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**HELLO
KINDERGARTEN!**

Kindergarten



What to expect when your child
starts Kindergarten.

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This booklet is for you as your child starts Kindergarten.

It takes you through what happens in a typical day in Kindergarten and includes ideas to help settle your child into school.

As your child's first teacher, the role you play is vital. The early years of school build on the experiences your child has at home and sets the foundation for all their future learning.

There are lots of things you can do to support your child's learning.

This booklet gives you ideas of what you can do at home to add to the exciting things your child is learning each day at Kindergarten.

Discover our range of online booklets and factsheets filled with fun ideas and activities you can do at home with your child.

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YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL JOURNEY

Children learn many important things before they start school.

They learn from you at home, from friends and family, in local playgroups, at Child and Parent Centres, and at child/family daycare if they attend. They bring all of this learning with them to school when they start Kindergarten.

Children learn best when they are supported by their families. The more you are involved in your child's learning and the more you talk with the teacher, the better you can both support your child. A strong partnership with the school and regular contact with the teacher makes sure your child gets the best start to school.

In Kindergarten, your child continues to build on the important skills they have developed with you at home. These skills may include your child being able to talk about things that interest them; draw pictures; pretend write; recognise colours, numbers, sizes and shapes; and share with others.

Your enthusiasm helps your child settle into Kindergarten and be proud of the things they learn each day.





EARLY EXPERIENCES AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Children's brains are a 'work in progress!'

In the first few years of life, your child's brain grows rapidly. The experiences you have with your child during these years are extremely important. A fun, happy and safe environment at home, school and within the school community helps your child develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.

Play is particularly important in childhood learning. Play gives children opportunities to develop imagination, practise skills, communicate with others, take on challenges and solve problems in fun and enjoyable ways.

Singing, playing games, building, playing make believe, talking, climbing, dancing, reading, writing and drawing all help your child's brain develop ways of thinking and learning.

KINDERGARTEN: BEGINNING THE SCHOOL JOURNEY

Magical. This is often how families describe Kindergarten classrooms. Rooms are filled with children's work, colourful posters and interesting displays for everyone to see. There is a range of activity areas where your child can discover, imagine, create and learn through play.

Kindergarten is the first learning experience your child has of school – of the wonder and excitement of learning, discovery and exploration.

While Kindergarten is not compulsory in Western Australia, attendance is highly recommended as your child builds on important social and emotional skills that help them throughout their school life. They also develop early maths, speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

Many schools hold parent information sessions before the school year starts or during the first few weeks of term. This gives you the opportunity to meet the teacher and other families, and to find out what is planned for the year. If you are unable to attend, contact the school or talk with the teacher to make another time to meet.

Your child's teacher often sends home written information and it is important to take the time to read these messages.

If you show you are confident and happy about school, your child picks up on this. This is important in encouraging a love of learning and enthusiasm for going to school each day.

Be sun smart! Make sure your child has a hat and wears sunscreen every day.





What happens during the day?

Kindergarten runs for 15 hours each week. Some schools run a combination of full and half days each week, while others run only half days or only full days. Talk with your school to find out how the program is set up.

Some schools encourage children to wear the school uniform in Kindergarten. For further information, contact your school to check its uniform policy and where to buy uniform items.

The teacher plans regular breaks each day so your child can eat and play. Some schools may ask you to contribute fruit and healthy snacks which are shared with all children at snack time.

If your child is in a full day Kindergarten program, pack a healthy lunch in wrappers and containers so they can open them easily and eat lunch by themselves. Self management is a very important skill that your child learns at this time.

Your child's teacher may encourage you to join in at the start of each day. This is a great way to settle your child into the routine as well as to see your child's work and talk about what they do during the day.

If someone else is collecting your child after school – such as a grandparent or a carer – please let your child's teacher know. Teachers make sure each child is collected by someone they know each day so it is important to keep the school informed.

WHAT WILL MY CHILD LEARN?

In a carefully planned learning environment, your child experiences many different learning activities.

These include cutting, painting, gluing, drawing, dressing up, sand play, climbing, storytelling, singing, dancing, exploring and social activities such as making new friends.

The social and emotional development of your child is a very important part of planned learning. Their teacher plans activities and encourages them to be involved so they become successful learners, team players, good problem solvers and creative thinkers who enjoy challenges.

Another focus in Kindergarten is on language and literacy. Your child develops an early understanding of letters, sounds and rhyming words; as well as how pictures can tell stories, how written words can be read, and how spoken sounds can be written down.

Learning about maths and numeracy is also a key part of Kindergarten. Your child learns about numbers and shapes, counting, measuring and the many different ways maths is used in our daily lives.

Teachers take into account children's experiences and backgrounds to make sure learning programs are targeted to meet their individual needs.



Your child will develop strong literacy skills by having books read to them, by sharing stories and by learning songs and rhymes. They will learn to identify words and syllables, and describe objects, tell stories and recognise print such as their written name. These skills will help with reading and writing in the future.

IN KINDERGARTEN...

Writing

Your child becomes aware that spoken words can be written down. Their writing may show randomly placed letters or scribbles that look similar to what they see as writing. Encourage all their efforts!

Sounds

Your child starts to identify sounds in words, especially the first sound in a word. They may then identify the last sound in a word. Your child also begins to recognise some letters and words, such as signs and names of shops, and learn sound-letter connections.

Measurement

Your child develops and uses the language of measurement such as: *tall, short, heavy* and *light*. They use the everyday language of time such as: *quick, slow* and *fast*, and are able to use terms such as: *before, after* and *next* to discuss the timing of familiar events.

Sorting

Your child begins to sort objects by size, shape and colour, and group similar kinds of toys together such as cars and blocks.

Numbers

Your child begins to play games that help them learn about numbers and join in with stories and songs that encourage counting.

Reading

Your child becomes interested in books and the pictures and words in them. Reading stories, saying and singing nursery rhymes, poems and songs, and making up actions are all part of Kindergarten.

Shapes

Your child learns about shapes and sizes by comparing and building.

Time

Your child may remember simple sequences and follow steps in their daily routine.

In Kindergarten, your child learns social skills by playing and sharing with other children. Play allows them to share, take turns and develop their confidence and coordination.





GOING TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY REALLY MATTERS


At school, your child's teacher plans programs and activities that build on previously learned skills.

Developing the habit of going to school regularly from Kindergarten is vital so your child does not miss out on important ideas and skills they need for future learning.

You can help by:

- talking positively about school so your child is happy to go each day
- showing interest in what your child is doing at school and talking with the teacher about what you can do at home
- setting play dates to help your child make friends
- teaching your child how to share and take turns
- arriving at school and collecting your child from school on time
- making sure your child gets nutritious meals each day and enough sleep each night
- making appointments with doctors, dentists and specialists after school or during the school holidays
- taking family holidays during the school holidays and not during term time.

If your child is unwell and unable to go to school, telephone or text the school to let the teacher know. If your child misses a day, talk with the teacher to find out how you can help your child catch up. If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, talk with the teacher.



Taking an interest in what your child does at school, helping in class and being part of the school community show your child how much you value school.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- Read books aloud, point to pictures and talk with your child about the story.
- Draw and write with your child and talk about what you are doing.
- Encourage your child to use trial and error to learn and complete tasks. Be patient and let them have a go.
- Your child begins to hear and see how numbers are used at home and begins to match number names to very small groups of objects just by looking. You can help by talking through what you are doing. For example: *We need four plates, so if I get two plates and then get two more, we'll have four plates.*
- A great way to help with maths skills is through everyday activities – at bath time, when playing outside and while cooking together. Counting with your child using items they can see and touch, measuring items and comparing items help them hear and use maths ideas.
- At this age your child also learns about measurement by using everyday words like: *full* and *empty*, *big* and *small*, *tall* and *short*, and *heavy* and *light*. Using words to describe position such as: *in*, *on* and *under*, and talking about whether something is *near*, *far* and *upside down*, help your child learn about location.
- Number songs and rhymes help your child learn about counting. Spend time together singing songs like: *One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive* and *One, two, buckle my shoe*. Number books that you read together and talk about are also great ways for your child to learn early ideas.



When enrolling in school, make sure you mention if your child has any allergies or medical conditions. If your child has particular requirements check with the school to see what plans it has in place for this. It is also helpful for the teacher to know if your child is seeing a specialist.



MORE IDEAS FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

Talk with your child

At school your child learns about the importance of communication. You can help by talking with your child about the things they do at school. Ask them to explain or describe things that happened during the day. Ask questions to draw out more information if they can't think of anything. Ask 'open' questions so your child answers with more than 'yes' or 'no'. For example: *What was your favourite thing you did at Kindergarten today?* rather than *Did you have fun at Kindergarten today?* Be sure to talk about your day too!

Speak with the teacher

Have regular contact with your child's teacher. Your school has a variety of ways for you to do this. If you want to speak with your child's teacher without interruption, it's best to make an appointment.

Contribute to the class

Your child's teacher may request help with listening to children read, helping children with their writing and artwork, as well as assisting with sporting activities, excursions and special events. You may also want to get involved in the school's parents and citizens' (P&C) association or volunteer at the school canteen.

Teachers often need items for art, craft, maths and science such as buttons, material scraps, sea shells, plastic containers and bottles – the list is endless! Check with the teacher about what items they need.

Read together

Children love being read to. The time you spend reading together helps your child develop a love of books and words. The earlier you start, the better – your child is more prepared for school if they are familiar with language and the many ways it is used.

Your local library is a treasure trove of books and reading materials – let your child pick out those that interest them.



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