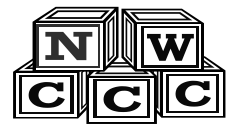


Transition to School News Information

August 2010



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 based on information from primary school teachers and 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 Norwest Child Care Centre and what you and your family can expect once you get to infants/primary school.

The key points that were raised at our information night earlier in the year were:

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** works as they are used to being given hot nutritious meals during the day and encouraged to eat at regular times
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 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.



Our biggest focus is on ensuring that your children are happy here at our centre, and also that they will be happy when they start school. The foundations for this are in social skills – so we spend much of our time working on social skills with each child.

Your child's teacher will plan class lessons based on a variety of skills. Starting school may be a little easier if your child can try the things below, but don't worry if they can't do them all.

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

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

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, day and night

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

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

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

Tips for parents on preparing your child for the classroom

- Read the Day Book every day and ask your child open ended questions encouraging descriptive answers.
- When we put up the schools listings later in August, try to make a connection with at least one other family who are going to the same school.
- 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 etc.
- When the orientation process starts at your child's school, follow the recommendations for a smooth transition
- 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 – or borrow from ours!
- Encourage your child to spend time playing by themselves as well as with others so they are able to play independent of others
- Encourage your child's curiosity by asking questions and by encouraging questions in return



Want More Information???

Follow [this link](#) for more information on school readiness from Early Childhood Australia - lots of great information for parents!

If you missed our April Transition to School Newsletter, or just want to read back on what we've been up to - [click here](#) – or visit our website <http://www.norwestccc.com.au/newsletters.html>

Play Based Learning

Why do Early Childhood Experts keep going on about 'play based learning'?

Play is essential for optimal development – Play enhances every aspect of children's development and learning. It is children's window to the world. Play is so important that its significance in children's lives is recognized by the United Nations as a specific right in addition to, and distinct from, a child's right to recreation and leisure.

When you ask 'what did you do today', if they tell you 'just played' ask what they learned whilst playing...

Play and Literacy – There are consistent findings in research about the close relationship between symbolic play and literacy development and good evidence that increasing opportunities for rich symbolic play can have a positive influence on literacy development. Pretend play with peers engages children in the same kind of representational thinking needed in early literacy activities. Children develop complex narratives in their pretend play. They begin to link objects, actions, and language together in combinations and narrative sequences. They generate language suited to different perspectives. The new pre-school learning framework is one of play-based learning, rather than relying on tools such as 'stencils' that you might remember from 'old fashioned' preschools when you were young! Scientific evidence based research has been showing for years that children absorb the most information when they're having fun.

Your children learn best through play.....and our teachers are skilled in the art of 'teaching through play' – so most of the time, what your child thinks is good clean 'fun' is a rich learning experience!

You can find out more about play based learning by following these links.

<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/LessonsInLearning/Nov-08-06-Let-the-Children-Play.pdf>

<http://www.teachmorelovemore.org/BestTrendsDetails.asp?catid=67#193>

<http://www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf>

Bush Room Teaching Structure

The organisational structure of the Bush Room is designed to give your children a high level of consistency, whilst offering our staff flexible employment, and accommodating award conditions such as rostered days off etc.

The "Schoolers" group incorporates most (not all) of the Kangaroos and Wallabies - ie all of the children who have indicated that they are off to school in 2011. Earlier in June, we sent out a newsletter to these families describing this organisational structure, and we fear that we managed to cause more confusion! So here's a diagram.

Rebecca and Amanda work together to develop and implement the 'school enrichment program' for all of these children.



Monique Pavicic
Joey's Group Leader



Rebecca Pickard
Bush Room Leader and
Wallabies Group Leader



Amanda Edmund-Jones
Kangaroos Group Leader



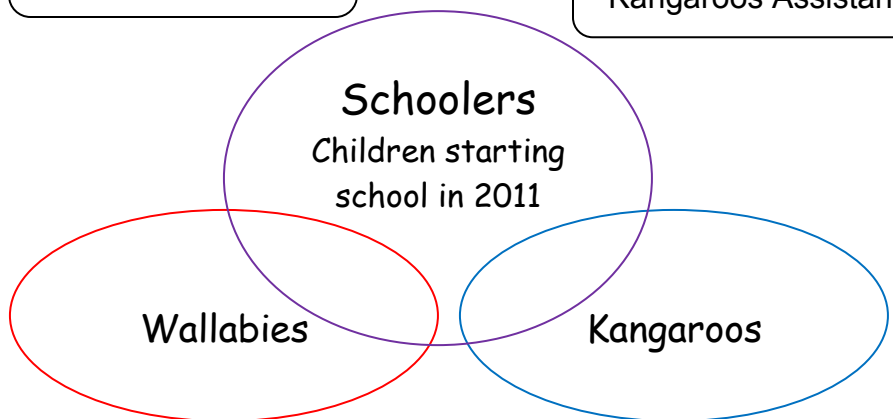
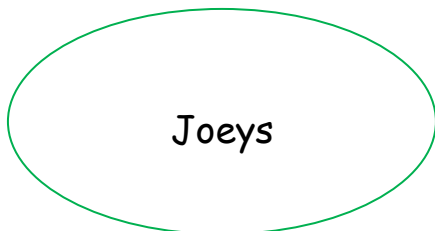
Lauren Border
Group Leader in Training and
Bush Room Assistant



Gail Pringle
Wallabies Assistant



Jessica Whipps
Kangaroos Assistant



Introduction of Reading Eggs

Thank you to those parents who have spoken with us recently about ABCs Reading Eggs. This is one of the few scientific evidence-based pre-reading programs recommended by Early Childhood experts. It works on emerging reading skills, and is similar to the teaching programs we use at the centre. Many of our families are introducing Reading Eggs at home, and to support our families who are doing this, we have purchased Reading Eggs support materials for our centre. The 'schoolers' will have access to Readings Eggs computer games, activity sheets and flash cards at the centre. These are similar to resources that we already have, and we recognise that choosing resources that are 'branded' with characters that the children recognise will support your efforts at home. If you have not purchased Reading Eggs, please don't panic, or worry (and please save your money!) – your children will be exposed to plenty of these activities at the centre over the coming months.



Finishing up at Norwest Child Care Centre

Please help us to cater for your individual needs by communicating as soon as possible when you intend to finish at Norwest. For anyone who intends to finish prior to December 23rd (our last day of 2010), you will need to give notice prior to the end of October, otherwise you will be charged to the end of the year. If you would like care in January 2011, until school starts (school often starts at the beginning of February), you will need to let us know as well (otherwise we'll assume that you are finishing on December 23rd). We will have 'exit forms' for you to complete in August.

News

All of the schoolers will be having 'news time' once a week. News is not mandatory for your children (fear of public speaking for adults is often rated higher than a fear of death! So for kids we try to make it inviting, but not compulsory). However, in addition to telling the group about any exciting events, we have some suggestions that you might like to help prepare for your child: If you go to a school orientation, or buy a school uniform, you might like to take a photo of your child, and they can bring it in to discuss. Please note that we will not discuss 'toys' during news time.

Lockers

We currently have a 'locker' and a 'hat pocket' for each child in the Bush Room. In the interest of reinforcing name recognition and the skill of looking after their belongings, we will be moving to each child having a 'permanent locker' in which they also store their hat – these lockers will not be shared with children who come on other days. Over time the schoolers will label their own locker. We encourage you to start guiding your children to put their own bag away in the morning, get their hat out themselves, and in the afternoon, collect all of their belongings and put them into their bag, zip it up and carry it to the car.

Art and Craft

As much as possible, we encourage the children to put their creations from throughout the day into their bags to take home and share with you. Sometimes they don't always make it into their bag, or all the way home – so we try to make sure that some art/craft is put into your 'pockets' in the foyer. Please encourage your children to take artwork home by giving it praise and value when it arrives home (this will encourage more creations to make the challenging journey home successfully)



Library

Don't forget that we've got an amazing library here for your children to borrow from. Just \$5 gives you access to all of our brilliant library books (and saves you money buying new books to read at night!). We have a great range of 'school' information books – as well as parent resources about supporting your child's transition to school. Speak with Rachel if you have any questions or would like to join the library.

Day Books

As always, one of the best ways to support your child's learning, is to read the Day Books each day that your child is here. Often children at this age will report that they 'played' with their friends all day – as this is the most exciting aspect for them. Reading the day book gives you a more thorough idea of what's going on in the room, and will give you information to use to ask open ended questions to prompt discussion (eg 'can you tell me what you discovered today about bugs?')

Emergent, Holistic Learning

Besides our School Enrichment time, and activities, we are also teaching your children every moment that they are at our centre. Our play-based, emergent curriculum is based on Early Childhood Expert recommendations, and our program is amongst the best in Australia (watch this space for details on our awards for providing outstanding pre-school programs!). Each of our team is undergoing professional development in the field of early childhood education – so they are constantly learning new and exciting ways to engage your children in learning. Chat to the team about how your child is doing.

Portfolios

We know you love the portfolios that we've produced this year, don't forget that we do need them back soon so that we can put more information in. If you'd like to borrow the portfolio at any time during the second half of the year [eg to share with visiting family], please don't hesitate to ask our team (preferably with a week's notice so that we can make sure it's up to date!).

Ron the Reading Bear / Hector the Reading Horse

Ron has been such a huge success – [and was so popular that the waiting list was months long!] that he's got a new friend Hector the Reading Horse. We encourage you to write your name down, and then take Ron or Hector home for the weekend to experience literacy with your family. Talk to Rebecca for more details.

Immunisation

Don't forget that if your child has had their 4 yo immunisation shots, we need to get copies of these records to update our system – otherwise your child care benefit/ child care rebate may be affected! Drop a copy to the office next time you're in.



School Enrichment Timetable

We have a host of school-focused activities coming in the months ahead as we prepare your children for school – in addition to the activities they are already doing. All of the schoolers will be doing these activities with Amanda and Rebecca, as well as the other teachers in the room. Keep your eye on the day books, your pockets and your email to see what's happening this week, and how you can be involved!

August

School Discussions – large group discussions about school, what is involved and what to expect

Following 2 step directions - listening and following directions without further prompting from teachers

Writing – focusing on pencil grip and letter formation (which direction to move your pencil in)

What school are you going to – a large chart will be displayed in the Bush room with the name of all of our schoolers, and we ask that parents write down which school their child will be attending, so that we can help your child to make connections prior to starting school.

Lockers with hats - see notes above.

September

School DVDs and Slide Shows - images of local schools and children at school shown throughout the day

Group Games – focusing on school yard games for kids to play – with and without resources such as skipping ropes – to help them make friends when at school

Self Help Skills – toileting, dressing, shoes, food – really stretching the kids to be independent at school

Conflict Resolution – resolving conflict between peers – through role plays, discussions and lots of practice

School Orientations Start - for many of our children

October

Transitions – we introduce a 'bell' and 'lining up' to transition between activities at the centre

Parent Questionnaire about school – we will be sending your child home with a questionnaire for you to use as an 'interview' tool– where you answer questions about your school memories. If you find an old photo of yourself in school uniform, scan/ copy it and send it in. We're also going to have some school photos up of our staff, and you can win prizes in our guessing competition!

Expressive Art – children depicting how they 'feel' about school through their artwork– prompting discussion and exploration

Dealing with Bullying- following on from our group games, we discuss strategies for your children to adopt if faced with school yard bullies. Where to go for help, who to talk to, how to manage the situation.

School Dress Ups – various school uniforms are added to our dress up area to help our children role play any issues they have regarding school

Walk Safely to School – Road Safety Awareness for the children – how to use crossings and walk safely around schools

Graduation Photos – are taken at the end of October so that they can be prepared for your portfolios

November

*see the Norwest Calendars or ask for another copy
– *more information coming in October**

Weeks 1 -4 **Kiss and Drop**

Weeks 2-4 **Lunch Boxes**

Week 3 **School Uniforms**

23rd - **School Reunion**

December

14th – Bush Room Christmas Party

23rd – Centre closes for 2010

