PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

Promote independence and self help skills

- Encourage your child to dress themselves (leaving plenty of time for them to do this will save parent frustration).
- Let your child answer questions from others without an adult intervening or answering for the child because it is quicker.
- Avoid saying things like, “I am going to miss you? Will you miss me?” This can make even the most ready child a little anxious and wondering why mum or dad is upset.
- Give your child practise in conversation and thinking about things eg. How do you think this might work? How might we solve this?
- Give your child practise at making some choices and following through with their decision.
- Talk about school in a matter of fact way, not making it too much of a huge thing but being positive.
- Try to avoid the big countdown, eg. It’s only 50 more sleeps until school often becomes an anti-climax and may cause anxiety for your child.
- Make everyday things an exploration of language – ask questions, listen carefully to their answers, and encourage the child to ask why.
- Encourage your child’s natural curiosity – do different things with them, encourage them to try different ways of doing things. Make a walk in the park a nature tour.
- Encourage your child to mix with other children in different supervised activities so they learn to socialise with their peers, take turns and share their toys and books.
- If your child says they can’t do something, ask questions such as “How else might we try? What else could we do? What might work?” Resilience enables children to believe they can attempt to solve problems, to have a go, to take risks and to believe in their own competence.
- Give your child practise with their lunch box and pop up drink bottle - make sure they can open and close their lunch box.
- Encourage your child to use the toilet appropriately.
**Promote a sense of belonging and contribution to a group**

- Set a few simple jobs for the child such as setting the table or collecting the mail.
- Ensure a regular bed time and routine before bed. If children are revved up, over excited or over stimulated in the hour before bed, they are more likely to find it difficult to calm down and settle at night.
- Ensure consistent routines, a relaxed bath time, a story together, a chat about the day are all part of the process of going to bed. Allowing time of about one hour for these things rather than a mad rush just before the designated bed time helps build a pattern and predictability for the child. Children love to have time to talk and read with their parents at the end of the day when it is quiet and relaxed. It is a lovely way to finish a day for the child and parent.
- Avoid too much TV and video games. Children need rest time and quiet times.
- Give your child time and familiarity with the school uniform. Don’t save it until the first day. Let them be comfortable with it and be able to dress themselves.

**ONCE YOUR CHILD IS AT SCHOOL**

- On the first day – and forever after – be on time. This is important for children. It helps settle them into class and not disrupt others or themselves. The start of the day is the most important. Ensure you have routines in the morning.
- Don’t be late picking your child up. A few minutes can seem a long time when you are not very sure of yourself. Organise a pick up point with your child.
- Encourage your child to carry their own bag.
- Ensure healthy lunches and snacks (water in pop top water bottles).
- Some children want to tell you all about their day as soon as you pick them up so, make time for you child after school if they need it, or as soon as you get home if you work. Some children, however, like some time by themselves before they want company.
- Listen, don’t ask too many questions. Children will talk when they are ready. Bedtime is usually a good listening time.
- Children are often very hungry after school. A healthy snack straight after can make up for a missed lunch due to excitement or anxiety. In the first few weeks they might be too tired to really want to eat by dinner time.
- Be flexible in the early days of school. Children may be tired and grumpy for a while until they settle in.
- Keep to routines that allow time for rest and free play. Don’t arrange too many after school activities or have too many things to do on the way home eg. shopping.
- Try to avoid too many extracurricular activities as children will be mentally, physically and emotionally tired.

- Some children, when they first start school, find it so stressful that they don’t want to go. They may get tummy aches or be very tearful in the mornings. Try not to let them see that you are worried. Let them know that you believe that they can manage to go to school and you will help them. Ask him what they think would help eg. sometimes going with another parent instead of you is a help. For another child having something small of yours to mind while at school will help.

- It helps if you read stories to children even after they can read themselves. Bedtime is also a good time to read stories.

- If your child is really upset or if you are worried talk to the teacher.

- Children love their parents to help out and visit the classroom and it helps build a relationship between you and the teacher.

- Sometimes the first few days are quite difficult for some parents and children with separation anxiety. Trust the teacher’s judgement and be assured that if your child is particularly distressed, you will be contacted immediately.

**REMEMBER**

Starting school is a big step for children and it takes time to get used to it.

Children do best at school when their parents and teachers support each other.

Let the teacher know if anything is happening to your family that might upset your child at school.

Tell the teacher when you are pleased with what is happening at school and when you are concerned.

Ensure your child is on time, arrives relatively stress-free each day and attends regularly.

Our aim is to make the Prep environment a safe and nurturing place where you child is happy and ready to learn.

We hope that some of these suggestions help you and your child enjoy a smooth transition to Kennington Primary School.

We look forward to working with you.

Regards,
The Prep Teachers