# Preschool / Nursery to Reception Transition Timeline

**Derbyshire County Council area | For children starting Reception in September 2027**

A practical guide for early years settings, schools, families and professionals. Moving to Reception takes time and careful planning. Support should build on each child's strengths, interests, communication and individual needs.

**Reception admissions for September 2027**

Applications open: 9 November 2026
Closing date: midnight, 15 January 2027
National Offer Day: 16 April 2027
For children born 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

**Useful links**

Apply for a primary, infant or junior school place

Parents' guide to primary admissions

Derbyshire Early Years SEN Local Offer

**Children with an EHCP:** the school place is arranged through SENDAS; families should not use the standard online admissions form.

## Abbreviations

*These are some of the shortened terms used in this guide.*

| SEND | EHCP | EHCNA |
|---|---|---|
| Special Educational Needs and Disabilities | Education, Health and Care Plan | Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment |
| **SENCO** | **EYSENS** | **SENDAS** |
| Special Educational Needs Coordinator | Early Years Special Educational Needs Service | SEND Assessment Service |
| **IHP** | **ISP** | **LA** |
| Individual Healthcare Plan | Individual Support Plan | Local Authority |

## What to do when: Universal - Support for every Child

| Autumn term before school entry (September to December 2026) | Spring 1 (January to February 2027) | Spring 2 (March to April 2027) | Summer 1 (April to May 2027) | Summer 2 (June to August 2027) | Reception Autumn term (September to October 2027) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Make a list of children who are expected to start Reception in September 2027. Remind families that they must apply for a school place, even if their child attends a nursery at the same school.<br><br>Share clear information about how to apply. Offer practical help to families who may find the application difficult.<br><br>Encourage families to visit schools and attend open events. Help them think about the school environment, daily routines, travel and before- or after-school care.<br><br>Work with the child and family to create an "All About Me" profile. Include the child's interests, important relationships, routines, communication, what helps them feel safe and how they show when something is not right.<br><br>Applications open on 9 November 2026. Remind families regularly about the closing date. | Remind families that applications close at midnight on 15 January 2027.<br><br>Applications received after this date will be treated as late.<br><br>Use assess, plan, do, review to think about each child's move to school. Identify children who may need extra or individual support.<br><br>Use stories, photographs, role play and play activities to help children learn about school. Keep preparation flexible and based on each child, rather than expecting every child to be "school ready" in the same way. | Settings and schools agree a clear timetable for parent information, visits, home visits where offered, and key contacts.<br><br>School places are offered on 16 April 2027. Once the school is known, the setting can contact the school with the parent or carer's knowledge and agreement.<br><br>Schools share simple, child-friendly information, including photographs of staff, classrooms, toilets, entrances and uniform, as well as information about lunch and the school day. | Arrange an early handover conversation between the setting and school. Share the information the school needs about learning, wellbeing, safeguarding and medical needs in a safe and appropriate way.<br><br>Help the child and family meet key adults and get to know the school. Offer quieter visits where these would help.<br><br>Continue helping children get to know school through books, photographs, small-world play, dressing-up, lunch routines and visits from school staff. | Children attend planned school visits. Change the number, timing and length of visits to suit the child and family.<br><br>Send the final transition summary and agreed records to school. Check that school staff understand how the child communicates, what helps and any adjustments they need.<br><br>Give families a named contact and clear information about the first days and weeks, including what to bring, where to go and who to contact with any questions.<br><br>Help families keep school familiar over the summer, especially where a long break may be difficult. Provide photographs or visual information to look at together at home. | Reception staff offer a warm and flexible start. Continue strategies that already work and focus on relationships, belonging and helping the child feel safe.<br><br>Check in with the child and family during the first few weeks. Make changes quickly if something is not working.<br><br>School staff use the transition information when planning support, assessing learning and communicating with home. |

## What to do when:  Targeted - Extra support for children who may need more help

| Autumn 2026 to Spring 1 2027 | Spring 2 to Summer 1 2027 | Summer 2 2027 | Reception Autumn 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Identify children who may need extra help with the move to school. This may include children with emerging SEND, medical needs, communication differences, limited attendance or changes in family life.<br><br>Create an individual transition plan with the child and family. Record what may make the move harder, what already helps, how the child communicates, any sensory or co-regulation support, and the child's views.<br><br>Involve health, social care, early help or other professionals where needed. Agree who will keep track of the transition plan and actions.<br><br>If an EHC needs assessment is in progress, the family should still apply for a school place unless the child already has an EHCP. | Once the school is known, arrange a transition meeting with the family, current setting, school SENCO or Reception lead, and any professionals who need to be involved.<br><br>Agree helpful changes before visits. These might include arriving at a quieter time, shorter visits, support from a familiar adult, visual information, a calm space, communication aids or a familiar object.<br><br>Where helpful, school staff visit the child in their current setting. This helps them see what works well and begin building a relationship with the child.<br><br>Share and review any healthcare plan, risk assessment, intimate care plan or other relevant plan so the right support is ready from the first visit. | Offer extra visits at the child's pace. Visit at different times of day where helpful and practise routines that are important for that child.<br><br>Create a personalised photo book, video, transition story or object-based resource. Show key adults, safe spaces, the way into school and important routines.<br><br>Agree what support, resources and staff training need to be ready for September. Record who will do each action and when it will be completed.<br><br>Agree when the transition plan will be reviewed after the child starts Reception. | A named adult checks in regularly with the child and family. Use the child's usual way of communicating to find out how things are going.<br><br>Review the transition plan within the first few weeks and after any important change. Use assess, plan, do, review to make changes.<br><br>Keep in contact with involved professionals and use school-age referral routes if further support is needed. |

## What to do when:  Specialist: Individual support for children with complex needs, including children with an EHCP

| Autumn 2026 to Spring 1 2027 | Summer 1 2027 | Summer 2 2027 | Reception Autumn 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|
| For children with an EHCP, SENDAS arranges the school place. Families should not complete the standard online application.<br><br>Make sure the child's plans and assessments are up to date. Use the child's and family's views when planning the school place and transition.<br><br>Start planning early with all relevant services if the child may need equipment, building changes, moving and handling support, medical training, specialist communication support or transport.<br><br>Check that the ISP and transition information are complete and up to date.<br><br>For children with a final EHCP, a phase transfer meeting will be necessary, and the SEND Assessment Service should contact you about this via The Hub. | Once the school place is confirmed, hold a transition meeting with the family, current setting, school and involved services.<br><br>Create a detailed transition plan. Include extra visits, staffing, support, communication, sensory needs, personal care, healthcare, safeguarding, equipment and training.<br><br>For children currently supported by EYSENS or Sensory and Physical Support Services, the service may help with visits, advice, staff training, meetings, funding discussions and links with school-age inclusion services to support transition to school.<br><br>Agree the correct funding route and share the supporting information early enough for decisions and staffing to be planned. | Offer repeated, personalised visits with a familiar adult where helpful. Let the child experience important parts of the school day without making visits overwhelming.<br><br>Check that equipment, adjustments, medication arrangements, emergency procedures and trained staff are ready before the child starts.<br><br>Share the final records safely. Include the EHCP, healthcare plan, ISP, current assessments, strategies that work and the agreed transition plan. | Put the agreed support in place from the first day. Check that it helps the child take part, communicate, regulate and feel that they belong.<br><br>Meet with the family and relevant professionals early in the term. Update plans to reflect the child's actual experience of Reception.<br><br>EYSENS involvement ends when the Reception transition work is complete. The school then uses the appropriate school-age services for any ongoing support. |

## Derbyshire links and contacts

Primary, infant and junior school admissions
Parents' guide to primary admissions
Derbyshire Early Years SEN Local Offer
Early Years SEN useful resources
EYSEN Specialist Teacher Service
School admissions for children with SEND

**Early Years SEN Helpline:** EarlyYears.SENHelpline@derbyshire.gov.uk

## Using this timeline

Work with the child and family when making plans. These levels are a guide, not labels, and the support can change over time.
Share only the information that is needed, keep it secure and seek appropriate agreement, unless safeguarding duties require information to be shared.

Check the current Derbyshire webpages before publishing or reusing this guide because dates and service arrangements may change.
This guide is for children moving from preschool or nursery into Reception in the Derbyshire County Council area. It does not cover Derby City.