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Pre-primary

HELLO PRE-PRIMARY!



Department of **Education**

What to expect when your child starts Pre-primary.

CC BY

WHAT'S INSIDE

Your child's school journey 4

Early experiences and brain development 5

Pre-primary: Beginning compulsory schooling 6

What will my child learn? 8

Going to school every day really matters 11

What you can do at home 12

More ideas for you and your child 13



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This booklet is for you as your child starts Pre-primary

It takes you through what happens in a typical day in Pre-primary 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 Pre-primary.

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, child/family daycare, if they attend, and at Kindergarten. They bring all of this learning with them when they start Pre-primary.

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 make sure your child gets the best start to full-time school.

In Pre-primary, 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 school and be proud of the things they learn each day.



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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. By the time they are three years old, 90 per cent of their brain has developed – so experiences in these early years are very important.

Loving and caring relationships with you, your family, friends, school staff and others in the school community help your child develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.

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

Singing, playing games, talking, climbing, dancing, reading, writing and drawing all help the brain develop ways of thinking and learning.

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PRE-PRIMARY: BEGINNING COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

After a year of part-time Kindergarten, your child goes on to full-time Pre-primary.

This is the first compulsory year of schooling in Western Australia.

The Pre-primary classroom looks similar to the Kindergarten classroom with lots of children's creations on display, as well as bright posters and charts around the room.

Children wear their school uniform in Pre-primary. Contact your school for more information about what the uniform is and where to purchase it.

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 you take the time to read these messages.

Your involvement in the school helps your child settle quickly and helps you understand how you can best support them.



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What happens during the day?

Your child's teacher encourages you to visit the classroom at the start of each day.

Wherever possible, try to spend this important time with your child. This is when you find out what your child is doing at school and what you can do at home to support them.

Be sure to pack a healthy snack and lunch for your child each day.

Your child's teacher plans for a balance of activities as part of their learning. Each day involves some physical activities so make sure your child wears suitable clothing.

There may be set days when your child can take books out of the library. Make a note of these days and put them on a calendar at home so you and your child are prepared and can set aside some time to read together.

At the end of the Pre-primary day, you need to collect your child from the classroom. If someone else is picking up your child, let the school know in advance so the teacher knows who to expect.

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

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WHAT WILL MY CHILD LEARN?

Pre-primary provides your child with a broad range of skills to help them understand the world. Your child learns more about literacy and numeracy, and further develops their personal and social skills, critical and creative thinking, and physical wellbeing. Your child develops skills in technology, the arts, science, humanities and social sciences, and languages. Your child's teacher takes into account the different experiences and backgrounds of children, and targets programs to meet their abilities and learning needs.

ENGLISH LEARNING AREA

Listening and speaking

Your child participates in class, group and pair discussions. They listen to others and retell events and experiences with their classmates and known adults. They also identify and use rhymes, letter patterns and sounds in words.

Reading

Through storybooks and films, your child learns that stories are about ideas and feelings, and that they have characters and events. The teacher may ask your child to talk about what happens in a story and what the characters are like. Listening for rhyme, letter patterns and sounds in words is important to early reading so classroom activities focus on this. Your child is also taught to identify the letters of the English alphabet and connect them to the most common sounds they represent. Your child reads a variety of short, predictable texts with familiar words and supportive pictures.



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Writing

Your child continues to experiment with letters of the alphabet, learning the difference between upper and lower case letters and begins to write using letter formations. In their writing, they use known words and familiar phrases and begin to use capital letters and full stops. Attempts at new words show developing sound-letter knowledge. Your child begins to use high frequency sight words, for example: *the*, *is* and *was*.

MATHS LEARNING AREA

Numbers

Your child begins to connect number names, numerals and quantities, including zero, initially up to 10, then up to 20 and beyond. Sometimes your child may think *zero* means 'blast off!' You may need to explain that it also means *none* or *nothing*.

Your child learns to represent and solve number problems involving adding, removing, grouping and sharing of small numbers of objects. For example, they may use toy farm animals to show three cows are put in a paddock with four other cows and then be able to work out how many there are all together.

Your child learns to create, copy and continue patterns using objects. These patterns may be based on colours, shapes and sizes.

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The language of maths

Your child learns to count, naming numbers in sequence going both forward and backwards and begins to use the relevant language of maths, for example: *How much? How many?* and *How long?* They use small numbers to 'get enough' items for their games and activities.

During games and activities, your child starts to compare the size of things using language such as: *longer*, *shorter*, *taller*, *heavier*, *lighter*, *fatter* and *thinner*. They use the everyday language of time and connect the days of the week to familiar events. For example, they may recognise they go to the school library every Wednesday.

Your child begins to learn shape and object words, for example: *ball*, *circle*, *square*, *cube*, *triangle* and *cone,* as well as position words, for example: *near*, *far*, *between*, *under*, *behind* and *in front*.

On-entry assessment

During Term 1, all Pre-primary children take part in an assessment for literacy and numeracy. There is no pass or fail. Teachers collect information on children's skills in language, reading, writing, counting and numbers. This helps them plan lessons and tailor learning for each child, extending children who perform well and supporting those who may need more assistance.



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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.



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:

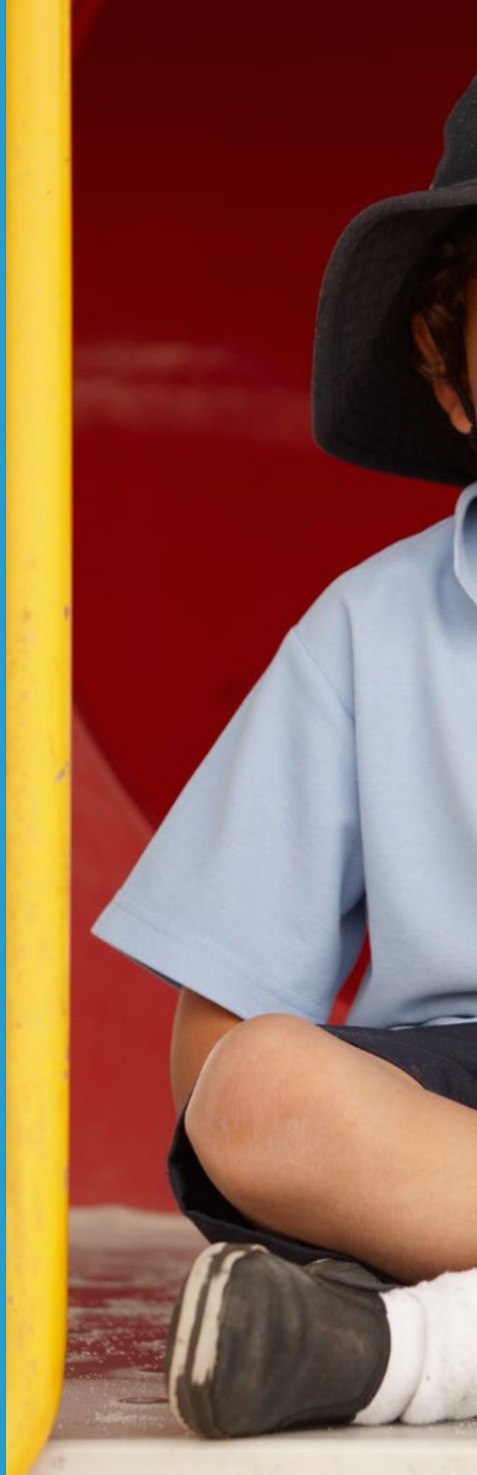
- talking positively about school so your child is happy to go each day
- showing interest in what your child is doing at school and talking with the teacher about what you can do at home
- setting play dates to help your child make friends
- teaching your child how to share and take turns
- arriving 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.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- You may like to visit your local library and borrow books on topics of interest to your child.
- Encourage your child to draw, write and tell stories.
- Encourage your child to use trial and error to learn and complete tasks. Be patient and let them have a go.
- Make time to read with your child every day. This not only promotes good reading habits, it is also a great way to spend time together as a family. Read your child's favourite book over and over. Encourage them to join in. Get them to tell you the story using the pictures for prompts or let them pretend to read and make up the story. Talk about the end of the story and encourage your child to express their opinions. Did they like the ending? How else could the story have ended?
- Encourage them to write and to tell you the reason for writing and why. For example: *I am writing a letter to Granny to say thank you for my birthday card*.
- Practise using numbers and counting with your child while doing everyday tasks. For example: *We have two visitors coming for dinner. There are four people in our family so how many plates will we need?*
- Encourage your child to use their new number skills to say how many objects when there is no need to count, for example you can just 'see' three things, or even see six things as three things and three things.
- Explore measuring by chatting with your child when you are cooking, shopping or at bath time about how different things might be: *longer* or *shorter*, *thicker* or *thinner*, and *lighter* or *heavier*.
- Help your child pour water or sand from one container to another to decide which holds more, or investigate whether a tablecloth is big enough to cover the table.
- Encourage your child to observe things in nature and to ask questions.
- Collect items and sort them into groups and talk about shapes, sizes, patterns and what they feel like.
- Explore your child's family history using photographs, objects and by telling stories. Talk about your relatives, where they were born and how life was different when they were your child's age.



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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 school today?* rather than *Did you have fun at school 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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