



# Getting ready For Kindergarten



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## **"IS EVERYBODY READY?"**

Getting 'ready' for school is usually viewed as something children do but parents, teachers and schools need to get ready for the first year of school too. Transition to school programs are all about building relationships in order to best support children as they experience their first year at school.

Children need to have good relationships with their teachers before they can be expected to take the necessary risks for learning. They need to know that school is a place where they are safe, happy and supported. Parents are their child's first teachers and the school can benefit enormously from knowing some of what you know about your child. Parents also need to believe teachers and the school can be trusted with their children.

Getting ready for school means establishing these relationships as early as possible. Make contact with your local school as early as you can to begin this transition and ensure you participate in any activities they are running for their future kindergarten students.

## **SOME PRACTICALITIES**

The most important factor in children starting school is that they are able to get their needs met in the classroom and in the playground. This means having some strategies for:

- making requests,
- asking questions and
- following instructions.

If children can do those three things, they can deal with situations like needing to go to the toilet, not being able to open their lunch box, finding their drink has leaked into their bag, falling over in the playground.

**Encourage your child to make complete verbal requests when they need something rather than relying on pointing or a single word that is well understood in the family home.**

Children need to be able to ask to go to the toilet, they will need to ask the teacher or other students for equipment in the classroom.

**Encourage your child to seek further information in situations where they need help.**

If they do not understand an activity, children need to feel confident in asking for help, also if they do not understand how to line up, where to meet the teacher.

**Expect that they can follow two and three part instructions.**

In the classroom they will be expected to participate in activities and routines that require them to listen to and respond to several instructions at once.

## **MAKING FRIENDS**

Making friends is a big part of being at school. Talk to your children about what it means to be friends, what a good friend does, what to do if they have an argument with their friend or if someone says or does something to hurt them.

It is important that you know what the school's expectations are in this regard so you can start to talk to your child about them.

## **SOME REAL PRACTICALITIES**

### **Make sure they can**

- open their lunch box/drink bottle/sandwich wrapper etc.
- go to the toilet independently, this includes being able to undress and dress appropriately, flush the toilet, wash their hands etc.
- say goodbye to you and know you will return. If you haven't left them before, start having some practices with a friend or relative
- take their jumpers/hats/shoes on and off
- open and close their school bag

### **Make sure they know**

- the basic routines of school, bells can be confusing and alienating if children don't know to expect them or what they mean
- who they can go to for help, you may need to be explicit about telling your child that the teachers are there to help them
- that you will be there to collect them at the end of the day

**It is a good idea to get hearing and vision checked before starting school.**

**Ensure all immunisations are up to date.**

## **EDUCATIONAL PRACTICALITIES**

Children who start school with some basic literacy and numeracy skills will find the first few weeks of school less daunting as they will be familiar with some of the concepts being introduced.

- Encourage your child to read regularly, looking at picture books with an adult is the first step in learning how to read. Discuss what you see in the pictures, what is happening in the story, any letters or words they might know
- Practice writing their name with them, or at least being able to recognise it
- Count everyday objects
- Talk about colours and shapes and encourage them to learn them
- Provide them with lots of opportunities to cut and draw

Your child will need to be an independent member of the classroom, this means they will need to be able to look after their own belongings, get their own pencils/scissors, remember to give you important notes or messages.

You can foster this independence by having similar expectations at home. Expect that your child will get their own things as they need them, carry their own bag or other belongings, get out and pack up their own playthings.

Understand that this independence won't always happen and label everything you don't want to have to buy a second time.

## **PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE FIRST DAYS AT SCHOOL**

**It is easier for children to adjust to school if they have had practice in:**

- talking with children and adults and communicating their needs to them
- playing with other children the same age and older
- spending time with others - family, friends or other carers
- following simple directions
- sharing and taking turns
- going to the toilet independently and washing their hands afterwards
- putting on and taking off their clothes, including shoes and socks, without help
- recognising and looking after their belongings
- opening and closing lunch boxes and school back packs
- recognising their name

# HELPING CHILDREN LEARN

Parents, other family members and friends can help children by:

- giving them lots of time and opportunity for play
- listening to them
- answering their questions
- talking with them about the things they want to talk about
- looking at books together, saying rhymes and finger plays
- reading and telling stories
- singing songs together
- enjoying their 'pretend' play
- doing everyday things together, like shopping, washing the car, visiting the park, going fishing, working around the yard or on the farm
- watching television or videos together and talking about what they see
- providing them with different kinds of materials to make things
- sharing their excitement about learning and discovering
- imagining things together
- joining in their play when invited
- giving them lots of encouragement, understanding, affection and acceptance
- showing they appreciate their efforts

# **THE 15 MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS FOR CHILDREN COMMENCING SCHOOL, IN PRIORITY ORDER**

**(As nominated by Kindergarten teachers in 36 schools in the  
Liverpool & Campbelltown District)**

## **The Child Can:**

- Use the toilet independently
- Follow verbal instructions/directions (one step or more)
- Dress and undress (jumper, hat, paint shirt, socks & shoes without tying laces)
- Identify/recognise own name in print
- Look after own belongings
- Share with peers
- Express/indicate needs and wants
- Hold pencil to make marks on paper
- Keep still for short period of time and listen
- Separate from parents at school
- Take turns
- Speak clearly
- Identify own school bag and belongings
- Open lunch box and packaging
- Use handkerchief/tissue