

MY CHILD IS STARTING SCHOOL

A guide for parents and caregivers



“Play is the highest form of research.”

— Albert Einstein



“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.”

— Margaret Mead

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Transitioning to school

So your child is starting school, which is an exciting milestone. It may take time for your child and family to adjust.

Here's some tips to assist a positive start:

- provide a predictable, calm home routine
- keep communication lines open with your child
- arrive before the bell each morning
- discuss with your child how they are getting home each day
- connect with their teacher.

Know your child's school

Each school community is unique. It's a good idea to:

- attend their transition, orientation or information sessions
- check out their website or subscribe to their newsletters
- follow their social media pages
- meet the Principal or ask staff at the school office for information
- connect with other parents who have children at the school.

Literacy

Literacy is a key foundation for learning. Talking and an awareness of word sounds form a strong base for reading success.

Read, rhyme and draw, sing, listen and talk with your child regularly. This builds literacy skills needed to understand information and communicate ideas.

If English is not your first language, continue using your strongest language as well as English to promote multilingual skills and maintain cultural identity.

Numeracy

Numeracy is all around us and used throughout life. Your child uses numeracy when measuring ingredients, counting stairs as they climb, sorting buttons or matching socks.

When children play with blocks and containers they think 'mathematically' about size, shape and space.

Talk about positions such as behind, next to and above, and inquire 'how many?' 'which way?' or 'is there enough?'

Friendships

Making friends can be challenging for your child. You can help by prompting them to think about games to play, where to play them and how to include others.

Your child will develop these skills by watching you – the way you start conversations, handle issues and accept others' perspectives.

Encouraging play provides opportunities for your child to 'read' faces and body language, furthering their social skills.

Managing feelings

Starting school can produce a broad range of emotions in your child, and understanding how to manage them can take a long time. Give support by listening, acknowledging and accepting their feelings.

Help your child to label those feelings and to find appropriate ways to manage them if needed. Your child will learn to manage their emotions by watching those around them.

Good learning behaviours

1. Exploring interests

Your child learns when they are interested, asking questions and exploring possibilities. This helps them to be creative and involved.

2. Problem solving

Encourage your child to persist with activities, even when it gets tricky. You can help them come up with their own ways to solve problems.

3. Acknowledge efforts

Acknowledge your child's effort when you see them trying, regardless of the result.

Self-help skills

Your child's independence will grow at school. You can build their confidence by providing them with small, achievable tasks such as:

- folding washing
- getting dressed
- opening and closing their lunch box
- putting items away.

Offer assistance if it gets too difficult, and ensure your child knows they are able to ask a teacher or student for help.

Building coordination

Physical skills help your child play and learn at school. Large movements called 'gross motor' skills are used in climbing, throwing or catching a ball. They provide strong foundations for future 'fine motor' development.

Fine motor skills are needed for drawing, using scissors and opening lunch boxes. When at home, playing with construction toys, using tongs and pegs, or gardening, can strengthen your child's fine motor skills and improve coordination.

Families

You are your child's first and most significant teacher. Being positively involved in your child's learning helps them become successful at school.

Provide plenty of play opportunities, sing and share stories, partner with your child's educators and model a love of learning.

Even a small amount can make a big difference.

Take care of yourself

Taking care of yourself helps you to take care of your child. When your child starts school you may feel worried, sad, happy or even relieved. You may recall memories of your time at school too.

Being aware of these feelings and noticing their affect is important. Share your feelings with trusted friends and build good communication with your child's teacher.

MORE INFORMATION

You can request a free interpreter service at your child's school.

To find out more about transitioning your child to school, visit our website: transitiontoschool.net

CONTACT US

Connect Child and Family Services

48-50 Oaklands Road,
Hazelbrook NSW 2779

P 02 4758 9966 **F** 02 4758 9988

E connect@connect.asn.au

FB Connect Child and Family Services

W connect.asn.au

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