Learning the days of the week: a guide for parents and carers

Key points

- Learning the order of the days – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and so on – is an important early maths skill that helps children understand time and routines.
- Yesterday, today and tomorrow can be confusing because what counts as 'yesterday' changes every day; children need to hear these words often before they stick.
- Anchors like 'swimming day', 'library day' or 'pizza Friday' help children fix the days in order because they connect to something they remember and enjoy.
- The pattern of weekdays (Monday to Friday, often school days) and weekends (Saturday and Sunday) is a natural way to split the week into memorable chunks.
- Daily calendar routines – looking at a calendar together each morning – build familiarity without pressure, and many Reception classes already do this.
- This is about sequencing and time words, not about reading clocks or telling the time, which comes later.

Things to try at home

- Point to a calendar together each morning: 'Today is Thursday. What day was yesterday? What day comes next?' Keep it simple; a right answer takes seconds, a wrong answer is just a chance to say it again.
- Notice the days aloud during your everyday routines: 'It's Monday – school day', 'It's Saturday – park day', 'It's swimming day on Thursday'. Children hear and absorb without being tested.
- Draw or find photos of what you did yesterday, what you're doing today, and what's coming tomorrow – a simple strip of three pictures. Talk about the days as you point.
- Sing or chant the days to a tune your child knows (like 'Twinkle Twinkle' or 'Happy Birthday'). Repetition and rhythm help days stick in memory.
- Make a simple chart on the fridge showing the seven days. Your child can point to today, cross it off, or move a counter along each day – no pressure, just familiarity.

Find out more

- Your child's teacher – ask how they practise the days in class and what words they use, so you can match them at home.
- GOV.UK curriculum guidance: search for 'Reception mathematics' to see what early learning goals include about time and sequencing.
- The National Curriculum for England (available free online) shows what 'understanding the passage of time' looks like at Reception and Year 1.