

It's about the children...



- Offer tours of the school where children have the opportunity to explore the environment with parents.
- Children (and parents) adapt more successfully when information is explained:
 - ◇ If it is not possible to identify Kindergarten teachers, explain that the person facilitating the program may not be involved with Kindergarten.
 - ◇ If the program is not held in a Kindergarten classroom let children know where kindergarten is and take visits there throughout the program.
 - ◇ Talk about weekends and holidays - some children expect to start school straight after the transition program.
 - ◇ Encourage parents to explore time frames with children such as eating lunch and completing tasks.
- Parents appreciate when Kindergarten children start the school day with Kindergarten teachers and there was a handover to other specialist staff (eg; librarian, PE teacher). Perhaps this could be a priority in term 1 and eased off with explanation to children over time.
- Parents value having choice about their involvement in the classroom as part of the transition program.
- Parents like having information about school readiness and activities for their child to take home between visits to the school.

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supporting families to raise children



Parent voices *Ideas for transition to school*

The ideas included in this document have been collated from discussions with parents in the Auburn, Blacktown, Hills, Holroyd & Parramatta Local Government Areas
Resource developed by Transition from Home to School Project

Communicating with parents:

- Offer information sessions where English is the main language and families are around the hall in language groups.
- Offer written information about transition programs and family expectations.
- Include photos in information books of the school environment and key staff in the school including: librarian, canteen staff and office staff.
- Arrange meeting times which take into account at home parents, working and shift working parents.
- Include a timetable of events for term 1 for children, staff and families including sport days, library and assembly.
- Try to reduce the amount of time spent 'talking 'at' parents.
- Large groups can be intimidating and discourage question asking.
- Think of creative ways to disseminate information (songs, children role playing, small group discussions).
- Try to breakdown school terminology and jargon. Identify the process and role parents in the following events:
 - ◇ Mother's Day/ Father's Day Stalls
 - ◇ Assemblies/ award presentations
 - ◇ Tuckshop ordering
 - ◇ Library and home readers
 - ◇ Parent committees
 - ◇ Athletics carnivals

- Allow opportunities for parents who have children already at the school to share information.
- Offer opportunities for information exchange between parents and Kindergarten teachers.

Families meeting families:

- Include as part of the transition program opportunities for families to meet and chat. Parents felt more secure and supported when they realised they were not alone in the process.
- Have a Kindergarten or 'experienced' school parent talk to 'new' families. Helpful information may include:
 - Number of uniforms and where they can be purchased.
 - 'Drop and kiss' zones.
 - What happens on wet days.
 - How to become involved in the school community.
- Develop 'buddy systems' for parents matching 'new' and 'experienced' parents. Take into account LBOTE. Have 'experienced' parents act in mentoring roles.
- Encourage families to develop their own informal social groups of Mums or Dads. This could include coffee mornings, nights out or getting to know you afternoons.
- Find jobs for parents as part of the transition process - they can help prepare materials which gives them an opportunity to meet and talk.