

School Readiness Specialist Volunteer

About Home-Start Essex

Home-Start Essex is a local independent charity that supports parents and caregivers across Mid, South, and West Essex to give children the best possible start in life. We offer compassionate, confidential, and non-judgmental support to help families feel less isolated, build confidence, and manage the challenges of parenting.

Our experienced staff and trained volunteers provide tailored support, across a range of services.

We work alongside families in their communities, building trusted relationships and helping them develop the strength and skills they need to nurture their children.

Purpose of Role

As a School Readiness Specialist Volunteer with Home-Start Essex, you will help parents and children prepare for the important transition to nursery or school. Your support will build confidence, encourage positive routines, and promote early learning through play. In this role, you will help families:

- Develop school-ready behaviours and routines
- Strengthen parent-child interaction through creative play and learning
- Build supportive networks in a safe, non-judgemental environment

You can offer support through:

- **Weekly home-visiting:** Supporting families in their own homes
- **Weekly telephone befriending:** Offering encouragement and guidance by phone/video
- **Weekly Family Support Groups:** Helping parents and children engage in school readiness activities, including play, nursery rhymes, and age-appropriate learning

As a positive role model, you will empower parents to support their child's development and help children feel ready and excited for their next step.

What We Offer - Training & Support

All School Readiness Specialist Volunteers complete a Preparation Course before starting their role. This includes:

- **8 e-learning modules** to complete at home, ideally before online sessions
- **Online face-to-face sessions** to build on the e-learning (format and number of sessions may vary)

In addition, you will be required to complete the School Readiness training where you will learn skills and gain knowledge to support children and their families as they prepare for the transition to school or nursery.

You will be supported every step of the way by a Family Support Co-ordinator who will help you ensure families receive the right guidance and support.

You will also have the chance to attend ongoing training sessions throughout the year, as well as regular peer support sessions.

Our training is designed to equip you with the confidence and knowledge to make a real difference.

Benefits for you

Volunteering with Home-Start Essex is a rewarding way to give back and grow personally. You can:

- Make a real difference in the lives of local families
- Build confidence and gain valuable experience
- Boost your wellbeing through meaningful connection
- Meet new people and make lasting friendships
- Join volunteer support groups and social events
- Develop transferable skills in school readiness that can be used in various settings, including future employment.
- Feel part of a supportive, community-minded team
- Give your time and gain so much in return.