

Transition to school newsletter November 2010



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Easy lunch and snack ideas

To support growth and development of children we need to ensure they have lots of good nutritious foods every day. While they are at our centre we provide up to four meals a day which contributes to 75% of their dietary requirements. We also supervise and encourage them to make healthy choices while they are here. Once they go off to school they will not be as closely monitored which means it's a great idea to ensure their lunch boxes are full of healthy and interesting foods. We have included a link below that has some really great ideas for making lunch easy and nutritious.

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/healthpromotion/nutrition/pdf/960060_easy_lunch.pdf

Competition for a new lunch box

Once you have had the chance to look at all the great ideas, we want the best ones. Many of you already have children at primary school and are old hands at this now so we are hoping to get some great ideas that we can then incorporate into our lunch box lunches when they start in November. Send us an email with your healthy lunchbox ideas and you could win a lunchbox.

Finishing up

Please help us to cater for your individual needs by communicating as soon as possible when you intend to finish at Norwest Child Care Centre. 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. There are currently limited spots left for vacation care in January 2011, and if you intend to come back in the new year prior to school starting, you need to request that NOW. If you are going on Holidays in December, January, February please let us know with the forms attached or send me an email with the dates that you will be away. There are also many families who have not provided us with an exit form I have also attached one for you to fill in if you have not already done so.

Graduation

This year the Kangaroo's graduation will be held during the Bush Room Christmas Party on the 14th of December. We will take photos prior to the event of the children in graduation outfits to put into their portfolios.



News

News has wrapped up for the year in favour of our new 'table top hour' and longer group times (we're stretching it now to around 40-50 mins at a time). Of course children are still welcome to informally bring special items in to share/show their peers.

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! Your child's school will also ask for a copy of the certificate when you enroll. Please drop a copy to the red communication box the next time you are in.



Library

The best way to support early literacy in your child is by reading to them. Research suggests that just 10 minutes of reading every day will increase your child's language and literacy skills faster than anything else. We have a library for Norwest Child Care Centre and have found some great books for you to borrow to read at home. There is a library card for each book and all families will need to join our library for \$5. It saves you loads of money as you won't have to buy new books to read at home all the time. So, start making use of it today. We have also added some new school-focused books so if you are already signed up make sure you get your hands on the books you haven't read already.

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?') You will also find information there about the songs we've sung, or other activities that the kids were involved in. We've also got a little display stand for the book we read in class that day.



Please note that one day per month the staff will be having a 'reflective day' instead of doing daybooks. The staff will utilize this time to thoroughly reflect on the program that they are creating for your children. On this day please take a look at the slide show of photos to see what your children got up to.



Emergent, Holistic Learning

Along with our transition to school program and activities, we are also teaching your children every moment that they are at our centre. Our play-based, Early Years Learning Framework is based on Early Childhood Expert recommendations. 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.

Orientation

Families NSW have been mapping different areas to find out how many schools and early education centres had been using transition to school programs. In 2006 31% of schools and 71% of Early childhood services were offering transition programs and then it jumped up to 73% of schools and 91% of early childhood services, which shows how important and helpful to both children and teachers that the programs are.



So, When Orientation comes up at your child's new primary school we strongly encourage you to go along. It provides opportunity for them to meet their new teachers, make friends and also allows you to start building connections with other families at your school. Going along will make the transition to school much smoother.

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/tss.pdf>
- Reading with your child at home
https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/reading/read_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 best things for parents to do to prepare their child for school:

- 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 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

Interviews to do at home.

Sharing your fond school memories with your children is a great way to help them feel excited (rather than anxious) about school. Doing a 'Q&A' or 'interview' style session with your kids can help them be prepared. Your children will love hearing from mum, dad, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Try having 2 adults at a time with the child – one adult who prompts the questions ("why don't you ask grandma about her favourite memory" or "ok, you ask grandma 'what is your favourite memory from school'") and one who answers the questions.

- **How old were you when you started school?**
- **What colour was your school uniform?**
- **What is your favourite memory from school?**
- **Can you tell me about some of the friends you made?**
- **Did you have a favourite teacher? What was their name?**
- **What games did you play in the playground?**
- **What did you take for lunch?**
- **What was your favourite thing to learn?**





What we've been focusing on over the past few months here at Norwest

Whilst we incorporate all of these activities into our everyday program, each month we've had a focus on some specific areas to help those Wallabies and Kangaroos who are off to school be super-ready.

In August

We had large **group discussions about school** – what is involved, and what to expect – we put up some of the children's' comments on the wall (next to our writing desk).

We worked on **following 2 step instructions** - eg 'go and get your hat from your bag, and then line up outside'. Some of our children are so good at this that they're up to 4 step instructions (and often, 5 step!).

We focused on **pencil grip and letter formation** at the writing table, coaching children each time they sat down to write.

We introduced the **"Reading Eggs" program** to complement the work that some families were doing at home. The children have LOVED this – and they have the opportunity to interact with the computer program, as well as use the laminated stencils at the writing table.

What **school are you going to posters** – we've got these at both ends of the room to help you find someone to connect with during those first few weeks.

We also **combined the hat pockets and lockers** so that the kids started taking more responsibility for their belongings.

September

We've had **school DVDs and Slide Shows** playing throughout the day for the kids to look at. These have specific local school images, as well as a series of 'generic' school images. They've sparked many exciting discussions.

Group Games – tied into our sports days, we've focused on the social skills required for good group games – how to take turns, how to enter play, as well as the rules and instructions for lots of great 'school yard games' such as Tunnel Ball, Boule, Bull Rush, Duck Duck Goose.

Self Help Skills – knowing which kids are off to school, we've stepped back a bit from helping them with routine things such as toileting, putting things in their bags, dressing and undressing.

We've had lots of opportunities to practice **conflict resolution**, both inside – through our discussions, role plays and 'feelings wall' as well as outside with Ben guiding the children through 'disagreements' over particular rules of playground games. We also used the ever-popular 'Zingo' as an opportunity for conflict resolution!

October

We've been using the **'outside bell'** to signal that it's time to come inside, as they do at school. We've also started to coach the children in how to line up without getting silly.

We've been drawing things about school and **expressing how we feel** about this – particularly in our day books.

We've added **school uniforms** to our dress ups for the children to explore in their dramatic play.

Walk Safely to School – we've had lots of discussions around holding hands and being aware of cars and traffic dangers. Our excursions provided the perfect opportunity to practice our road safety awareness and road crossing skills (several times!). We've incorporated the 'key messages for children' from the [Kids and Traffic program](#) – including 'always hold hands'

Dealing with Bullying – we've had lots of discussion with children about how to manage situations with their peers when they aren't happy, feel that it's been unjust, or feel that they or a friend is being bullied. We've had lots of opportunity to practice this as a part of our sports program, as well as within the class room – and our day books have included details of specific discussions.

Table Top Time - The 'schoolers' have also had some great 'table top time' activities. They choose their image (a photo of them on a paddle pop stick) and indicate which of the three school readiness activities they would like to participate in – and then after group time, they go to that activity. The children are developing their planning and communication skills, and following through their plans.

Coming up in November & December

Monday 1st November – and continuing until Friday 26th November

Kiss and Drop

All schoolers should be signed in at the foyer, and then given a 'kiss goodbye'. The children then take their bag through to the bush room themselves and put it in their locker, grab their hats, and then find their teachers and friends by themselves. It'll be a challenge for the first week, but we'll have the hang of it by the end of the month!

Monday 8th November – and continuing until Friday 26th November

Lunch boxes

Bring an empty school lunchbox for us to keep for the month (clearly labeled), and each day Michele will fill it with healthy foods, snacks and lunches. At morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea time the children will be given their lunch box and coached through the ideas of eating a little bit now, and leaving some for later, unwrapping and opening packages, eating whole fruits, eating from the lunchbox with their hands (rather than at a table) – and other tricky lunchbox skills. We also need you to pop a drink bottle into the box, so that we can fill it with chilled water for them to practice drinking.

We will only be doing this for children for whom we have a lunchbox, so please don't forget to bring one in (Michele will take them from now on, and return them at the end of November).

Monday 15th November and continuing until Friday 19th November

Wear your uniform

If your child has already purchased their uniform (many don't until the new year..) or they have hand-me-downs from siblings, they can wear them in for the day and show them off to their friends.

Tuesday 23rd November

School Reunion

Children who were with us last year and started school in January 2010 will be invited back to speak with the group about their experiences.

December 14th

Bush Room End of year Party and Graduation

Details for the end of year party will be coming in the November parent newsletter.

December 23rd

Centre closes for 2010 at 4pm



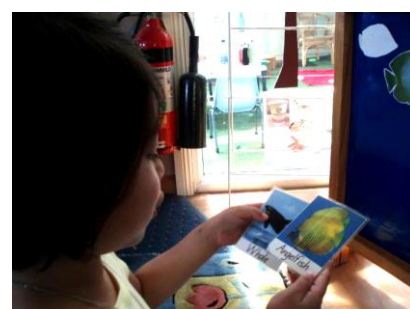
Reminders from our information night about what is important for your child when they go off to school

At our transition to school information night earlier this year we had Janette Kerr the assistant principle from Toongabbie Public school come in and talk to many parents about what is important for your child to know and be capable of when they go off to school. Janette also discussed some things that would help prepare your children that you can do at home.

Following is a list of things Janette discussed with some key points to consider:

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 (including school shoes with laces)
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 work as they are used to being given hot nutritious meals during the day
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 for parents 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.



*We are very excited about your children starting school
– and so are they!*

School Days Photo Guessing Competition

In the foyer we have photos from the first day (or year) of school for some of our staff. Take a guess as to who they are. The person who gets the most correct will win a free day of child care – and if you get all correct, it's bonus points.

Some of them are really easy, some a bit harder – so we've put the staff photos up next to the display to give you a hand (and we'll give you a hint – one of the staff is currently on maternity leave!)

Just fill out this form and return it to the red communication tin in the foyer.

School Days Photo Guessing Competition

Your name _____

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1) | 7) |
| 2) | 8) |
| 3) | 9) |
| 4) | 10) |
| 5) | 11) |
| 6) | 12) |
-

Healthy Lunch Box Ideas Competition

Your name _____

Your healthy lunchbox suggestion: _____
