teachers.

BookTrust has put together a booklist to encourage parents and carers start talking to small children about starting school and the skills they will need – for example going to the toilet, brushing their teeth, tying their laces, speaking properly etc. These books are brilliant for helping toddler and pre-schoolers (ages 2-4) develop everyday life skills.

[I Want My Potty!](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book/i/i-want-my-potty/)  
**Author:** Tony Ross **Publisher:** Andersen Press   
The Little Princess hates nappies and thinks there must be something better. This is classic picture book entertainment, which will be especially appreciated by any children who are learning to love their potty!

[Zeki Gets a Checkup](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book/z/zeki-gets-a-checkup/)  
**Author:** Anna McQuinn **Illustrator:** Ruth Hearson **Publisher:** Alanna Books   
Zeki is a big boy now – he loves hiding toys, playing ball, singing and dancing. Today, he’s going for a checkup at the doctors’ with Daddy and his toy Mister Seahorse. A lovely book to share with toddlers, which marks their developmental milestones.

[My Big Shouting Day](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book/m/my-big-shouting-day/)  
**Author:** Rebecca Patterson **Publisher:** Jonathan Cape   
Bella is having a Big Shouting Day: from morning until bedtime, she shouts and complains about everything from biscuits to baths. But eventually, Bella says 'sorry' for her big shouting day...

[My New Shoes](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book/m/my-new-shoes/)  
**Author:** Leilani Sparrow **Illustrator:** Dan Taylor **Publisher:** Boxer Books   
Young bear’s feet are growing, so it is time for him to get some new shoes. Vibrant illustrations and rhyming text capture the excitement of this familiar experience, making this an ideal tale for toddlers who are embarking on their own visit to the shoe shop.

To see the full booklist, [click here](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/l/life-skills/).

Diana Gerald, CEO of BookTrust says: “We know there are an increasing number of demands placed on parents and that they’re busy all of the time but using books and stories as an opportunity to start discussions with young ones to prepare them for school can go a long way to help get them ready to start in the new term. If cost is a concern, then why not visit your local library or hold a book swap. There are so many great books out there to help get the conversation started so why not add these to your summer reading list.”

According to Amanda Spielman, head of Ofsted ([as published in the Daily Telegraph](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/06/01/children-starting-school-unable-speak-use-toilet-ofsted-head/)) “Children arrive at school without the words they need to communicate properly. Just imagine the disadvantage they face, right from the start. Unable to follow what’s going on. Unable to keep up with their classmates. Unable to reach their full potential.” In the piece, she also reported 70% of schools are finding an increasing number of children starting school without being toilet trained compared to five years ago.

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*Notes to editors*

BookTrust is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach 3.4 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit**.** [**booktrust.org.uk**](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

1. Research conducted by health and hygiene firm Essity, based on interviews carried out by YouGov [↑](#endnote-ref-1)