



Starting School

What can I do to help my child get ready for school?

Transition from Home to School Project
DEC/Families NSW

Helping my child learn to read and write.

'Talking and listening' is a foundational aspect of the literacy curriculum and is also the foundation for a child learning to read and write. Language is the currency of learning and the key to literacy. Reading and writing is simply the visual representation of language. Children need to have a strong language base to draw upon in order to help them to learn to read. Talking, reading and singing with your child provides them with strong foundations for school. This can be in your native tongue or in English. Here are some practical suggestions to help you.

Play and Talk

Play is the foundation of children's learning. Encouraging your children to play and playing with them is probably the most important thing you can do to help them prepare for school.



Play helps children to develop language and communication skills, social skills, literacy skills, numeracy skills, problem solving skills, the list goes on and on.

Some suggestions for play

- ball games,
- balance activities,
- climbing or crawling games.



These activities help to develop the large muscles and will help to build your child's strength and endurance.



The activities listed below help to build the small muscles in the hands and will help your child when learning to write. They also help develop language skills, counting and number skills, social skills and so on.



- peg boards,
- puzzles,
- threading,
- finger plays,
- finger painting,
- sand play,



- playdough,
- shaving cream,
- gloop,
- duplo or leggo,
- blocks.



The activities below help to build language which is the foundation to reading

- rhymes
- story telling
- imaginative play - shops, cars, dolls, dressups
- puppets
- boardgames (especially turn taking games)
- matching and memory games etc.



All of these activities help children learn and are **FUN!**





Provide books and reading material



If you have a positive **attitude** towards books and learning so will your children. Reading material may be in your first language, it may be newspapers or magazines, it may be picture books or it may be stories you like to make up with your children. Spending time reading with your child and letting them see you read is the important thing.

Encouraging your child to have some quiet times will also help them to prepare for the formal structures of school. Children will need to sit quietly, listen and attend to the teacher for longer periods of time than they may have been used to before starting school. There will also be new rules and structures that they may not be used to and so having these quiet times at home will help in their adjustment to the new school environment.



Helping My Child Develop Numeracy Skills



Maths is everywhere!

Utilise everyday opportunities to help your child learn about numbers. When you are playing, at the dinner table, shopping, driving in the car, going for a walk, on a picnic or at the beach there are plenty of opportunities to talk about numbers, shapes, colours, days and dates. These are all mathematical concepts and will help your child Develop math skills at school. Some ideas to help you at home are:



Talking about numbers

- "How old are you? Show me how many fingers."
- "How old will you be next birthday?"
- "What does your number look like?"
- "Let's count how many candles on the cake - 1,2,3,4,5."



Playing

There can be all sorts of opportunities when children are playing to teach mathematical language and concepts.

- "How many blocks do you have"
- "How tall is your tower?"
- "Can you make a long train?"
- "What colour is this?"
- "Let's make a pattern. We have red, green, red, green, what comes next?"
- "What shape is this?"



"Can we put this on top, under, below, beside, next to etc?"
(position)



Cooking

This can be a great time to talk about numbers and measurement.

"How much do we need?"

"Now we need half a cup."

"Let's add a little more."

"This cake is smaller, this is bigger."



There are lots of opportunities in the kitchen to introduce maths ideas. These can be fun and provide opportunities for you and your children to enjoy spending time together.



Mealtimes

Counting the sausages, vegetables etc. on the plate.

Sharing the pizza, chocolate etc. - **Dividing**

"There are 4 of us here so we will cut this into 4 pieces. That means we can have $\frac{1}{4}$ each."



Shopping

This can be real shopping or pretend shopping at home.

This introduces children to the concept and value of money. It also is an opportunity to count objects, to weigh things, to talk about numbers, to share and so on.

"How much does this cost?"

"What does that money look like?"



Time, Days and Dates

Talking about the time of day can help children to develop an understanding of the concept of time. Understanding the concept of a second, a minute, an hour, a day can be difficult for children to grasp.

It may also help them to adapt to the pattern of their day when they begin school.

e.g. "It is 9 o'clock now, you will be going into school now."

"It is 11 o'clock now, it will be your little lunch time."

"It is 1 o'clock now, that will be **BIG** lunch time"

"It's 3 o'clock, time for you to come home now!"



Talking about days of the week and months of the year will also help your children's maths skills development.

You may like to:

1. Count the days until Christmas.
2. Mark the day your child begins school on a calendar.
3. Mark their birthday on a calendar and talk about when they have their birthday.

Make a social story of the daily routine ie: take photos of morning routine - having breakfast, getting dressed, brushing teeth and hair, what time to leave for school etc. It could be made into a booklet or a chart for reminding when school starts