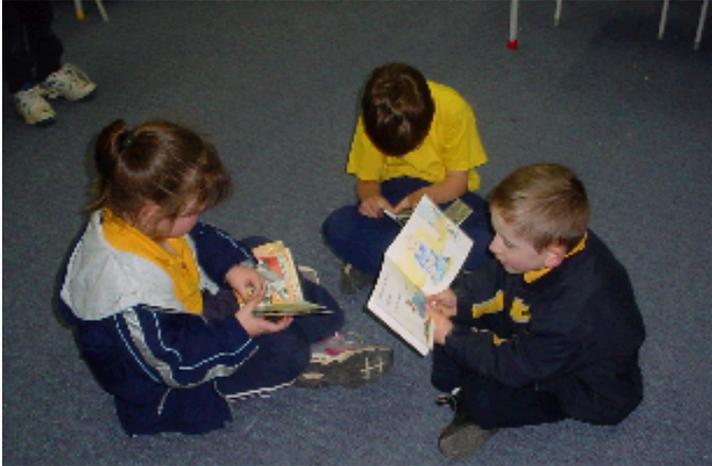


# Preparing Your Child For School



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### **ABOUT THIS BOOK.**

This book is provided in response to parent requests as to how they can prepare their child for school. In producing this we recognise that parents are children's first teachers and when school and the home have a good understanding of how they can help each other, children benefit.

There are 8 areas of learning at school - in this booklet we have focused on behaviour and literacy (reading, writing and speaking) as they are common threads through all areas.

This book will be available for families as they indicate their intention to enrol their child at Wallaroo Mines Primary School, which may be as they start Pre-School. This does not replace the parent handbook, which contains details about school matters (see the final page for contents). An information sheet about children's transition to school is also available.

An appointment can be made to discuss preparing your child for school. Please see the last page if interested.

We look forward to your child commencing their schooling at Wallaroo Mines Primary School.

CHEERS,

The Wallaroo Mines Primary School Staff.

## PREPARING FOR SCHOOL ROUTINES

Our children are very important to us and we want to help them whenever we can. In a family a child often receives lots of attention. At school your child may be in a class of up to 26 students therefore preparing your child to become an independent individual is important to enable them to feel confident in the pre-school and later the school environment. This confidence will allow your child to develop the necessary skills to participate, experiment, learn and achieve.

Here are some suggestions to prepare your child:

- *Practise leaving your child for some time in the care of others.* Many parents find it as stressful to be separated from their child as the child from the parent. Children can easily sense their parents anxieties and this can effect the way they feel. Try *explaining where you'll be and a time you'll be back. Be punctual* when collecting your child as lateness can cause stress, anxiety and a loss of trust. To prepare your child for Pre-School and then school routines it helps them to be confident when separated from you.
- *Talk positively about school.* School and pre-school are different. It is important that children feel comfortable about starting school.
- *Encourage them to be independent by:*
  - Choosing clothing from your selection and dressing themselves;
  - Packing up an activity before playing with something else, helping to put things away;
  - Learning the importance of good hygiene, e.g. washing hands before meals & after the toilet;
  - Being responsible for their own things, e.g. jumpers and lunch boxes;
  - Encouraging writing and reading their own name in lower case letters eg Daniel;
  - Play peacefully and co-operatively;
  - Using scissors;
  - Following 1 then 2 to 3 simple directions at a time;
  - Spending some time each day doing 'quiet' activities eg puzzles, drawing and reading.

## READING.

Most children enjoy learning to read. We read lots of different things each day like signs, cereal packets, newspapers, bills and program guides. Books are an ideal starting point to encourage and develop children's reading skills.

It is important that children are familiar with the way books are *organised*, the *different types of books* ( e.g. true, made - up, rhyming, number etc. ), the *language used in books* and they experience the *pleasure books provide*. Reading lots of different types of books to and with your children will prepare them for reading at school.

The following strategies can be used as a guide for you and your child as you are sharing books:

- Talk about the title, the author and illustrator by asking questions such as "*Who wrote the book?*", "*Where does it tell you who drew the pictures ?*" and "*What is the name of the story ?*";
- Before reading a new book, start by *looking* at the pictures and *predicting* what it may be about;
- Read it - *you* read it first, *then together*, then in *turns*;
- Once you have read it, *talk* about the book, (*what did they like, or not like?*);
- Encourage good listening e.g. *looking at you* as you speak, *answering your questions* and praising their *carrying out of instructions*;
- Read familiar books and leave out words for them to fill in;
- Active or 'busy' children may prefer books that have flaps, pockets or moving parts. See the pre-school, school or public library staff for possible books.

**If they are attempting to read on their own ALL efforts should be valued.**

**If they come to a word they don't know:**

- Let them have a guess at it;
- Look at the pictures for a clue;
- Read past the word and come back to it later;
- Try to sound it out;
- Read on.

Another way of developing reading skills is to label with masking tape household objects eg fridge, cup and the door.

### **WRITING.**

Writing is about putting our ideas onto paper. Some ways to help your child develop their writing skills are :

- Read stories to your child each day. Discuss and explain things like words, letters and sentences;
- Let your child see that writing is an important way to gain information - point out writing around them like labels, headlines in papers, messages on cards and posters etc;
- Talk about parts of the book, page, cover, title, where the writing starts and ends on a page and discuss the pictures;
- Let your child see you writing e.g. shopping lists, bank forms, recipes, writing their stories for their pictures etc;

**Accept and praise any writing your child attempts.**

### **HANDWRITING**

- Encourage activities that use hands and fingers e.g. painting, cutting, pasting, building, rolling and tearing. As children participate in these activities their finger skills and manipulation are developing;
- Help your child to learn to write their name. Use a capital letter to begin and then lower case. e.g. Daniel.. At school we use the South Australian print. Here is what it looks like and how letters begin. Encourage this formation for letters and numerals:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10.

It is important that children hold their pencil with a suitable grip so they can write neatly and at a reasonable speed. It is very difficult to correct a poor pencil grip once a child has started school. The recommended pencil grips for left and right handed children are -

### **SPELLING.**

To spell successfully students need to understand about words and letters. Talking about and playing games that use words and letters helps to prepare children for spelling.

At home you can help your child to get ready for spelling by:

- Singing together rhymes you both know. Then find words that rhyme or sound like the last word of the line e.g. *wall and ball*;
- Read rhymes and leave off the last word so they can add their own rhyming word;
- Play 'I spy';

- Play riddle games by giving clues for words “*I am a little animal and I rhyme with house*”;
- Talk about the difference between the sound of a letter (e.g. the sound at the start of ball is ‘b’) and the name of the letter ( the name of this letter is **bee**);
- Have an alphabet chart with pictures - play games to find the sound, find other things that start with the same sound.

**If attempting to spell or sound out words it is important all efforts are encouraged.**

e.g. “*That’s a really good try, you can hear that sound*” and “*Let’s try that one again*”.

## **HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH MATHS.**

There are four main areas of maths

- \* *Space* - e.g. shapes, lines, symmetry, regions and boundaries.
- \* *Measurement* - e.g. time, length, weight, area, capacity and money.
- \* *Number* - e.g. counting, amounts, ordering and grouping.
- \* *Thinking mathematically* – thinking and solving maths problems

*There are many ways children can be prepared for learning maths but most important of all is that they **see and hear** maths used at home.* Talking about filling the car, bath or jug, the day to post a letter, asking for 3,4, 5 objects and discussing who will have the first turn are all examples of how we use maths at home.

Also maths can be developed by:

- Playing games that involve matching, counting, turn taking and ordering;
- Using calendars, television programs and clocks to discuss the time to plant in the garden, birthdays and when to do things;
- At the playground using words like over, under, between, through and beside;
- Involving children in counting such as “*get a spoon for each person*” and “*three apples.*” Encourage pointing to objects when counting;
- Encouraging the use of money (when appropriate), playing games with pretend money and making their own money;
- Using colour words to ask for items “*Can I have the red cup?*” once major colours are known discuss light and dark colours;
- Singing number rhymes and using fingers, pieces of food to show the increasing or decreasing amounts (ask your child about the rhymes they sing at Pre-School like “ 5 little ducks” or “3 jellyfish”).

## **EATING ROUTINES**

At pre-school and school times are set for eating. Healthy eating is always encouraged There are many ways you can prepare your child for eating at school:

- It can be difficult for children who are ‘grazers’ to wait for break times. Encourage your child to eat at break and meal times (at school recess is at 11am and lunch at 12.45pm );
- Discuss what foods children would like packed so they feel happy about what they will be eating;

- Pack appropriate amounts for your child's appetite and discuss your expectations if certain amounts aren't eaten;
- As recess is at 11am it is important that children eat breakfast;
- At school it is expected that children sit down and eat with their class rather than eat as they play.

Often children starting school do not eat all of their lunch. As they become familiar with school routines they learn to eat more of their lunch before playing.

- Lunch orders are available through the school.
- Each classroom has a refrigerator for storing named perishable foods eg. salads, yoghurts, custards and meat sandwiches

### **VISION, HEARING AND CO-ORDINATION.**

A child's ability to learn can be hindered by poor eyesight, hearing and co-ordination. The ability to clearly hear different sounds and see what is the same or different are the foundations for learning to read and write. Co-ordination develops physical skills and handwriting.

Some ways of helping children with these are to:

- *Look for details* - help your child to look for the differences between objects and collect those with the same features (size, colour, rough or smooth, same or different);
- *Look for special items* - help your child to do jigsaw puzzles, when shopping look for certain items and look for different shapes within objects (e.g. "Can you find the packet with the red bear?")
- *Order and memorise by looking* - play games like dominoes and memory, thread beads following a pattern, play re-arranging games and dot-to-dot activities;
- *Order and memorise by hearing* - have your child repeat words/ sentences after you and gradually increase the length. By giving instructions it can be a game "Walk to the door, hop 3 times and walk back to me". After reading to your child ask them to tell you what happened at the start, end, middle etc;
- *Listen for certain sounds* - have your child close their eyes and guess the noise you make. Tap out a pattern and have them copy it. Say words and ask if they are the same or different. Put some objects in a box and ask them to take out all the things that start with e.g. **p** (potato, pencil and paper). Say a sentence and have your child finish it "A fish swims with its \_\_\_\_\_";
- *Visit* the playground often. At home roll, throw, kick and hit different types of balls;
- *Teach* them the names of *body parts* and play games that *describe what they can do with them* (e.g. "What do you hop on?").

Child and Youth Health (previously known as CAFHS) provide a free health check for children before they begin school. Your child's physical coordination, sight and hearing will be tested.

It is very important that your child attends a health check session as any follow up care can be investigated before your child begins school.

This will be done through the pre-school after your child turns 4.

## **BEHAVIOUR.**

At school there are rules to ensure students can learn and are safe. These rules focus upon students:

- *moving safely;*
- *using 'inside', friendly voices;*
- *caring for others;*
- *caring for property.*

Students are familiar with the rules. Appropriate behaviour is constantly recognised for example by smiles, praise, congratulations, awards and stickers.

If a student behaves inappropriately they are reminded of the school rule. If the inappropriate behaviour continues, further steps are used to help them choose suitable behaviour.

Detailed information about student behaviour management is available (see parent handbook details).

## **SCHOOL EVENTS.**

School students participate in a number of "special" class and whole school events such as assemblies, excursions, religious education, performances and sports day.

Some students find the change of program and large groups unusual and need time, practice and encouragement in order to participate successfully.

You can prepare your child for this by:

- Joining in with "special" events at pre-school and in the community;
- Taking your child to different places e.g. the library, visiting relatives and local museums;
- Talking with them about the new experience e.g. who will be there and what is likely to happen.

## **IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION.**

It is important that you feel comfortable about your child starting school. As school and pre-school are different, gaining first hand information may help answer your concerns.

If you have a question or would like to talk to someone you can:

- Contact the school (drop in or call 88211988) and explain your needs. A time can be made for you to talk with the appropriate staff member eg the Principal, or a Junior Primary staff member;
- Call the school or drop into school for a copy of the **Transition to School information sheet** and / or the **Parent Handbook**.