

Transition to Prep for children with disability

Fact sheet for families – Prep routines

Starting school is an important time in the lives of children and families. A strong start can help your child develop a lifelong love of learning.

The Department's *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student* is our strategy for every state school student, focusing on educational achievement, wellbeing and engagement, and culture and inclusion. A key school priority outlined in the strategy is a strong start in the early years.

The first year of school (Prep) is full of new and exciting experiences. It is important that schools and families work in partnership to ensure that all children have a positive and confident transition to school.

There are many things for schools and families to consider when a child starts Prep. The school needs to be ready for all children, including planning for and implementing reasonable adjustments for students with disability.

When you enrol your child in Prep, the school will discuss reasonable adjustments and strategies to support your child's success and wellbeing at school. Your input is highly valuable as all children are unique and have different interests, needs and motivations. You know your child best.

Children will develop familiarity and confidence in school routines and learning/social behaviours at their own pace. Take time to talk to your child about starting school and the routines your child is likely to experience at school, for example: playing with new friends, going to the library, where to store their bag and learning new skills. It is okay if your child is unable to do things at the same rate as their peers.

Your child will participate in a school-based transition to Prep program. This is an opportunity for your child to become familiar with school routines, develop learning/social behaviours and build connections with staff and peers. You can support your child to be prepared for the routines that will become part of everyday life at school. These will be modelled during the transition to Prep program.

Your child's school may also provide you with additional resources. For example, a visual transition booklet that you can use with your child prior to school to help your child feel safe, confident and welcome in their new environment.



Speak to your child's Prep teacher or the school principal, if you feel your child would benefit from having additional resources.

Here are some ways you can help your child at this important time.

Your child: Make time to talk to your child about how they are feeling about starting Prep and try to adjust routines at home to match their moods and energy levels. Help your child to build their confidence by finding answers to their questions together – these are known as 'what will I do' scenarios.

From home to school: Help the Prep teacher get to know your child. Talk to the teacher about your child's interests, goals for your child and how your child learns. This includes providing information to the school about your child's individual strengths, capabilities and needs. Your child's allied health professionals team will be able to provide you with information about supports and strategies that may assist at school.

From Kindergarten (Kindy) to school: Going to Kindy is an important way to help children develop a range of new skills that will help them as they move into school. Kindy helps your child build confidence, make friends, and develop a love of learning. You can ask your child's teacher about starting school and about your child's transition statement. Sharing your child's kindy transition statement with their new school will help the teacher learn about your child's strengths and interests, and will support their planning to make your child's transition a positive one.

From a State Delivered Kindergarten (SDK) to school: Some selected state schools deliver a Kindy program. For children registered at a SDK, staff can work with you to support their transition to Prep (in that same school or a



future school) and ensure the right reasonable adjustments are in place to ensure the successful participation in Kindy and into school.

From an Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) to school: For children registered at an ECDP, staff can work with your child's future school to support their transition to Prep and ensure the right reasonable adjustments are in place from their first day of school. ECDP staff can also work with your child's kindy.



The following are ideas to help you build your child's confidence for Prep

Practise skills that will help your child to manage everyday routines at school.

Encourage your child to work independently toward completing one or more of the range of skills below:

- opening snack packets, lifting the lid off the yoghurt container, opening and closing the lid of their drink bottle, opening and closing their lunch box
- getting dressed in their school uniform with minimal support and trying to put on socks and shoes, and tucking socks into school shoes to avoid lost socks
- managing personal care routines such as using the toilet, washing hands and wiping/blowing their nose
- wearing their school hat when outside
- carrying their own school bag and recognising personal possessions.

Tip: Get your child to practise opening a lunch box on the floor, a bench and in the park. Children at school generally have to manage this task on their own.

Discuss 'what will I do' scenarios with your child to help build their confidence.

- My yoghurt tipped and went into my sock. What will I do?
- My drink has leaked into my lunchbox. What will I do?
- I feel hungry or thirsty. What will I do?

- I dropped my sandwich on the ground. What will I do?
- I can't find the lid for my snack box. What will I do?
- I feel sick. What will I do?
- I need to go to the toilet. What will I do?
- I wet my pants. What will I do?
- I've got no one to play with. What will I do?

Tip: Place a wet wipe, face washer or a sheet of kitchen towel in your child's lunchbox to help them clean up spills.

Plan ahead so you feel more confident about your child starting Prep.

- School bags and hats all look the same. Choose a bag tag with your child that they like and will remember.
- Label your child's clothing and hat with clearly printed fabric name tags. Make sure your child knows where the tag is located on their clothes.
- Wash your child's uniform a few times when new as they often feel scratchy.
- Place a spare set of clothes or a spare school uniform at the bottom of your child's school bag in a plastic bag.
- At the beginning of the year, check the school policy regarding food at school. Talk to your child about snacks containing nuts or other common allergens, in case there is a student in your child's class with an allergy.
- If your child attends an outside school hours care (OSHC) program, laminate a picture of the OSHC building and place it in your child's lunch box on the day they are attending.
- If your child's school has a drop off and pick up zone, discuss what will happen with your child at the beginning and start of each school day. For example, a designated staff member or parent helper will accompany children from the Prep classroom to the pickup zone. Check the specific routine with your child's school.



Other helpful information

Queensland Government – Department of Education – podcasts for parents

<https://qed.qld.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media/podcasts/tips-for-parents>

Early childhood education and care – Transition to school

<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/early-years/transitions/moving-to-school>

Supporting successful transitions to school for families (factsheet)

<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/earlyYears/Documents/transitions-info-families.pdf>

Starting school – Tips to support your child (brochure)

<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/earlyYears/Documents/transitions-starting-school-brochure.pdf>

Early Childhood Australia – Parent resources

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/parent-resources/>

Community Resource Unit – Inclusive education and transition fact sheets

<https://cru.org.au/resources/factsheets/inclusive-education/>

Ready. Set. School! – Parent resources – Reimagine Australia

<https://reimagine.org.au/practitioner/transition-to-school/>

Transition tools – Raising Children Network

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/school-play-work>



Planning for Prep

Things I need to do	Information to gather to share with the school