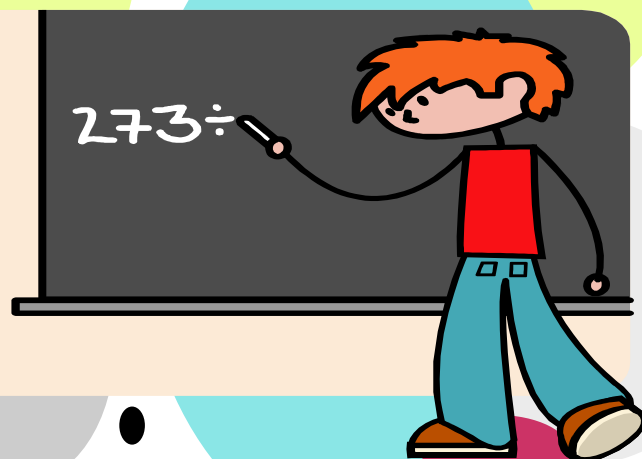




Prepare
your
child for
school



SCHOOL READINESS BOOKLET

"The beginning of something is always very important. Especially when it's young and needs time to grow." Plato

Starting school can be an exciting and overwhelming experience for children and their parents. In the first few years it is important children develop the skills necessary to flourish and achieve their full potential. This is a wonderful time to experience new knowledge and establish friendships which will help them deal with many of life's challenging moments.

The structured nature of the school environment requires children to learn new rules, new information and meet many new faces. Skills such as communication and social are paramount to establishing positive relationships with teachers and other children. Physical health, wellbeing and emotional maturity are also key factors in your child's school experience.

This booklet will offer you some information and suggestions to help your child be ready for their school years and enjoy the start of a new beginning!



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills at school are very important. Children need to be able to follow instructions, understand what the teachers are asking of them and talk to other children and teachers. They also need to be able to communicate their own needs and ideas. This is especially important in a brand new environment like Prep and Grade 1. There are many noises and lots of people all wanting to speak at once. This is where the way in which your child processes all the auditory information around them, will affect what they learn. It is important to realize that while your child may be listening, they may not be able to hear what is being said to them.

Your child's teacher will have strategies to help with these in the classroom and it is important to encourage these when your child is requesting something or wishes to gain your attention. These may include;



Putting your arm in the air, to ask a question.



Waiting until the person is finished speaking before asking another question.



Saying the person name you wish to speak to first before asking them a question.



Let your child know that it important to tell their teacher when noises are too loud.

Some helpful tips to try at home to encourage your child to communicate efficiently at school include;



Asking your child Who, What, Where and Why questions.



Story telling



Encouraging an inside voice and an outside voice (louder)



Use manners, such as, "Excuse me mum, could..."

Asking questions and telling stories builds a child's vocabulary and also helps the child to express themselves. So when they wish to ask a question or talk to other children at school they are able to do so in a manner people can correctly understand.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

PLAYING WITH OTHERS + CO- OPERATION

Co-operating and playing with others occupies a significant amount of time at school. Whether it is in the playground, sharing equipment or spaces, the classroom in group activities or sharing Crayons and pencils, it is important your child is able to adapt and play with others to achieve positive outcomes at school. It is also important your child feels comfortable playing by themselves as this creates a sense of independence and creativity.

To prepare your child and help them to understand how to share with friends and others you may like to try these ideas.

Encourage your child to share toys, food and watch television with their siblings at home.



Praise your child when they share and offer to share some of your things with your child.



Play games where you must take turns (ie board games or on a ride), sit in a circle (ie pass the parcel, duck, duck, goose) and stand in a line, (you could even try this one at the supermarket when buying groceries!)



Here are some tips for play time by your self.



Encourage 'me time', where the child plays only by themselves for a certain period of time. This can also be a time where you (mum or dad) also has 'me time'. Gradually build the time up until your child is comfortable to initiate 'me time' themselves.

Remember, therapy may be done through play, but 'playing' is still a skill in itself!

Learning to share and co-operate will help your child to make valued friends and learn about ways to problem solve with others. In addition, this will also assist your child's ability to work alone and in groups.



SOCIAL COMPETENCE

RESPECT FOR ADULT AUTHORITY & FOLLOWING RULES

Teachers and other adult helpers in the school setting help and guide your child through their years of learning. The classroom is a very structured environment and for your child to achieve the most positive outcomes at school, rules are in place to ensure this. You can help your child respect the rules at school by asking them;



What they learnt at school that day and did they learn any new rules?



What do you do when you need to do?

Naturally your child sees their parents as a source of guidance and sets the rules at home. It is important when your child starts school they understand why these rules are in place and why it is important to respect the people who are implementing them.



PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Your child's physical health and wellbeing at school is again very important and possibly the most influential factor motivating them to attend. When we feel well we are more able and willing to listen, learn and participate in activities. This also includes your child's ability to tend to their own needs, and express the need for help if they require it, or if they are not feeling well.

Developing key skills such as fine (ie. needed for handwriting, using scissors, tying shoe laces) and gross (ie. Walk, wheel, jump, and catch) motor skills are very dependent on and related to our general physical health and our confidence.

Awareness of our bodies, helps build confidence in how to use our body, arms and legs.



Encourage your child to try tasks themselves first and if at first unsuccessful assist them to be able to try again.



Give them a rhyme or steps to help remember for next time.



Praise your child for their efforts.



Encourage school based activities at home such as drawing, Cutting catching and throwing etc.



Play dress up, this will help your child develop their own level of independence.



Play games such as, Simon says, twister (if appropriate) and imitation of movement games.







Your child will start to develop a hand, eye and foot dominance (ie. writing, cutting, brushing teeth) and foot dominance (ie.kicking). Ask them to tell you which hand and or foot they are using so they become aware of their left and right sides of their body.

Promoting good physical health and wellbeing for your child will enable them to cope with the new school experience much easier and ensure a much more enjoyable and productive experience.



EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Emotional maturity is a significant factor to consider when your child approaches school. Many factors will affect your child's feelings and emotions, such as being around people they do not know, trying games or activities which they may be a little fearful of and also dealing with the emotions of their classmates. In order to maximize your child's school experience encourage your child to spend time with others, and to try new things and activities. Developing emotional maturity is different for all children, you can encourage this growth by:-

-  Praising good behaviour
-  Ask your child to reflect on negative behaviours.
-  Ask your child why they are upset and what can they do themselves to make the situation better for them.
-  Reassure them it is good to try new things and to spend time away from you at school and at home. .
-  Know which behaviours are appropriate for their age.
Remind your child that they are a big boy/girl now that they are school.
-  Encourage your child to speak to teachers and friends if they are upset and offer the same support to friends who might be upset.

Emotional maturity will also help with your child's communication and social skills and their overall physical wellbeing. This will hold them in good stead to cope with teasing,, making mistakes and having accidents, as well as occasional minor frustrations and disappointments, and remain content throughout most of the day.



REFERENCES AND HELPFUL WEBSITES

www.kidslife.com.au

www.seriouslykids.com.au

www.readysetgrowctkids.org

www.brighthorizons.com

www.kidspot.com.au

www.firstschoolyears.com



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Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions and or suggestions.

Good luck and enjoy the coming school years!!

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