

Transition to School Newsletter

Welcome to our first Transition to School Newsletter.

The transition from child care to school for many parents and children is a very stressful time and one that is filled with many different questions. The following information is designed to answer some of those questions - what your child needs to know before they go to school, how this can be achieved at Top Ryde early Learning and what you and your family can expect once you get to infants/primary school.



We are planning a Transition to School Information Night which will include a talk from local school teachers. In the meantime, we have collected some thoughts and ideas from other teachers and resource people to help.

Some key points to consider:

1. Children do not need to be proficient in writing their names but they do need to be able to recognise it and attempt to write it.
2. It is very important that children have the confidence to ask questions, make their needs known and take care of themselves in an environment where there may be one teacher for up to 35 children.
3. There is no expectation that children need to be able to read and write before school as long as they have an understanding of what letters mean and how they are used. Many parents teach their child differently to how a school will teach and therefore the child will become very confused and bored if they know too much.
4. There is an expectation that children are independent at toileting and dressing themselves
5. Children should be encouraged to maintain their home languages
6. Children will be asked to complete a variety of gross motor activities to assess their level of competence
7. Children need to understand the way recess and lunch work as they are used to being given hot nutritious meals during the day
8. Children need to show an interest in learning
9. It is important that children are able to make friends, share and negotiate with others
10. Concentration skills are important so that children learn to sit in groups
11. Children should have realistic expectations of school
12. Children should be able to follow basic instructions and see a task through

Another **important tip** for parents is that if you are going to need before and after school care at your child's school next year, book in as early as possible as spots fill up incredibly fast. We do before and after school care here at Top Ryde Early Learning for children at Ryde Public School. Talk to Nicole for details.



What we do here at Top Ryde Early Learning to assist with this transition to school...

1. Name Writing and Recognition

Children are surrounded by their name here at the centre, from as early as the Lilli Pilli Room, although it becomes more obvious once they move through to the Acacia and Waratah Rooms. Children have labelled lockers as well as individual lunch cards for meal times. Inside the room they have large resource cards which they use as a guide when they want to write their name. There is a writing centre where children can practice writing and children are always encouraged to write their own names on their artwork. The Waratahs also enjoy literacy games where they get to find their own name in the room.

2. Confidence

Building a child's confidence is extremely important to their continual success at school and beyond. Here at the centre children are given lots of opportunities to succeed in front of their peers and teachers. 'Show and tell' is a great opportunity to get up in front of their group and talk about something that is important to them. They are then given the chance to answer questions from their peers. Children are also given the responsibility to be 'helpers' in a variety of tasks throughout the day where more confident children are paired with less confident. The emergent curriculum that we use fosters the mastering of skills which in turn builds confidence by continuing to add to the children's experience of success.

3. Reading and Writing

The children are surrounded by language and literature throughout the day. There is a wealth of story books, resource books, signs and labels for the children to learn that letters and words mean something. The children have access to a variety of writing materials that are available to them all day. Children are not forced to write, but when an interest is shown, children are encouraged to extend it by writing their names - eg invitations for events, information from interest projects, words for the day book and excursion notes to parents. Children are read to throughout the day and often get an opportunity to 'read' to their friends or younger children either when they visit other rooms or in the garden during outdoor play. When children 'read' they analyse the pictures in the story and make up the appropriate words - this is a fantastic exercise as it shows that children are understanding that words make meaning, and they are building on their confidence and imagination.

4. Toileting and Dressing

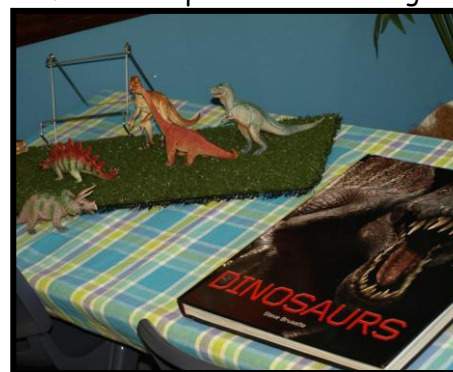
Here at the centre we encourage children to become independent at toileting by close supervision of the bathroom, especially whilst toilet training so that they can ask for assistance if required. Children are also encouraged to dress themselves before and after sleep time and any other times throughout the day, including during dramatic play with dress up clothes. They are given many opportunities to develop self help skills, from making their own beds to cleaning up after themselves at lunch time. Later in the year we label the toilets in the Waratah's bathroom as 'boy' and 'girl' toilets so that children learn to identify those words for when they start school.

5. Home languages

This is extremely important for us to continue to encourage and we ask parents to give us some basic words in home languages so that the staff can communicate with the child whilst they are here. In addition, the staff between them have over 5 different languages that they fluently speak. Maintaining a home language will make it easier for the child at school to learn English and other languages. We also have books in other languages, educational computer games in different languages and celebrate a range of cultural events so that even those children who do not have a second language are exposed to different ones. We incorporate this through the transitions, mealtimes and the language group times.

6. Gross motor activities

We have a lot of gross motor equipment at the centre for children to play in and we also program for specific gross motor games, such as parachute games etc. Shortly we will be introducing monthly Sports Days for the children where they will get the opportunity to try sports that they may be less familiar with. In order to continue to build the children's confidence, these activities always remain competition free and all children are encouraged to participate. This is also a good opportunity for children to learn about games with rules which can be quite complex for them to understand. We know that ball sports are a great way for children to make friends at school and so provide many opportunities for them to play with different ball in the garden.



7. Recess and Lunch

Towards the end of the year the Waratahs will be asked to bring in a lunch box that will be filled by our chef with nutritious snacks, a sandwich and a drink. Many children start school without understanding the concept of recess and lunch and not being able to open the wrap on the sandwich or get the straw out of the plastic on the drink. This exercise gives them the opportunity to learn these skills in a much smaller environment where they will get assistance from staff at any time.

8. Interest in learning

Our program is designed to ensure that children are interested in learning and have an inquisitive mind about the world around them. We want to foster their natural curiosity at this stage in their lives. All of our day to day programs and projects are based on the children's interests and therefore they are much more likely to invest the time to explore, investigate and learn. These experiences give ownership to children and encourage problem solving and decision making. We use realistic materials and equipment so that their experiences are more genuine.

9. Making friends

In an environment with such great staff to child ratios, it is easier for staff to see a child who finds it difficult to make friends and join a group. Teachers can work to build these skills for a child by group games, name games, buddying children up and role play activities where children are encouraged to challenge biases, prejudice and stereotypes.

10. Concentration skills

Group times are a great opportunity for children to build on these skills of sitting and listening. Whilst at the centre children will learn about the '4 L's' which are

Legs crossed,

Hands in Laps,

Listen with your ears; and

Look with your eyes.

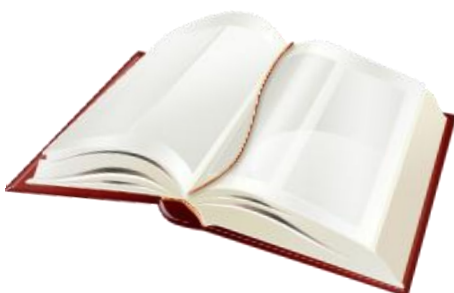
Other activities such as group projects, games with rules and the computer also enhance these skills.

11. Realistic expectations

Towards the end of the year we are planning to have small groups of children go to visit Ryde Primary school so they can see and experience what it is like. They will spend a morning at the school in a class, take morning tea in a lunch box and learn in a school environment. We will also invite some school aged children to come and talk about what it is like at school and offer some handy tips and hints for our Waratahs to get started. We also utilise a photo book that the school made for us showing all the things you may see and do at school.

12. Follow basic instructions

There will not always be a teacher on hand to guide a child step by step through a task when they are at school so it is important that they learn this skill when a supportive environment such as ours. Children are encouraged to take on responsibilities and over time the complexity of the tasks are increased. For instance, children may start the year by being asked to put forks on the table for lunch, then as the year progresses the task would change to the children being asked to 'count the number of children sitting on the mat, then go to the lunch trolley and 'count' the same number of forks and then set the table for lunch'.



School Readiness Checklist

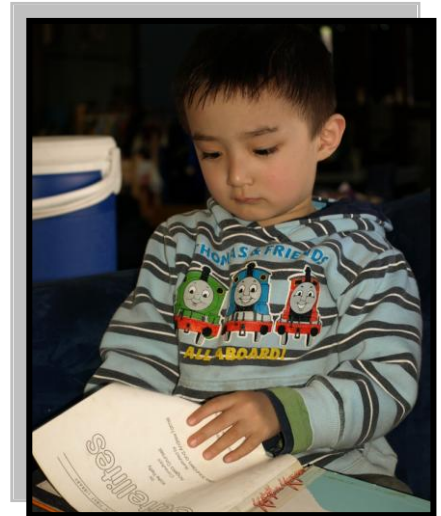
Your child's teacher will plan lessons based on a variety of skills. Starting school may be a little easier if your child can try the things below, but do not worry if they can't do them all just yet, there is still over 6 months until they're starting school.

Personal/social Skills

- Tries to use the toilet independently
- Tries to say their full name and their own address
- Tries to finish a task and tidy up afterwards
- Tries to play co-operatively with other children - shares and takes turns
- Tries to sit still to listen to a story
- Tries to share an adult's attention with several other children
- Tries to participate in imaginative play

Language skills

- Talking to other people about familiar objects and events
- Answering and asking simple questions
- Making needs known e.g. asking to go to the toilet
- Following simple instructions
- Using books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- Identifying pictures in books, magazines, on television or video
- Joining in singing familiar songs



Mathematics

- Recognising numbers
- Using words such as many, a lot, more, less
- Finding things in a group that are different
- Seeing differences in shapes
- Telling the difference between opposites - up and down, under and over, in front and behind

Writing Skills

- Tries to write letters from the alphabet and numbers
- Tries to write their own name. Encourage your child to use a capital letter to start their name
- Tries to use a variety of tools to draw, scribble or write with

Physical Skills

- Uses scissors
- Enjoys a variety of indoor and outdoor play
- Can put on and take off jumpers, shoes and socks independently
- Uses building blocks when they play



This sheet is based on information from <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/primary/primaryindex.php>

What can you do? - Tips for parents on preparing your child for the classroom

- Read the Day Book every day and ask your child open ended questions about their day to encourage descriptive answers.
- Enrol your child at your school of choice now, so that they know to expect you next year, go to their orientation days, buy the uniforms etc
- When we put up the schools listings later in the year, try to make a connection with at least one other family who are going to the same school - just leave a note in their communication pocket. Before the school year starts, organise play visits for the children so they have a close friend to start off their great new adventure with.
- Read to your child as much as you can from a variety of sources including story books, reference books, signs, labels etc. 10 minutes per day is all it takes to help them build strong positive associations with reading - a quick story before bed is a great way to 'wind down' and spend the time
- Visit your school with your child
- Go past the school regularly and point it out to your child
- Share with your child good stories and memories of your own school days
- Be positive about school, teachers and learning
- Talk with your child about the kinds of activities they will take part in during the school day
- Talk about friendships and how to be a good friend
- Take your child with you to your local library and help them choose books
- Encourage your child to spend time playing with themselves as well as with others so they are able to play independently of others
- Give your child tasks to do around the house (even if they don't always do a perfect job), including setting the table for dinner, clearing away after dinner and putting their clothes away.
- Support children's attempts at dressing themselves and encourage their independence with toileting.
- Encourage your child's curiosity by asking questions and by encouraging questions in return.

