

School Readiness



Readiness is what we call the things that assist children to be successful at school. Readiness is not an event that happens at a certain time, it is a process that every child moves through at their own pace’.

When considering a child’s readiness for school, families should be encouraged to make decisions based on their child’s needs, skills, and interests. Developing knowledge and skills in the areas of numeracy (numbers and counting) and literacy (reading and writing) are helpful, however not essential.

Emotional and Social development is crucial for school readiness, and it is highly important for children to have good social skills and be confident learners to set strong foundations for a lifetime of learning.

The Department of Education sets an age when your child should start school.

To enrol in government school, a child must turn 5 before 30 April of the year they will start school, however the law in Victoria states that children must attend school by the age of 6.

Age is usually the first consideration for parents when deciding about when their child will start school, however, some families may have some queries about whether your child is ready to start school even if they are the “right” age.

Kindergartens and Early Learning Centres can support families with any queries they may have about ‘school readiness’.

To decide about school readiness, you may want to consider:

- **Language skills:** communication is used to form relationships that will help to teach your child. A child needs to be able to follow instructions and understand what teachers are saying, as well as being able to communicate their own thoughts and feelings.
- **Physical well-being:** a child who has a disability or a chronic illness may have difficulty with some aspects of school. This does not automatically mean they are not ready for school, but any physical or functional limitations need to be considered.
- **Motor co-ordination and skills:** a child needs co-ordination skills to allow them to dress and undress, unwrap lunch, use a pencil and scissors, and participate in other activities that require eye hand and motor co-ordination.
- **Concentration and emotional adjustment:** a child needs to be able to socialise and play with others. They also need to be able to adjust to a more structured, but still flexible learning environment, which may include a focus on tasks and follow directions or instructions from teachers.
- **Independence:** a child needs a range of skills so that they manage things with no or minimum support. This includes going to the toilet, eating snacks/lunch, dressing, or following simple routines.

Simple tips activities that you can do to help your child get ready for school are listed below:

Talk with your child

Talking with your child about how their day was and what they enjoyed the most.

Talking about kindergarten/school is an easy way to support them and find out how they are feeling.

Talk topics may include:

- What are they looking forward to about going to school?
- What do they want to learn at school?
- Talk about all their new friends at school
- Discussion about your own happy memories of being at school.



Read with your child

Reading with your child is special. Whilst reading you are bonding with your child, as well as supporting their learning growth. Reading books should be a pleasurable daily shared activity.

Sharing books with your child:

- builds their reading skills
- builds their language
- encourages a lifelong love of reading
- grows their understanding of the world.



Ask your local library for any books about starting school.

Practise Independence

When your child starts school, they will build their independence. At school, your child will look after their things and follow daily routines.

You can support your child's independence by:

- helping them choose a lunchbox they can open and close. Also select food items that are wrapper free, or if items do have wrappers, ensure they can open them independently
- Teach them use the toilet and wash their hands
- Put on their uniform (taking their jumpers off and/or putting them on)
- Talk about how and who to ask if they need help



Encourage play experiences

Your child explores the world through play. Play supports your child's learning.

Encourage your child to explore their world by:

- Doing simple puzzles
- Playing games like dressing up / role play
- Listening to a favourite song and sing or dance along
- Digging or planting in the garden
- Going to the park and exploring it
- Participate in art or craft activities



Make Friends

Starting school is a great chance to make more friends. Your child will feel more settled starting school when they have a friend in their class.

Help your child meet new friends by:

- Practise social skills like sharing, taking turns, cooperating, listening and working through any concerns or issues.
- Go along to orientation sessions before starting school.
- Find out if any children from your child's kindergarten or early learning centre are going to the same school and consider meeting up for extra play 'dates'.



Build confidence

Children who enjoy their start to school become more confident when they can do or join in with activities.

You can help build your child's confidence by:

- Following a routine (for example, get up early, get dressed and eat a healthy breakfast together)
- Practising putting on socks and shoes
- Encouraging your child to keep trying even if they find something a little 'tricky' or difficult
- Celebrate when your child does well and give them plenty of positive reinforcement
- Check health and wellbeing



Check Health & Wellbeing

Your child may have mixed feelings about starting school. Often children feel excited and happy about starting school, but also be mixed with sad feelings and may worry about what school will be like.

You can support your child's health and wellbeing by:

- Getting your child's eyes, ears and teeth checked
- Check your child's immunisation are up to date
- Ensure your child's medical details are up to date, for example, A current asthma management plan
- Talk about how they are feeling and why this might be, especially if you notice a change in them
- Making time to rest before school starts and over the first few weeks is critical



Create Strong Partnerships

Help your child's new teachers get to know your child. Your child's teachers can then support your child's learning, engagement and wellbeing needs when they start school.

Talk to your child's teachers about:

- What your child is interested in
- How you feel your child learns
- Any goals you have for your child
- How your child acts in social situations
- You can also ask your child's teacher what they are learning at school and how to support this at home

