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Preparing for School

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to childcare settings

Preparing your child for school

Starting school is a big step in a pre-schooler's life and there are many things you can do prior to starting school to help prepare them for this transition.

Talk about what to expect:

- Schools have different expectations to childcare settings and children need to be aware of these to ease their transition to school. For example in childcare settings the program is child and interest directed, whereas at school the children are required to participate and follow a set curriculum.

Visit the school environment:

- If possible attend the School's Open Day to learn more about the school. This is also a good way for your child to meet other children starting in kindergarten, their teacher and the Principal.
- If you can't get to the Open Day, visit the school with your child and point out the differences between childcare or pre-school and formal schooling. Some of these differences include:
 - Separate boy/girl bathrooms.
 - Bubblers for drinking water
 - Library
 - Playground and classroom set up.

Practice opening your lunch box:

- Many childcare centres provide meals so it can be beneficial for your child to practice opening a lunch box and unwrapping different packaged items. While a teacher will be available to assist, there are usually

around 20 children in a class and they may all require assistance.

Teach your child they are responsible for their own belongings:

- Label every piece of your child's school uniform including their lunchbox and school bag.
- Unlike childcare or pre-school, at school everyone has the same uniform and often, the same school bag.
- Clip a familiar toy onto their school bag so it's easily recognisable.

Meet with friends prior to starting school:

- Children find it comforting to have a friend going to school with them. If some of their peers from childcare or local groups are going to the same school it can be a good idea to meet and foster this relationship.

Is my child ready for school?

- When assessing whether or not their child is ready for school, parents often want a checklist of items. It is not always as simple as this, but remember you know your child best and you will have a good indication if you meet with your childcare or pre-school educators and discuss their development and progress.

- Pre-schools promote a child's social and emotional competence when transitioning to school rather than their cognitive knowledge. So when assessing if your child should start school, or even assisting them in developing skills for the school environment, here are a few areas to look out for:

Fine motor skills:

- Pencil control
- Manipulating scissors to cut

Social skills:

- Listening to and carrying out instructions
- Attention span (can they remain at a task to complete it?)
- Becoming aware of how their behaviour impacts on others
- Confidence to approach new tasks and new people (can they ask a new/different teacher where the toilets are if they are lost)

Emotional skills:

- Ability to take turns (how do they respond if another child is using something they want?)
- Co-operative play skills (can they work in a group to achieve a result?)

- Ability to manage emotions (anger and frustration) with minimal adult assistance
- Reduced impulsive actions (an ability to think before acting)

Language and communication skills:

- Sentence structure
- Can recall past events in detail
- Can hold a conversation (turn taking in full sentences)
- Understands language can be used to tell a story (real or imaginary)

Problem solving skills:

- Are able to sort, compare and categorise items according to colour size and shape
- Basic counting
- Ability to complete puzzles
- Thinking of alternatives or other options when a problem arises

What age can my child start school?

This varies from state to state but in New South Wales children can start Kindergarten in the first term of the school year if turning five by July 31st that year.

Tresillian Day and Residential Services support families experiencing a range of early parenting challenges including:

- Sleep and settling difficulties
- Adjustment to parenthood
 - Breastfeeding
 - Infant nutrition
 - Toddler behaviour
 - Multiple babies
- Emotional and psychological health & wellbeing
 - Postnatal depression and anxiety

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