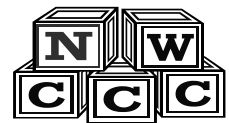


Transition to School News Information



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 a local primary school teacher 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 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 understand the way **recess and lunch** works 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 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 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. Later in the year we label the toilets in the Bush Room bathroom as 'boy' and 'girl' toilets so that children learn to identify those words for when they start school.

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. We also have a variety of bi-cultural support workers who help us out throughout the year to assist new children who have English as a second language settle into the centre. All the children benefit from these support workers and learn many new and exciting things about different cultures.



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. We have also developed a monthly Sports Day where the focus is on health and exercise and the children are given the opportunity to try new sports they may not be familiar with, including kanga Cricket and Quits for example. 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. 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 a 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.

8. 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 this 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 3 university trained teachers in that room (5 in the whole centre) who could work in a primary school, 1 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 which enables staff to keep up to date with changing trends and ideas in the industry.

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. This year's reunion was a great success with most of our children from the previous year coming back to share their experiences. We have a project book dedicated to this year's reunion which the children can read and look at whenever they want.

12. Follow basic instructions

There will not always be a teacher on hand to guide a child step by step through a task when they are at school so it is important that they learn this skill when a supportive environment such as ours. Children are encouraged to take on responsibilities and over time the complexity of the tasks are increased. For instance children may start the year by being asked to put forks on the table for lunch, but as the year progresses the task would change to the children being asked to 'count the number of children sitting on the mat, then go to the dining room and count the same number of forks and then set the table ready for lunch'.

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

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

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

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

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 about their day to encourage descriptive answers.
- 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. Before the school year starts, organise play visits for the children so they have a close friend to start off their great new adventure with.
- 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
- 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
- Encourage your child to spend time playing with 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

Parent Questions

What is the cut off age for school?

Your child needs to start school by the time they are 6 years of age.

What sort of things should parents look for in a school?

You need to consider what is best for your child - some children cope better in smaller groups so class size would be a determining factor as to the type of school you chose. Community spirit is also an important factor as well as what does the school offer overall, including outside of school activities. Is there access to before and after school care? It is also worth looking at the type of orientation process they have for students and whether you think that they will cater for your child's individual needs.

How can parents identify a good school?

Check out their website and school newsletter (most school will send one out to you if you ring and request one). Go to P&C Meetings or go to the school at pick up time and talk to existing parents about their experiences. Make sure you speak with the principle and see if you can go on a tour of the school.

If you 'hold your child back' - do they get bored?

Not at all - we adapt our program to the interests of the children so it is ever changing and never the same year after year. Primary school teachers will agree that it is better to have a child in kindergarten who is over interested rather than a child who is not ready. Sending a confident, socially ready child to school will set them up for a successful school career.

What are some of the differences between the Catholic and Public school system?

They are governed by the same laws so the curriculum is the same. The ratios can be very different though - the Public School system is limited to 20 per class, whereas the Catholic/private system can have class numbers up to 35. Many parents chose the Catholic system so that their child can receive the sacraments, but nowadays, that responsibility is put back onto the parents and it is their responsibility to go to church with their child. Government funding also differs and it may be easier for a public school to get funding for a child with additional needs.

How can parents find out about school zones?

Most school will be able to provide that information upon request as well as Councils.

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

Baulkham Hills Public 9639 6936
2A Giralong 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.