

Through the School Gate

Tathra Preschool Transition to School Newsletter

We have developed this newsletter to help you and your family embark on your journey into the bigger pond of school life

At preschool children are developing a broader sense of identity. They are learning:

- ≈ What it means to belong to a group as they develop care, empathy and respect for others
- ≈ To become more independent and resilient.
- ≈ To respond to diversity with respect and becoming strong is their social and emotional well-being.
- ≈ To become confident learners as they develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination.
- ≈ A range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
- ≈ To become effective communicators as they interact with peers, teachers and their community.
- ≈ Important foundations for literacy and numeracy

Is my child the right age for starting school?

Children may enter kindergarten at the beginning of the year if they turn 5 on or before 31st July. Legally children need to be enrolled and attending school when they turn 6

Teachers in partnership with families can assess school readiness. Things teachers and families can look for to assess a child's readiness for school include: Is the child able to:

- ≈ Cooperate and operate as part of a group
- ≈ Take guidance from an adult other than a parent.
- ≈ Adapt to changes in the routine
- ≈ Ask for help
- ≈ Separate easily from parents/guardians
- ≈ Interact with peers and share ideas and take turns in conversation
- ≈ Listen to others ideas
- ≈ Sit and attend in group situations
- ≈ Use physical skills to manipulate scissors/pencils

Is Your Child Ready

Ask yourself that "If my child goes to school next year will they cope or thrive? We want children to enjoy school and we want to set them up for success. Most children will cope. Our aim is for children to thrive.

What is school?

- ≈ Bigger than Preschool
- ≈ A big day and tiring
- ≈ Lots of big children
- ≈ Lots of teachers
- ≈ There are lots of different buildings, a hall, canteen, toilets, office and classrooms



Tips for a smooth transition to school

Have Confidence in Your Child

You need to be confident your child will manage this change. Listen to your child's worries about starting school and provide re-assurance without buying into the anxiety. Helpful comments include

"There will be challenges but I know you can do it... we will help you.... Your teacher will be there to help you there are lots of kids who are all in the same situation..... you will all be starting new together".

Be positive about school and learning

Talk about what the teacher does/give child confidence that the teacher is there to help them learn about all these new things.

If mum or dad is worried then children will think there is something to worry about.

- ≈ Even the most enthusiastic child will need re-assurance.
- ≈ Talk about the good things about school and learning, eg. You will meet new friends, you will learn new things.
- ≈ When you talk about your own school experiences focus on the good avoid the horror stories. Share any funny and not so funny horror stories about detention/a mean teacher when your children are out of ear shot.
- ≈ Comments to avoid include:
 - "Wait till you get to big school"
 - "You won't be able to do that at big school+".
 - "You will have to do that on your own when you get to big school."

Provide children with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the school

Think about what makes you feel good in a new situation. Think about going to a party/a job interview. What makes you feel relaxed – or less nervous – What sort of things help you cope? We want to set children up for success.

- ≈ Knowing someone helps.
- ≈ Knowing the place helps.
- ≈ Knowing what will happen helps.
- ≈ Make an appointment with the school to have a tour. This is a good opportunity to ask questions and find out about the school's philosophy
- ≈ Attend the Kindergarten orientations/open days.
- ≈ Visit when other children are at school so they can get used to the number, size and noise.
- ≈ If your child is going to catch a bus a family member could catch the bus with them a few times so they know what to expect. Where do they have to be to catch the bus...what happens if you are late. Be organised be on time to drop children off and be on time to pick them up.

When you visit find out about the important places in the school and go and find them with your child.

- ≈ Classroom
- ≈ Toilets
- ≈ Office
- ≈ Bus stop
- ≈ Pick up spot

When Purchasing School Resources

Lunch boxes and food

- ≈ Practise to make sure they can open lunch boxes/pre-packaged foods.
- ≈ Yoghurt/fruit in plastic cups are challenging to manage and open. Remember they may be



balancing their food on their knees.

- ≈ Check they can manage the fruit you send
- ≈ Fresh fruit, vegies and sandwich is best

Bags

- ≈ Bags not to heavy and easy to get into.
- ≈ Avoid excessive weight and poor design. Heavy bags can cause pain and spinal injury
- ≈ Recommended weight for a child to carry is 10% of their body weight.
- ≈ Weight should be carried with heaviest items close to body – straps done up to prevent sagging at back.
- ≈ Base of bag should not be below hips.



Transition does not end on first day

- ≈ For some children the first week maybe easier than the second or third week.
- ≈ Be aware of ongoing challenges, children may be facing so you can make it easy for them and talk to your teachers.
- ≈ Make sure you have plenty of time in the morning so you all have a relaxed morning before school. You want to avoid mornings full of arguments and hurry. **Avoid distractions like T.V.** Time to eat a good breakfast is important.
- ≈ Your child's relationship with you will be more important than ever as they begin this new adventure. Parents, families are the safe base from which children can move out to explore the world more independently.
- ≈ Your child will want to share with you their new friendships and learning. They will need your understanding comfort and support. We all need to tell people close to us when something goes wrong. Having a safe place to come back to, where people understand and support them gives children the confidence to try new things and the courage to have another go if they don't first succeed. Children need time to download their day and once expressed they often move on.

Manage fatigue

- ≈ Expect children may be tired and cranky when they get home.
- ≈ Try to get children in bed early – maybe early dinner time so you can get them into bed early
- ≈ Some children may need a day off to cope with tiredness. Talk to your teacher about what would be the best day.
- ≈ Avoid filling afternoons with activities: e.g. friend's houses, shopping, lessons such as music/swimming and so on. Be aware that you could increase once they settle in depending on your child's level of energy.
- ≈ It is important to get children to bed early. Research indicates that pre-schoolers need 12 hours and primary school 9 – 10 hours taking into account individual differences.

Things you can do at home:

- ≈ Encourage children to have a go.
- ≈ Support children to build resilience and cope with frustration when things don't go their way.
- ≈ Value all attempts to write
- ≈ Encourage children to write their name with a capital letter to start their name and then lower case for the rest. Remember confidence to have a go is more important than accuracy
- ≈ Make stories part of the bed time ritual.
- ≈ Observe text /signs/shops
- ≈ Post letters and observe numbers on the letter boxes
- ≈ Rhymes and poems are fun way to help children practise sounds
- ≈ Pretend reading is real reading



- ≈ Get children to help you make shopping lists
- ≈ Find fun ways to:
 - count to 30
 - count back from 10
 - recognise numerals 1-10
 - count one by one
- ≈ Recognise dot patterns on a dice
- ≈ Set the table, 4 cups, 4 plates, 4 forks etc
- ≈ Cooking measuring and reading recipes are great opportunities to compare (More/less) (full/empty) (heavy/light).
- ≈ Sharing is about division and fractions ($\frac{1}{2}$ for you and $\frac{1}{2}$ for me)
- ≈ Physical play such as ball games, running, balancing, skipping and climbing helps develop coordination and emotional and physical well-being.
- ≈ Have a 'making table' set up so children can use scissors, masking tape and pencils.
- ≈ Encourage children to toilet and dress themselves
- ≈ Encourage children to take turns, listen to others and share
- ≈ Help children express emotions and deal with conflict appropriately.
- ≈ Remind children about respectful ways to communicate and express their needs and wants

Being Rather Than Becoming

- ≈ Enjoy them as they are
- ≈ They will learn the things they need to learn when they get to school.
- ≈ Minimise the pressure. Be mindful that the tendency for family members and friends asking about big school can build up pressure for children.
- ≈ Enjoy the holidays before your child goes to school as it is a very special time.

Transition to school Resources/Websites

We have some great transition to school books in our preschool library for families to borrow and we recommend the following websites.

- ≈ <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/parent-resources/transition-school/>
- ≈ <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/startingschool>
- ≈ <http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

