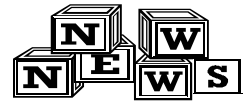


# Transition to School News – March 2007



Welcome to the latest Transition to School Newsletter. As many of you who attended would agree, our Transition to School Information Night was a great success and very informative. We spoke not only about what we are doing here at the centre, but what you and your child can expect when they enter infants/primary school. We were lucky enough to have Gabrielle Holloway, a Norwest parent and Kindergarten teacher at a nearby infants/primary school, talk on behalf of the school system.

The key points that were raised by Gabrielle are as follows:

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 show an **interest in learning**
8. Children need to understand the way **recess and lunch** works as they are used to being given hot nutritious meals during the day
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

Another important tip Gabrielle gave to parents was 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.

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

### 1. Name Writing and Recognition

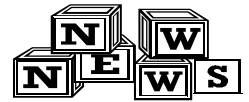
Children are surrounded by their name here at the centre, from as early as the Ocean Room, but once they move into the Bush Room, this becomes more obvious. Children have labelled hat pockets and lockers as well as individual lunch cards for the dining room. Inside the room they have large resource cards 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.

### 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. 'News Time' is a great opportunity for children 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



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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.

## 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 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 are understanding that words make meaning, but 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. They are given many opportunities to develop self help skills, from making their own beds to cleaning up after themselves at lunch time.

## 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. 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.

## 6. Gross motor activities

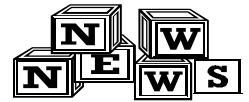
We have a lot of gross motor equipment at the centre for children to play in and we also program for specific gross motor games, such as parachute games, dancing, long jump in the sandpit etc. In order to continue to build the children's confidence, these activities always remain competition free and 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.



## 7. Interest in learning

Our whole 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 the 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. Programming and catering for individual children is made easier by the fact that we have 2 university trained teachers in that room (5 in the whole centre) who could work in a

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primary school, 2 Associate Diploma trained staff and 2 staff with a Certificate III in Children's Services. This level of training means that all staff are valuable members of the teaching team and contribute to the program development. Continuous training and development is also highly encouraged (both our Associate Diploma staff are currently studying at University) which enables staff to keep up to date with changing trends and ideas in the industry.

## 8. Recess and Lunch

Towards the end of the year in the Kangaroo Group, the children are asked to bring in a lunch box and this will be filled by Michele (our Chef) with nutritious snacks, sandwich and 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 of their 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.

## 9. 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.

## 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.



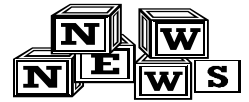
## 11. Realistic expectations

At the beginning and end of the year we have a reunion for the class of the previous year. This allows the children who have gone to school to come back and tell the children in their own words, exactly what it is like to go to primary school and what they can expect when they start. In preparation for this children are involved in writing an invitation to the past students and are given many opportunities to ask questions on the day.

### ***The best things for parents to do for their child:***

- 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 (some of these are outlined in the attached handout and also on display in the foyer).

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Some of the schools in our local area are listed below:

**Baulkham Hills Public** 9639 6936  
2A Girralong Ave, Baulkham Hills

**Beaumont Hills Public School** 8824 6470  
The Parkway, Beaumont Hills

**Bert Oldfield Public School** 9622 2122  
Oldfield Road, Seven Hills

**Caddies Creek Public School** 8814 5916  
Currawong St & Glenwood Park Dr,  
Glenwood

**Crestwood Public School** 9624 3950  
38 Peel Road, Baulkham Hills

**Excelsior Public School** 9634 3774  
Rondelay Drive, Castle Hill

**Ironbark Ridge Public School** 8814 5687  
Withers Road, Kellyville

**Jasper Road Public School** 9639 6801  
Jasper Road, Baulkham Hills

**Kellyville Public School** 9629 1279  
Windsor Road, Kellyville

**Kellyville Ridge Public School** 8883 0480  
Cnr Singleton Ave and Greenwich St  
Kellyville Ridge

**Kings Langley Public School** 9674 4460  
68 Isaac Smith Parade, Kings Langley

**Lalor Park Public School** 9624 4808  
Heffron Road, Lalor Park

**Mary Immaculate Primary School** 9626 3999  
1 Barnier Drive, Quakers Hill

**Matthew Pearce Public School** 9624 3311  
Astoria Park Road, Baulkham Hills

**Our Lady of Lourdes Primary** 9639 4172  
Oakland Avenue, Baulkham Hills

**Our Lady of the Rosary** 9629 2566  
8 Diana Avenue, Kellyville

**Rouse Hill Public School** 8824 7330  
Clower Ave, Castle Hill

**Samuel Gilbert Public School** 9680 4477  
Ridgecrop Drive, Castle Hill

**Seven Hills North Public** 9624 1275  
45 Beethoven Street, Seven Hills

**Seven Hills Public School** 9624 3441  
2A Lucas Road, Seven Hills

**Sherwood Ridge Public** 8824 3333  
Rosebery Road, Kellyville

**St Angela's Primary School** 9894 9377  
7-13 Victoria Road, Castle Hill

**St Bernadette's Primary** 9634 2898  
357 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill

**St Bernadette's Primary** 9622 3535  
18 Wheeler Street, Lalor Park

**St Michael's Primary School** 9639 0518  
3 Chapel Lane, Baulkham Hills

**William Clarke College** 9629 3200  
132 - 150 Wrights Road, Kellyville

If you are still undecided about whether or not you are going to send your child to school next year, please speak with the teachers who will give you any advice they can.