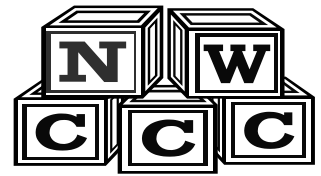


Transition to School Newsletter



Norwest Child Care Centre

April 2010

Welcome to our first edition of our Transition to School Newsletter for 2010. The year is quickly getting away from us and before we know it, we will be farewelling the next group who are heading off into the big wide world of school. However before we get there, there are lots of processes along the way to make this transition as smooth as possible. This newsletter will give you a few tips and steps you can take as a family throughout the rest of this year to help your children in the Transition to school process.

The right age for starting school

Children may enter Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year in NSW schools if they are five on or before July 31 of that year. You will be asked to provide proof of your child's age when starting school. Children develop at different rates and learn skills in different ways. Some gifted and talented children may be ready to start school at an earlier age however others may benefit from an extra year in maturing rather than starting school at a young age.

Enrolling in a Public School

By now most of you will have a good idea of where your child will be attending school next year. For those that have not yet enrolled the following website address will help you begin the process.

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/enrolment/index.php>

Enrolling in an Private, Independent or Religious School

For details about enrolling in privately run schools such as Hills Grammar, Anglican Schools and Catholic schools, and other independently run schools, please contact the particular school directly.

School Attendance

Education in New South Wales is compulsory. All children between six and fifteen years of age must go to school every day that the school is open. It is a condition of enrolment that you send your child to school every day. A small number of absences may be justified for example, if your child:

- * has to go to a special religious ceremony
- * is required to attend to a serious and/or urgent family situation (eg a funeral)
- * is too sick to go school or has an infectious illness.

Regular school attendance will help your child to succeed in later life. Attending school every day makes learning easier for your child and helps children to build and maintain friendships with other children. If your child doesn't learn the basic skills in the early years of school, they may develop learning problems in later years.

FINDING OUT ABOUT SCHOOL:

School starts in late January, or early February, each year.

It is important for parents to:

- ❖ Contact the school your child will attend.
- ❖ Enroll your child before the new school year starts.
- ❖ Find out what day your child will start school.
- ❖ Attend the school orientation.
- ❖ Find out about the school uniform.
- ❖ Meet teachers at the school.
- ❖ Find out if there are Community Languages Teachers at the school and get to know them.



Before school starts

- Visit the school together so your child is familiar with the grounds, including the drink taps, toilets and classroom.
- Visit the school when the other children are there so your child can get used to the noise of the playground and the size of the 'big' students.
- Meet your child's teacher together and give your child an idea of how many children will be in the class.
- Show your child where the after-school care facilities are, if needed.
- Get your child to try on the uniform and shoes before the first day, just to make sure everything fits.
- Make sure your child has all the extras. Remember – bag, hat, art smock, library bag and so on.
- It will help if your child knows another child from class before school starts. Try to organise play dates with other children before the first day of school.
- Explain the basic school rules, such as putting up your hand, asking before going to the toilet, listening quietly when necessary, and doing what the teacher asks.
- Have a practice run with the lunchbox to make sure your child can take off the lid (perhaps before buying the box).
- Give your child lots of love and support. Be excited and enthusiastic about your child starting school.

Immunisations

Is your child turning 4? Or just turned 4? Then it's time for their four-year immunisation. See your Doctor or immunisation provider. For more information you can also visit www.immunise.health.gov.au. Don't forget when your children have new immunisations to bring in a copy of their updated immunisation schedule to update and maintain our records.

Literacy

The Raising Children Network states "Literacy is most commonly understood as reading and writing, Before children can read and write, they need to grasp other forms of language, such as speech and the use of print and pictures. Parents have a vital role to play in helping their children develop these skills, along with a positive attitude towards reading".



Reading has always been an important skill. In our modern world it is more important than ever. Children learn about the importance of reading as they watch family members use reading and writing for everyday purposes. Reading with your child at home will help your child in all learning areas of school and more. Children see you reading and writing in everyday life for example reading for pleasure, sharing a story with your child, using a recipe, making a shopping list, writing a birthday card or reading street signs. This teaches them that reading and writing are useful skills in today's world. Be confident that your child will learn to read.

Reading with children is fun and one of the best ways to help them learn.

What you can do at home

1. Be yourself and involve your child in everyday conversations from an early age.
2. Read aloud to your child. It will help your child to learn the language of books and encourages the enjoyment of books and reading.
3. Talk about books together - make reading a shared, enjoyable activity.
4. See that there is a range of reading material for your child at home, both fiction and non-fiction.
5. Read to your child in your first language - research shows that using your first language will help your child when he or she learns to read English.
6. Try not to let television intrude on reading time - set aside some uninterrupted time to read with your child.
7. Listen to your child read every day, even if only for a short time.
8. Give books as treats and presents.
9. Discuss the meanings of stories and words.
10. Join your local library. Borrow books for yourself as well as your child.

Norwest Child Care Centre Library

Did you know that for just \$5 you could borrow a great range of story and information books from the Norwest Child Care Centre library? It allows you to borrow books for a week at a time, and share wonderful reading experiences with your child. It was started a couple of years ago as a few parents suggested they wanted to read more with their children and to share some of the terrific stories they were learning about whilst here. So several teachers sourced their favourite books and it has grown from there.

If you would like to join the Norwest Library, please see Sarah or Rachel and we will get you started.

Numeracy

Numeracy is about being confident when you use math's skills in everyday situations. There are opportunities to explore numeracy all around.

Children develop numeracy skills when they use mathematical ideas in their everyday situations. They begin to make sense of these situations by asking questions such as:

- How many?
- Does it fit?
- How big is it?
- Which way will I go?
- Is it likely to happen?
- How much is there?
- Will there be enough?

Children often explore this in their play and interactions with people.

Numeracy involves using mathematics efficiently in our day to day lives. Every day we use number, measurement and space. One of the earliest skills children have to develop is numbers and counting. Counting is recognising numbers carry meaning and value, and can be used in a many ways. As children establish counting they will also be beginning to learn measurement and space.

Children need to learn to apply measurement in practical situations. First they need to talk about things that we can measure and the things we can use to measure. As children develop their understanding they will learn more than just numbers, but also words for other forms of measurement including cup, tablespoon, litre, kilograms and metres.

Mathematics is also about ideas relating to shapes, objects and their position. Using literacy children learn to describe shapes, objects and their position around them.

How you can help at home:

To count: -Ask children to count the number of plates and utensils to set the table

- Play Dominoes, Card Games, Board Games involving one or two dice and counters

To Measure: - Fill up containers using a cup and see how many different containers hold

- Record your child's height

To learn Space – Talk about position of an object when putting it back ie in front, next to, behind

- Look for objects around the home of different shapes and sizes eg circle, square

Use practical and everyday items to count and measure such as pegs, cups, carrots, socks, balls, phones, keyboards, books, maps, bread....



What is the *Best Start Kindergarten Assessment*?

Best start Kindergarten Assessment occurs in the School Term one. It was introduced to help teachers establish what levels each child was at coming into Kindergarten. Children come to school with different levels of literacy and numeracy. Some are familiar with books, can recognise some letters, even write their name or count to ten, while others have not yet learned these skills. Kindergarten teachers have always observed their new students and used different methods to find out what each child knows and can do so that they can plan and teach what their students need to learn next. The *Best Start* provides teachers with a common tool to give all children the Best possible start to Kindergarten. The Best Start approach is not a test. Its primary purpose is to provide teachers with greater information about your child. The teacher will look at your child's early reading and writing, their ability to communicate with others, and how they recognise and work with numbers, groups and patterns. You will be given feedback about what your child's teacher has learned about your child, which you are welcome to discuss if you wish, in keeping with our usual practice.

My School Website

My School provides an important opportunity for everyone to learn more about Australian schools, and for Australian schools to learn more from each other. The *My School* website has been developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), an independent authority that is responsible, among other things, for publishing nationally comparable data on Australian schools. ACARA has worked closely with education sectors and partners across the country to develop this website. For more information please go to:

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

WORKING TOGETHER

Parents are children's first teachers. Children learn a lot from their parents. Parents never stop being teachers for their children. Teachers and parents can work together to make school an exciting place to be and to help children achieve their best at school.

Some considerations for determining school readiness:

- Is my child emotionally ready for the challenges of school?
- Can my child mix well with others?
- Does my child separate from me easily?
- Will my child flourish in a structured environment or does s/he need a more relaxed, unstructured one?
- Does my child listen well and respond appropriately to instructions?
- Does my child communicate effectively?
- Do I want my child to go to school because it will be more convenient for me, or because s/he is ready?
- Will another year in preschool be more beneficial for my child?
- Will my child cope with the tiredness of five days at school?

What we do here at Norwest to assist with transition to school...

Name Writing and Recognition

Children are surrounded by their name here at the centre, from as early as the Ocean Room, but once they move into the Bush Room, this becomes more obvious. Children have labelled hat pockets and lockers as well as their labelled clothing. Inside the room they have large resource cards which they use as a guide when they want to write their name. There are sign-up sheets and books for children to write their names in when they want to have a turn and children are always encouraged to write their own names on their artwork etc.

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. 'Group Times' are a great opportunity for children to get up in front of their group and talk about something that is important to them and most importantly contribute their thoughts and ideas. 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.

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 on 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 when they visit the other rooms. When kids 'read' they analyse the pictures of the story and make up the appropriate words – this is a fantastic exercise as it not only shows that children understand that words make meaning, but they are building on their confidence and imagination.

Toileting and Dressing

Children are encouraged to dress themselves before and after sleep time and any other times throughout the day such as by taking shoes off and getting their hats for play. They are also given many opportunities to develop self help skills, from making their own beds to cleaning up after themselves at lunch time. Children are often walked through appropriate procedures in toileting and hygiene and it is often the conversations throughout the day.

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. 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 and celebrate different 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.

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, dancing, long jump in the sandpit etc. 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.

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.

Making friends

In an environment with such low 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.

The best things for parents to do for their child:

- Attend the Norwest Transition to School Information Night
- Read the Day Book every day and ask your child open ended questions about their day.
- 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.
- Encourage your child to help with tasks at home (even if they don't always do a perfect job), including setting the table, clearing away after dinner, putting their clothes away.
- Support children's attempts at dressing themselves and encourage their independence with toileting.
- Read to your child as much as you can from a variety of sources including story books, reference books, signs, labels etc.
- When the orientation process starts at your child's school, follow the recommendations for a smooth transition.
- Keep us informed of your decisions as a family of when your child will be going to school and what we can do to help your transition process.



Is your child ready to start school?

Are you considering sending your child in 2011 or 2012?

Come to an information evening hosted by school teachers, early childhood teachers and a child psychologist on:

Tuesday 27th April 6:30pm – 8pm at

References and Resources

- NSW Public Schools
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/primary/transition/index.php>
- Time to Start School Resource Booklet
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/gotoschool/ttss.pdf>
- Reading with your child at home
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/reading/read_english.pdf
- Help your child with writing
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/hyc_rwss/hyc_ww/hww_english.pdf
- Starting School
http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/starting_school.html?highlight=school
- National Child Care Accreditation Council –Transition to School Factsheet
<http://www.ncac.gov.au/factsheets/transition.pdf>
- The Illawarra Billy Backpack Transition to School Project
http://www.transitiontoschool.com.au/info_parents.html
- A Special Place – Kindergarten Orientation
<http://www.kellyville-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/documents/specialplace.pdf>
- Numeracy
http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/numeracy_early_years_-_dest.html?highlight=numeracy