

School Readiness

Where do I start?

There are many ways to help your child thrive when they start 'big' school.

A great way to kick off your child's formal education is to understand the school culture and what your child is doing in the classroom. It can give you peace of mind and your child sound directions in their learning for life.



This handy guide will help with the following questions:

- When should my child start school?
- What should my child know before they go to Kindergarten?
- How can I help my child cope with Kindergarten?
- Where can I get support for my child or family?
- Resources

Kindergarten Orientation

Most schools have orientation days towards the end of the previous year to welcome children to kindergarten. Many schools also have transition to Kindergarten programs over several weeks in the second part of the year.

At Soldiers' Settlement we have a transition program to assist our students with getting used to Kindergarten routines.

Starting School

Starting school is an important step in a young child's life and 'Is my child ready for school?' is a question asked by many parents.



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When should my child start

When to start school

Your child can start Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn five on or before 31 July in that year. By law, all children must be enrolled in school by their sixth birthday.



When to enrol

Kindergarten enrolment begins around April the year before your child will start Kindergarten. Schools will often advertise when they are taking enrolments or you can contact the school you are interested in attending to find out about enrolling your child.

The school year starts in late January after the summer vacation period. The [school calendar](#) lists school term dates.

When to start your child at school is an individual decision. You may want to discuss this with us or with your child's pre-school teacher, carer or doctor. Our teachers are trained to work with your child regardless of their age or level of development.

Children develop at different rates and learn skills in different ways. It is the school's task to respond to the needs, learning styles and rates of progress of individual students.



Specialist Support

Specialist advice and support is available to parents/caregivers of [children with disabilities](#) to help them access appropriate educational services. Talk to the school as early as possible about these services.

You may also consider speaking to the ESL teacher at your chosen school, the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer or the Aboriginal Education Assistant and the Special Education Consultant.

Download [Getting ready for school - a guide for parents of a child with disability](#) (PDF 423kB).



Who can I talk to?

Parents/caregivers of students starting kindergarten often want further information and advice about whether their child is ready to start school. There are a number of education professionals who may be able to offer guidance about your child's specific needs.

Parents/caregivers are encouraged to speak to their child's pre-school or day care teacher or carer, the school principal, school counsellor, school K-2 supervisor and the Kindergarten teacher at school.



- Preparing for Kindergarten

Preparing for Kindergarten

Parents/caregivers can do a lot to help prepare their child for Kindergarten before the big 'first day'. Below is a list of skills that will be useful for children starting Kindergarten. We recognise that not all children will have these skills as everyone develops at a different pace, so this is intended only as a guide so that starting school may be just a little easier.

Encourage your child to attempt the things mentioned below, but don't worry if your child can't do all of them. Talk to the Kindergarten teacher, and together you can support and assist your child's learning.



How can I help?

Language

- talks to other people about familiar objects and events
- answers and asks simple questions
- makes needs known
- follows simple instructions
- uses books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- identifies pictures in books, magazines, on television or video
- uses a variety of things (pens, pencils, textas, paintbrushes, sticks in the dirt) to draw, to scribble or to write
- joins in singing familiar songs

Physical Skills



- uses scissors to cut along a straight line
- enjoys a variety of indoor and outdoor play
- can put on and take off jumpers, shoes, socks inde-

Mathematics

- recognises that numbers can be used to count
- uses words such as many, a lot, more, less
- identifies things in a group that are different
- sees differences in shapes
- differentiates between opposites - up and down, under and over, in front and behind, day

Personal/Social Skills

- uses the toilet independently
- can say own name and address
- adapts to unfamiliar settings and new experiences
- can finish a task, and tidies up afterwards
- plays cooperatively with other children - shares and takes turns
- can sit still to listen to a story for a few minutes



Soldiers' Settlement Public School

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Learning • Respect • Responsibility

29-39 Menin Road Matraville NSW 2036

P.O.Box 507 Matraville NSW 2036

ph 9311 1175 • fx 9661 4232

matravilss-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

www.matravilss-p.schools.nsw.edu.au



Learning is a partnership

Developing a partnership with the school is a great way to enhance your child's learning experiences, says Ruth Goldstein, an experienced Kindergarten teacher in the Southern Highlands.

"Research shows that parental involvement impacts positively on a child's education, so volunteer for things like the canteen or reading groups and certainly become a member of the P&C, which is a great way for working parents to support their child at school," Ruth says.

"Children see parents walk into the school and see that mum and dad value education. That sends a really loud message to them.

Arriving on time is also important. Arriving late continually at school causes great anxiety for a little child in their first year of school. They have to walk in, they're anxious about their school day anyway, all eyes are on them. It also sends a message to them that school's not really important enough to be on time for."

Parents are role models for their child's attitude to school and your child will copy your behaviour, Ruth says.

"If you're anxious, they'll be anxious too, and if you're unhappy with any aspect of the school your child will follow that cue," she says. "If you do have concerns, make a time to meet with your child's teacher. The end of the day is preferable to the start because most teachers are preparing in the mornings for the busy day ahead."

