

## How to help a child start a task

Some children find it hard to get going, they can be anxious about the blank page or be overwhelmed by a task. Start by going through the instructions and checking that they have all the equipment they might need.

### Have a go at these steps.

#### 1. Repeat Back

Ask your child to repeat back instructions to explain to you what they think they need to do. Allowing your child to talk through the task helps them to work out what to do and helps you to pick up any misunderstandings and sort them out before your child starts work.

#### 2. Model

Try doing the first sum to demonstrate, then do a few sums together so your child can see what to do before they try on their own. Or plan the first sentence or sentences together so they don't have a blank sheet when they start writing. You can write it on another piece of paper for them to copy or even scribe a few sentences for them.

#### 3. Tick

Set up a checklist or task board with your child, so they have a list of what they need to do and they can tick off the parts of the task as they do it. For those who can't read well, we might draw a series of little pictures to remind them what to do. Break the task into small sections to encourage them that they are getting there!

#### 4. Time

Give your child some thinking time. Leave them for a time to process the instructions. Check in on them after a minute then, once your child is confident, they know what to do and have everything they need, leave them to work independently for a short time with the reassurance that you will come and check on them. It can help to set a timer so they know how long they need to work for on their own. Start with a short time, like three to five minutes and increase it gradually. As children get older, we try and get them to work on their own for longer periods. How long they can work for depends on their enthusiasm and interest, but it is always good to know that we have a finish time to work to! We all like to know when we can get up for a break, so make the finish time clear and stick to it.