

HEALTHY TIPS FOR WHEN YOUR CHILD IS STARTING SCHOOL

◆ Emotional and Social development

- Say goodbye to your child calmly. It is common to have separation problems at first. Be on time to collect your child after school.
- Before starting school play games where your child doesn't always win and there is a small amount of teasing.
- Regressive behaviour (eg bed wetting, thumb sucking, wanting to be dressed and fed) is normal when children start school: don't worry.
- Encourage your child's curiosity by asking questions and by encouraging questions in return, talk about experiences.
- Your child may communicate little about his/her day's activities at school. You can learn much by just observing your child's play and listening to their stories.
- Encourage your child to read. It is important your child also sees you reading and writing. Children learn by your example.
- Give your child simple jobs to do at home eg setting the table, picking up after play.
- Your child may develop many friendships in their first year at school. Boys have a new friend depending on the current game they are playing and girls have a new best friend every day.
- Your child should know his/her name and address before starting school.

◆ The ill child

- Teachers need to be aware of any medical conditions or disabilities your child may have eg asthma, diabetes, allergies. Children with asthma, EpiPens and allergies: ensure the school has a management plan that is updated every 12 months or after each hospital admission.
- All children starting Kindergarten are required to provide a record of their immunization status. Think about chickenpox immunization for your child.
- If your child has an infectious disease they are to stay at home for the recommended period.
- If your child is unwell they will recuperate quicker if at home.
- Identify emergency backup for childcare in the event your child is ill or injured.
- Head lice are particularly prevalent in Spring and Autumn. They are spread by direct contact and they love all children. Check your child's head regularly for small eggs about the size of a grain of salt glued to the base of hair shafts. Apply a recommended treatment and notify your child's teacher. Tie your child's hair up or keep it very short.
- Don't forget a visit to the dentist with your child prior to starting school and yearly throughout your child's schooling.



◆ Nutrition

- Good nutrition will have a positive impact on your child's learning.
- Breakfast should be nutritional eg Weetbix, yogurt, toast and a piece of fruit. Turn off the TV in the mornings.
- Pack small, healthy, substantial foods for school that are easy to eat throughout the school day. Encourage your child to have a healthy morning tea. Practice unwrapping school lunches and opening lunchboxes at home prior to starting school.
- Have an early dinner or a nutritional snack after school.

- Don't forget to encourage your child to drink water. Not only is it healthy, but also readily available both at the bubbler and in a recyclable container.
- Don't forget to volunteer for the canteen. Your child will love to see you at school.

◆ **Toileting and self help skills:**

- Encourage your child to wipe his/her own bottom and use the toilet independently.
- Parents need to have a positive attitude towards using public and school toilets to ensure their children use the toilet as required throughout the school day.
- Encourage your child's independence with dressing eg. tying their shoelaces, removing their jumper, buttoning their shirt/uniform.
- Have a male in the family demonstrate to little boys how to stand at the urinal.
- Encourage your child to wash and dry their hands after toileting, after blowing their nose and before eating.
- Encourage your child to blow his/her own nose using a tissue or a handkerchief.
- Clearly label all your child's clothes and belongings with his/her name.



◆ **Activity**

- Turn off the TV after school and visit your local park, swings, slippery dip, play equipment. Play with balls, water, sand, etc.
- Exercise with your child. Physical activity is very important for children and adults. It helps to prevent obesity. Don't forget to wear sunscreen and a hat when outdoors.
- Encourage your child to participate in school activities throughout their schooling.

◆ **Positive attitude from parents re schooling and teachers**

- Be positive about your child's school, learning and teacher.
- Talk with your child about school, focus on the positive aspects.
- Parental involvement in school activities provides children with a sense of belonging.
- Don't forget to take care of yourself eg meet with your friends the first day of school.
- Don't believe all stories your child tells you. Always check with your child's teacher.
- Be prepared for your child to take 1-2 terms to adjust to school.

◆ **Safety:**

- Practice the safest route to and from school, crossing the road safely, travelling by public transport. If driving, park in the safest place.
- Remember parents are role models. It is better to promote safety.

◆ **Sleep**

- Tiredness is to be expected when your child starts school, so establish a routine of early to bed.
- Have "time out" after school. Your child will learn through free play.
- Limit the additional extra-curricular activities after school for the first year.

◆ Children with special needs

- Children with potential difficulties need additional assistance during the transition stage when starting school.
- Specialist advice and support is available to parents of children with special needs in accessing appropriate educational services. Talk to the school as early as possible about access to these services.

◆ For further information contact your School Health Service on:

☐ Berowra/Brooklyn	9456 7037	☐ Carlingford	9873 4070
☐ Lindfield	9415 6366	☐ Galston	9653 2256
☐ Pennant Hills	9483 7955	☐ St Ives	9144 7250