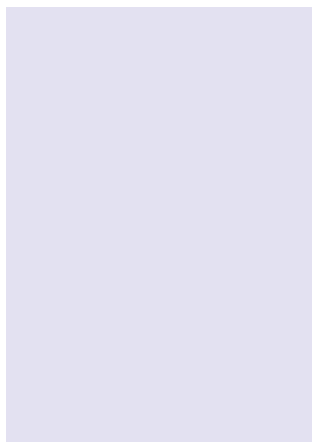
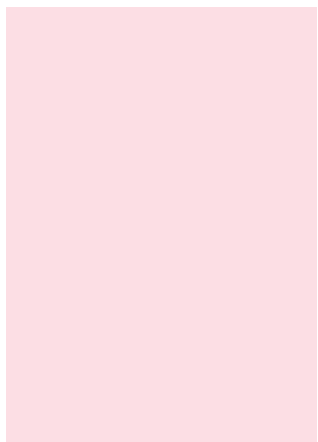
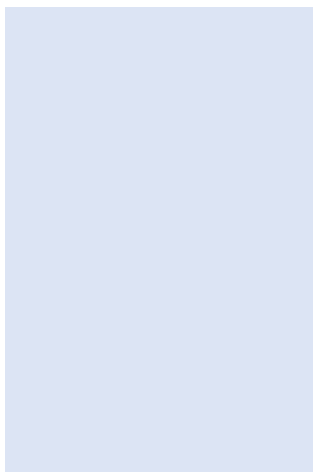


Time to start school

Family guide to starting Kindergarten



Ready for school checklist

TICK EACH TASK AFTER IT HAS BEEN DONE
(NOT ALL TASKS WILL APPLY TO YOU).

The year before your child starts school

- ☐ Attend school orientation or transition.
- ☐ When immunisations are due, ask to have your child's hearing and eyesight checked.
- ☐ If your child has an allergy, medical condition or any special needs, inform the school as early as possible and make an appointment to see the principal.
- ☐ Fill in a travel pass application if this applies to you (see page 5).
- ☐ Organise who will be looking after your child before and after school. Fill in applications for an OOSH service if needed (see page 5).

Some things you'll need to buy for school

- ☐ School uniform (summer, winter, sports).
- ☐ Sun hat (usually part of school uniform).
- ☐ School shoes and running shoes (try Velcro if they can't tie laces).
- ☐ Back pack (may be available from the school).
- ☐ Lunch box (get your child to choose one they can open).
- ☐ Drink bottle.
- ☐ Raincoat.
- ☐ Paint shirt (an old T-shirt will do).
- ☐ Library bag.

The year your child is starting school

- ☐ January – You might like to spend some time each day with your child practising things your child will be doing when they start school eg drawing pictures.
- ☐ Write your child's name on everything!
- ☐ Make sure you have the school's phone number.
- ☐ Teach your son to use a urinal if he doesn't know already.

The night before the first day of school

- ☐ Lay out your child's clothes, shoes and socks.
- ☐ You may want to make your child's lunch tonight and put it in the fridge.
- ☐ Help your child to pack their school bag.
- ☐ Pack a spare pair of underpants, socks and a change of clothes in a plastic bag. Let your child know these are in their backpack in case they have any toilet accidents at school.

The first day

- ☐ Be positive and happy about the first day with your child.
- ☐ Let your child dress themselves as much as possible.
- ☐ Tie long hair back or plait hair.
- ☐ Apply sunscreen to your child each morning. They will need to wear their school hat when outside the classroom.
- ☐ Take photos!

The first weeks of school

- ☐ The school will let you know when you may need to pack items for activities such as sport, art or library.
- ☐ Children are often very tired in the first few weeks of school. Your child needs lots of sleep.
- ☐ Give your child a healthy breakfast to get them through the day.
- ☐ Make sure your child knows who will pick them up each day.
- ☐ Check your child's bag each night for school notes and lunch leftovers.
- ☐ Try to establish regular morning routines.
- ☐ Start a home reading routine.
- ☐ Talk to the teacher about helping in the classroom, if you can.
- ☐ Chat to your child about their day at school.
- ☐ It is very important that your child still has time to relax, play outside and do things that they enjoy once they start school.



Your child's learning

There are no specific skills that a child needs to have before starting Kindergarten – they are not expected to know how to read or write. The main thing is that both you and your child feel confident about starting school.

Activities to try with your child before starting school

These activities are suggestions of things to do with children before they start school to make school a little easier for them.

Language skills

- sing songs together
- tell each other jokes and rhymes
- give your child simple instructions to follow, e.g. how to pack a bag
- use books for enjoyment, e.g. looking at pictures
- identify pictures in books, magazines, on television or the Internet
- encourage your child to join in conversations.

Writing skills

- give your child pencils, markers, crayons, paintbrushes and sticks in the sand to draw, scribble or write
- write numbers and letters
- encourage your child to use a capital letter to start their name, e.g. Jack.

Mathematics skills

- encourage your child to recognise numbers using words such as many, a lot, more, less
- help your child to find things in a group that are different, such as differences in shapes
- talk about opposites – up and down, under and over, in front and behind, day and night.

Personal/social skills

- organise times for your child to play with other children so that they can learn to share and take turns
- encourage your child to tidy up after playing
- help your child to learn to say their full name and their address
- make your child aware of rules and the reasons for having them.

Physical skills

- provide practice using scissors
- provide opportunities to play with building blocks and other puzzles
- play hopping and skipping games.

Keep playing

Play is one of the most important needs children have and this does not change once children enter Kindergarten. Playing enhances all aspects of their healthy development.

Children play because it is fun, but as they play they are actually learning. When children play they are using their bodies, their imagination, and learning how to communicate and cooperate. They learn how things work and how to manage feelings. Please allow some unstructured time after each school day for your child to relax and play.



A smooth start to school

Getting prepared at home before school starts will help you and your child feel confident and excited about starting school.

Preparing with your child for school

It's almost time – your child is about to start the first day of a new and exciting experience. You may be wondering where to begin in getting your child prepared.

We recognise that it's a big step for everybody. Developing a positive relationship with you to support your child's learning is vital to us. Our team of highly qualified teachers and support staff is here to give your child the best possible start.

Your first contact with the school may be with the school administrative staff. They are the friendly faces at the school office. They help by giving you guidance on general information you may need. They also make appointments for you with the principal, teachers or other school staff, if you need to speak with one of them.



Preparing at home

There are a few things to organise, budget for and plan before school starts.

Budgeting

Starting school involves new costs such as buying uniforms and school shoes so it may be helpful to budget ahead for these items. If you require after school hours care for your child, these costs also need to be budgeted for.

Uniforms

Your child's school will tell you about the school uniform and where to buy it. Hats are part of the school uniform to provide sun protection. There is usually a summer, winter and sports uniform. The school can tell you which shops supply the uniform or the material to make it.

To keep costs down, many schools run a clothing pool where uniform items are donated after children have outgrown them.

If you haven't already enrolled your child, please go to the school to enrol and if your child has any special needs or allergies it is important to inform the principal.

Financial contributions

Schools will ask you for a voluntary contribution to enhance educational and sporting programs. You may be asked to pay for excursions throughout the year to enhance your child's classroom learning and if your child is involved in extra activities such as sport or band, you may be asked to pay for things like instrument hire and transport to events.

Financial assistance

If you are having any difficulty with the costs of schooling, please make an appointment with the principal to discuss your situation. The Student Assistance Scheme may be available to assist you.



Outside of school hours care

Services that care for children outside of school hours (OOSH) are often run from schools or near schools. Your school can give you information about the services in your area. These services charge fees and you may be eligible for Child Care Benefit to help with the fees.



Write your child's name on everything

You can:

- use a permanent laundry marker to label clothes, hats and shoes, or sew or iron on personalised labels
- check that labels haven't faded with washing
- go through your child's bag with them each night
- all schools have a lost property area, so ask at the office if something doesn't come home.



Life at school

Each school will have its own start and finish times, but school will generally start at 9 am and finish around 3 pm, Monday to Friday. Students have a break for recess and lunch to eat and play.

School may start and finish with an assembly where students come together to hear the principal, teachers or student leaders make announcements.

School is compulsory

The law states that all children of compulsory school age must go to school. When children miss school they miss out on vital information, their learning routine is broken and they can lose confidence. They also miss out on building their friendships. All of these factors can affect their attitude towards school and their achievement.

If your child is late or away

If your child arrives late you will have to sign them into school in the office; this is the same process if you are taking your child out of school early for any reason.

If your child has been away from school you will need to provide an explanation for the absence. This is usually done by writing a note explaining why they were away from school and your child can give this to their teacher when they return to school. It may also be done by telephoning the school.

Picking up children at the end of the day

When school finishes each day, your child's class will gather at a regular place. Your child's teacher will wait with the children. Make sure your child and their teacher know who will be collecting them each afternoon. Children can get upset if you or someone else picking them up comes late. Check with their teacher about the best time to arrive in the afternoon.

Keep routines

Kindergarten children can get very tired at night because they are doing so many new and exciting things. For this reason it helps if you keep routines like bath time, meals and reading time as regular as possible. A good sleep each night is important.



Writing notes

If your child has missed school, you can write a note with the following information:

- include your child's name and class
- include the date/s and number of days your child was away
- explain why your child was away
- include other information as needed.

If your child is going to be away for more than three days please let the school office know. You will still need to write a note when your child returns.

For proforma notes and translated information in 34 languages see

School Attendance

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/translated-documents>

Getting to and from school safely

Please remember to cross at the school crossing holding your child's hand. Streets around schools are very busy in the mornings and afternoons. Please do not stop or park your car on or near any pedestrian crossing and observe all safety and no stopping signs.

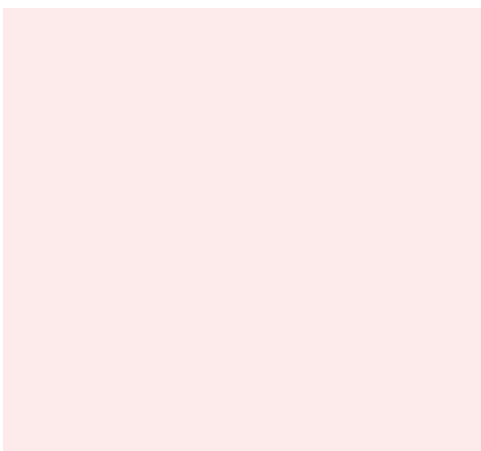
Gifted and talented

Gifted and talented children have above average potential in one or more areas of intellectual, creative, social or physical ability. Opportunities exist in all NSW public schools for gifted and talented children. Please contact your school to talk with the principal about the programs offered.

Students with special needs

If your child has a disability or any special needs, please inform the principal as early as possible. The Department of Education and Training provides a range of specialist services to support students with a disability.

Students who experience difficulties in learning, such as students with significant learning difficulties, mild intellectual disabilities and language disorders, are supported through the Learning Assistance Program in their school.



You can visit, phone or email the school to discuss any matter that concerns you. Interpreters may be available if requested.





Caring for students

It is important that you and your child know that there is always someone at school to help them. Schools have also developed successful programs that support students and keep them safe.

Keeping children safe and happy

Your school will tell you when the school grounds are supervised, procedures for pick-ups and other ways they ensure children are looked after at all times.

Teachers

Teachers in NSW public schools are tertiary trained and professional. They are sensitive to the needs of young children and will be there to help and guide them. Your child's teacher will let you know the best way to keep in touch with them and find out about your child's progress. Keep your child's teacher informed of any changes in your child's life that may impact on their work or enjoyment of school.

School counsellors

School counsellors are experienced teachers who are also qualified psychologists with post-graduate qualifications in school counselling. They can help students who are having difficulties at school or home. They can also help families to access services outside of school if needed. You usually need to make an appointment with the school counsellor by phoning the school.

Anti-bullying environment

All public schools actively prevent bullying by having programs such as peer support that encourage appropriate behaviour, build self-esteem and respect for others. Schools also have plans in place to deal with bullying or harassment and school staff are trained to deal with these situations. You can get a copy of your school's anti-bullying plan from the school office.

Additional care

Public schools provide other support staff where these are needed.

These positions include:

- support teachers for students with learning difficulties
- English as a second language (ESL) teachers
- community information and liaison officers
- Aboriginal education officers.



If you notice a major change in your child's behaviour or you have any worries about your child and their schooling you can speak to your child's teacher, school counsellor or principal. It is always best to raise any concerns as early as possible.

Head lice

It is common for school children to get head lice at some time and it has nothing to do with being clean or dirty. Head lice can spread when children are in close contact, but head lice do not cause any harm to your child's health.

To prevent your child getting head lice:

- check your child's hair regularly
- keep long hair tied back.

If your child has head lice:

- remove tangles with a large comb, then comb hair with a thick, white hair conditioner using a fine-tooth comb to get rid of head lice and their eggs (nits) daily until there are no more eggs
- continue to send your child to school
- inform the school so they can inform others to check their children's hair; your child does not have to be identified
- schools sometimes hold a "nit busting" day to quickly put an end to nits in the school.

For translated information see

Head lice parent information sheet

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/translated-documents/head-lice-treatment-options-information-for-parents>



What happens if your child is sick?

At school

If your child gets sick or is injured at school, the school will contact you and seek the necessary medical attention. If your child is mildly ill they will go to sick bay, usually near the school office, where they can lie down and be monitored. You will be called to come and collect your child from school if they are too sick to go back to the classroom. For this reason you should always keep your current contact details with the school.

At home

Keep your child away from school and see your doctor if your child has:

- a fever of 38°C or above
- vomiting or diarrhoea
- severe cold or flu symptoms
- rashes of an unknown origin.

Sun safety

Schools try to protect children at school from the damaging effects of the sun's rays by providing shelters where possible and having hats as part of the school uniform. Your child's hat must be worn when they are on the playground or they will have to play in the shade. Children can also wear sunglasses at school to protect their eyes from sun damage.

At home, apply sunscreen each morning before your child leaves for school as part of their regular routine.

Medical issues

If your child has any medical conditions, allergies, is at risk of anaphylaxis or requires the administration of prescribed medications, the school must be informed. This information will usually be provided as part of the enrolment process, however it is also important that you inform the school of any changes to your child's health.

Allergies

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction to foods such as nuts or shellfish, or insect bites. If your child is diagnosed with a severe allergy to a particular food it is important to inform the school principal as early as possible so that strategies can be put in place that help to minimise exposure to the known allergen. You may be asked to assist the school canteen manager in a review of the canteen menu for example.





Healthy school days

Your child needs healthy food for energy and concentration at school. The food your child eats for breakfast will need to sustain them through the morning until recess and then they need a range of healthy foods for recess and lunch to get them through the school day.

Eating at school

Eating at school will be a different experience for your child compared with eating at home or at preschool. There are no places to keep food hot or cold. Children often sit on the grass or on benches and balance their food on their knees. They will also need to be able to open everything that their food is wrapped in and they won't want to spend so much time eating that they miss out on playing.

Tips to help your child

- Pack food that is easy to open, easy to eat and not messy.
- Write their name on their lunch box, water bottle and any other containers.
- Include a frozen drink bottle to keep food cold. Wrap it in a tea towel in case it leaks.
- Use insulated lunch boxes or cooler bags.
- Avoid using plastic wrap because children find it hard to pull apart.
- Pack tissues or paper around fruit so it won't bruise.
- Remind your child to wash their hands before eating and to use the toilet at recess and lunch.
- If you make lunches the night before, store them in the fridge until school time.
- Pack a water bottle for your child each day and remind them that they can also get water from the taps or bubblers throughout the day.

Recess and lunch ideas

- Cut fruit into pieces (squeeze a little lemon on apples, pears or bananas to stop them going brown) and put them in a small container.
- Cut up vegetables such as carrots, celery and cucumber and put them in a snap-lock plastic bag. In a separate container put dips or yoghurt to dip carrots in.
- Make wholemeal muffins and freeze them. Pack a muffin each day for recess or keep at home for an afternoon snack.
- Frozen orange quarters and pineapple rings are refreshing treats in summer.
- Try different breads, such as rolls, pita, wholegrain or tortilla wraps.
- If using tomato, slice thinly and place between other fillings to stop the sandwich going soggy.
- Cook a little extra dinner and save some for lunch the next day. Quiche, homemade pizza slices, vegetable patties, roast vegetables, noodle salads or sausages could be used.

When lunches come home

Don't be too worried if your child doesn't eat lunch to start with. Sometimes children are too excited or too busy having fun playing with their friends at mealtimes and may not eat all their food.

If your child is very hungry after school you may want to remind them about eating their lunch. Your child's eating habits will eventually settle into a routine.



What your child will learn at school

Most time in Kindergarten is spent developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. There are six subjects known as Key Learning Areas studied throughout primary school.

These are:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Creative Arts
- Human Society and Its Environment
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

A Kindergarten classroom

Kindergarten classrooms are happy and exciting places. Children might do puzzles with friends on the floor, play in a cubby house, listen to their teacher read a book or sit at a desk to write and draw. They will learn about numbers, shapes, patterns and science, sing, visit the library, use computers and be involved in many other activities.



Telephone Interpreter Service

If you would like further information please contact your school. If you need an interpreter to assist you please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on telephone 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. The operator will call the school and the interpreter will stay on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

Translated School Information

Find school information translated into many languages at:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/translated-documents>



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