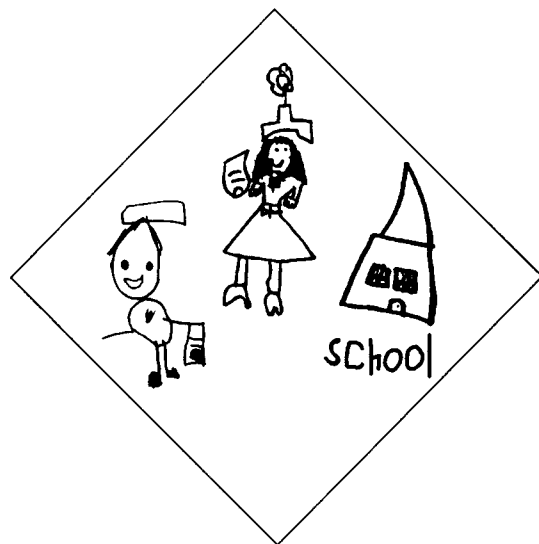


Starting School

**A guide for
parents of children
starting Kindergarten**



Is my child the right age for starting school?

Children may enter Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year in NSW Department of Education and Training schools if they five on or before July 31 in that year.

Some gifted or talented children may be ready to start school at an earlier age. Others may benefit from being a little older, but by law, all children must start school by their sixth birthday.

You will be asked to provide proof of your child's age when starting school. Ask the school principal what is needed.

Starting school

Starting school is an important step in a young child's life.

"But is my child *ready* for school?" is a question asked by many parents.

Children develop at different rates and learn skills in different ways. It is the school's task to respond to the needs, learning styles and rates of progress of individual students.

Schools plan learning experiences based on the skills students bring to school. The achievements of Aboriginal children and children for whom English is a second language (ESL) may be in their home language, rather than English.

Specialist advice and support is available to parents of children with disabilities in accessing appropriate educational services. Talk to the school as early as

possible about access to these services.

Here is a sample of skills suitable for most children starting Kindergarten. Starting school may be just a little easier if they have these skills. Encourage your child to attempt the things mentioned below, but **don't worry if your child can't do all of them.** Talk to the Kindergarten teacher, and together you can support and assist your child's learning.

Language

- talks to other people about familiar objects and events
- answers and asks simple questions
- makes needs known
- follows simple instructions
- uses books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- identifies pictures in books, magazines, on television or video
- uses a variety of things (pens, pencils, textas, paint brushes, sticks in the dirt) to draw, scribble or to write
- joins in singing familiar songs.

Mathematics

- recognises that numbers can be used to count
- uses words like "all, many, a lot, more, less"
- identifies things in a group that are different

- sees differences in shapes
- differentiates between opposites – up and down, under and over, in front and behind, day and night

Personal/Social Skills

- uses the toilet independently
- can say own name and address
- adapts to unfamiliar settings and new experiences
- can finish a task, and tidies up afterwards
- plays cooperatively with other children – shares and takes turns
- can sit still to listen to a story for a few minutes
- is curious about the world
- can share an adult's attention with several other children
- participates in imaginative play



Physical Skills

- uses scissors to cut along a straight line
- enjoys a variety of indoor and outdoor play
- can put on and take off jumpers, shoes, socks independently
- makes and designs things using a variety of materials

What can I do to help prepare my child for school?

- visit your school with your child
- be positive about school and learning
- talk with your child about school
- use your local library
- read to your child – talk about what might happen next in stories
- share many different experiences
- support your child in your home language while learning English
- read to your child in your home language
- provide a variety of play materials – water, mud, sand, paper, pens, paint, balls
- encourage your child's curiosity by asking questions and be encouraging questions in return
- have an up-to-date immunisation certificate

All children starting Kindergarten are required to provide an immunisation certificate, a record of your child's immunisation status. Speak to your doctor, local council, or school about immunisation.



Who can I talk to about my child's readiness for school?

Make an appointment to speak to:

- your child's pre-school or day care teacher or carer
- the school principal, school counsellor, school K-2 supervisor
- the Kindergarten teacher at school
- the ESL teacher at school
- the Regional Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer or the Aboriginal Education Assistant
- the Early Learning Consultant

Transition to school

Most schools have orientation days towards the end of the previous year to welcome children to Kindergarten. Many schools also have transition to Kindergarten programs over several weeks in the second part of the year. Contact your local school for details.

Helpful reading

Partners in Education: Parents, teachers and children. Sharing your child's first school experiences: some ideas for parents.