

PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS



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1 BEFORE WE START PRESCHOOL

There are many things you can do with your child before they start Preschool to support them with their transition. Some suggestions include:

- Walk or drive by the school grounds and talk about what it might be like and where they might play.
- Have a lunch box picnic near the school and invite other families along (if COVID restrictions allow).
- Read books with your child – there are many great books about starting school that you can enjoy together (take a look at the [Great books to read with your child](#) resource on the Directorate website for ideas).
- Set up a morning routine to help your child get used to getting ready for school – wake up, eat breakfast, get dressed and pack a lunchbox and school bag.
- Talk with your child about the things they are looking forward to.

2 WHAT DO WE NEED?

Each school will have different requirements, but generally your child will need:

- A clearly labelled school bag, lunch box and drink bottle - try to choose a lunch box that your child can easily open (if they need help, that's ok!) and pack food they usually eat at home. The school will share information about any foods that can't be in lunch boxes. Keep a look out for this.
- Sun smart clothes that can get messy and are easy to move in.
- A change of clothes, underwear and socks in case of accidents.
- Comfortable and safe shoes that your child can run, climb, dance and ride in.

3 LET'S GO TO PRESCHOOL!

Day one at Preschool will look different across schools and services, and may change depending on COVID restrictions and Public Health directions. Your school will communicate this with you - talk with your child about the arrangements so that they know what to expect.

Some children will skip straight through the door, whilst others may take longer to warm up. All children settle in their own time. Acknowledge your child's feelings and remain positive about the experience. They are watching to see that you are happy too!

Be mindful that it can cause additional stress for a child if there is a large group of adults to farewell. Take photos to capture and share the memory.

4 MAKING FRIENDS

Consider reaching out to arrange a play date or group meet up on the weekend to strengthen connections and friendships. Many schools and services will distribute a contact list at the start of the year (with your permission).

You can help your child to practice relationship building skills such as sharing, taking turns, listening and negotiating - playing simple games can be a great start. You might also like to consider joining a sporting team in the local area.

Talk to your child about what you look for in a friend and how you are a good friend to others. Remember that at this age friendships are different to adult friendships and can be quite fluid!

5 PLAY-BASED LEARNING

All ACT Preschool programs implement the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia, which emphasises play-based learning and is centred around the concepts of *belonging*, *being* and *becoming*. Play is an important aspect of early learning that helps children to develop imagination, social, communication, language and physical skills in a fun way.

Remember, the aim in Preschool is not to teach your child to read and write. Literacy involves story telling, talking, listening and responding. Numeracy involves working with numbers and patterns and engaging in mathematical thinking. Your child will engage in a range of structured and open-ended activities and will be encouraged to explore their interests and build their confidence and curiosity through play.

More information can be found in the [Preschool Pathways Supporting Resources](#) on the Directorate website.

6 THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Many parents worry about how their child will transition to Preschool. Keep the following in mind:

- Talk to others – if your child attends an early childhood education and care service, speak with educators about your child's strengths, concerns or extra support your child might need.
- Try not to focus solely on academic skills – your child does not need to know how to write their name, recite the alphabet or recognise numbers before they start preschool.
- If your child needs support with toileting, that's ok. Let the school know this beforehand so they can be prepared to support their needs.

You know your child best. Be confident in your decision and maintain open communication with your school throughout your child's transition.

7 GETTING INVOLVED

- Talk to your child about school and ask open-ended questions about their day.
- Read with your child to help them develop an interest in stories and words. Share and chat about your favourite books.
- Encourage your child to help count, measure and compare items around the house to build maths skills.
- Talk to the teacher about how you can help out or share your skills or interests with the class.
- Consider joining the Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) or volunteering to help at Preschool.

More suggestions can be found in the [Preschool Pathways Supporting Resources](#) on the Directorate website.

8 FINDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

If your child has a disability or developmental delay and will be attending an ACT Government Preschool, the school will:

- consult with you to understand your child's needs and any adjustments required to support them;
- make the reasonable adjustments necessary to enable your child to take part in education on the same basis as other students; and
- assist your child and family to feel safe and supported in the education environment.

If you are concerned about the level of support your child will require at Preschool, talk to the school in the first instance, as early as possible.

Each school will have different requirements - make sure you find out about the transition approach at your child's preschool and engage in it!