

More than one in four children start primary school unable to sufficiently read and write

Shocking statistics have just been published that one in four primary school children start school unable to sufficiently read or write.

According to the Education Secretary Damian Hinds, despite the best effort of schools, the ability gap widens as children get older. He wants to halve the number of four and five year olds arriving at school without any literacy skills over the next 10 years.

And that's why Home-Starts in Greater Manchester urge more funding to be used for Early Intervention services and those working with the under fives.

A child not being 'school ready' massively impacts on their futures and their life chances as adults.

To halve the number of children not being 'school ready' is no easy feat and it's imperative that charities such as Home-Start are asked to contribute to this pledge.

At Home-Start we work with families who are struggling to cope, this in turn can have a huge impact on their ability to parent, to provide their children with early education experiences, socialise with peers, communicate with others and have the confidence to thrive in a school setting.

Our volunteers visit families once a week to offer ongoing practical and emotional support, walking alongside the family and empowering them to make the right decisions and choices for their children.

Reasons can be complicated as to why parents struggle- poor mental health, isolation, poverty, lack of support- all these issues can contribute towards a child not being 'school ready'.

Whilst support is primarily aimed at parents, children benefit enormously too. Our volunteers will read and write with them, talk to them, encourage messy play and help them to become independent- skills that are vital in a school environment.

However, early education does begin at home, and it needs to start for children long before they begin primary school. If we are to halve the number of children who start school unable to read and write, then investment needs to take place in the frontline services who can help to turn this statistic around.

Every child deserves the best possible start in life, every child deserves the right to a bright future. In Greater Manchester we could make an even bigger difference to local families if we had more local volunteers. If you can spare just a couple of hours each week, have parenting experience and want to invest in our next generation, please consider becoming a volunteer for one of the six Home-Starts in Greater Manchester.

To find out more about volunteering for Home-Start or to watch our film about School Readiness please visit www.gmhonestarts.org.uk