



Choices
Family Day Care Pty Ltd

School Readiness Booklet



Transition to School Program

Introduction

The transition to school program is for children in Family Day Care in the year before prep. Preparing for school is a process whereby children and families adjust to new interactions, experiences and new relationships. It is not a point-in-time event, but rather an experience that starts well before, and extends far beyond, the first day of school.

At Choices and Regional Choices Family Day Care, the staff, educational leaders and the educators work in collaboration with the local community, schools and families to support the individual strengths and needs of each child and provide a high quality educational program to help all children experience the transition to formal schooling. Starting school is a major life transition for children and their families. It is a period of change that can be both challenging and exciting.



Choices and Regional Choices Family Day Care offers important foundation experiences to support each child's development, confidence and readiness for school. Children thrive at the school when they bring the skills and confidence they have learnt in Family Day Care to their new environment.

Our program incorporates the learning and development outcomes of the Early Years National Framework for children birth to five years supporting children in the areas of Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning and Communication.

The Five outcomes for children are identified in the Framework as:

- Children have a strong sense of identity (Identity)
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world (Community)
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (Wellbeing)
- Children are confident and involved learners (Learning)
- Children are effective communicators (Communication)



Children learn from birth and their learning and development at each stage of life forms the foundation for the next. During the period from birth to five years, children experience more rapid brain development and acquire more skills and knowledge than in any other period in their lives. By the time they enter school, children have already developed key communication, learning and thinking skills; learned to build and maintain relationships; and formed a strong sense of their own identity. These skills and knowledge are the foundation for learning at school, and for lifelong learning.

Choices and Regional Choices Family Day Care aims to build continuity between a child's learning and development in early childhood to the transition to school. In Quality Area 6 of The National Quality Standards, it focuses on collaborative relationships with families that are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes for children and community partnerships based on active communication, consultation and collaboration. Families are the primary influence in their children's lives and also have strong beliefs and values regarding the education and care of their children, and the experiences in which their children should be able to participate. Effective relationships between educators and families are fundamental to the quality of education and care that children receive.

With guidance from two local prep teachers and a number of schools in our education and care area, we have developed the "Choices and Regional Choices Transition to School Program". By forming these collaborative partnerships with our school community we have been able to develop a School Readiness Checklist for children that will be attending prep next year. The educators will work in partnership with families and children to work towards the goals on the checklist.

Effective transition-to-school approaches recognise these skills and abilities as the starting points for learning and teaching. We look forward to working with you and your child to prepare them with confidence to start school next year.



Children that are Happy, Healthy and STRONG!

Sleep

All children need regular sleep. Experts recommend that preschool and early school aged children need at least 11-12 hours sleep per day. Sleep keeps the body healthy by giving it time to grow and repair itself and leaving it in a good state to fight infection and illness. Sleep keeps the mind healthy by improving memory, problem-solving and concentration.

Touch

Research tells us that touch is important to a healthy body and mind. Hugs, cuddles, and pats on the back provide nurturing and reassurance to children. Touch has been shown to make some children calmer and to help children recover when they are sick. Touch and tactile experiences are very important in the early years.

Relaxation

Everyone needs some down time and children are no different. Relaxation time allows children to explore their interests, develop their play and unwind. It helps them to get to know their space and where they belong. Less stress keeps both their bodies and minds healthy.

Opportunities to be active

Moving around and being active helps children's muscle develop, keeps their healthy, burns off energy and leads to the learning of skills that will enable with their friends and join in games. Being active can include regular park, exploring the neighbourhood, helping in the garden, riding a bike, ball with a friend or adult.



Nutrition

Good food allows children's bodies to grow well and their minds to think clearly. Always eat a good breakfast. Drink plenty of water. Include plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grains in your child's diet. Let children help you to cook so that they can begin to understand how foods work. Eat together and encourage social skills. Put food in easy to open containers. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/sites/default/files/packing-a-school-lunchbox-fact-sheet-20130506.pdf>

Giving things a go

Learning and growing involves a great deal of trial and error. Children feel good about themselves when they have the freedom to make mistakes and form their own ideas, when they laugh freely and see the funny side of things, when they are encouraged and have the chance to make friends. Children will benefit from having time to explore a range of experiences. Just remember that the simple things are often the most fun.

Great Games to Build Strong Bodies

Sensory Games

- Rolling down hills
- Swinging and sliding
- Snuggling in a doona
- Crawling through a chair tunnel
- Trampoline bouncing
- Jumping on the spot



Balance Games

- Hopscotch
- Twister
- Walking on cracks in the footpath
- Bike riding
- Balance beam
- Walking on tree roots



Ball Games

- Basketball hoops
- Handball
- Frisbee
- Hitting balloons
- Throwing the football
- Throwing socks into a basket
- Kicking a beach ball



Co-ordination Games

- Dancing
- Skipping ropes
- Chasing bubbles
- Hula hoops
- Elastics
- Simon says
- Animal walks



Strength Games

- Moving buckets of sand
- Climbing a tree
- Monkey bars
- Tug of war
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Swimming and water play



Other Fun Games

- Hide and seek
- Running with the wind in your hair
- Playing with pets
- Making a cubbyhouse
- Flying kites
- Chasing games



Developing Fine Motor Skills

We take for granted that children do enough in their everyday life to help them to develop the hand skills they need. We see them mastering play stations, the computer mouse and playing with the latest toys. Yet many teachers and parents tells us that their children struggle with some of the tasks we take for granted like turning on taps, unwrapping their lunches and dressing themselves. Sadly, reality sees many children three weeks into prep crying because their little hands are sore from writing.

This alerts us to the fact that good fine motor skills and strengthening hand muscles rely on a broad range of experiences. Remember some of the games that you played when you were young, games such as cards, making mudpies, cooking, climbing, paper dolls, marbles and yo-yo's just to name a few. These games developed your fine motor skills in a playful way, giving you the foundations to learn harder tasks such as holding a pencil and using scissors.



So it is very important to lay the foundations for fine motor development in a broad range of play experiences. Not only will it help children to use their hands with greeter expertise, but will also be more fun. All of these skills will continue to develop after school entry but will form a firm base for classroom skills including writing with pencils, cutting with scissors, building with maths materials, art and craft activities. **Strong steady bodies**

To use their arms and hands effectively, children need to have strength and stability in their bodies and shoulders as well. Encouraging children to stand at a child sized table to draw, paint or mould play dough helps build strong shoulder muscles needed for writing.

Environment

Setting up your environment so children can have access to the resources they need for creativity and developing finger and hand strength is essential. On a child sized table or close by, children should be able to choose for themselves crayons, pencils, felt pens, rulers, and scissors. If there are other smaller children in the environment, then this may need to be supervised. A handy caddy that can be easily moved to the table is ideal.



Other Activities

Other activities your children may like for fine motor skills are Puzzles, Lego, Tongs, Threading, Pegs, Weaving and Lacing.

Learning to listen to hands through the senses

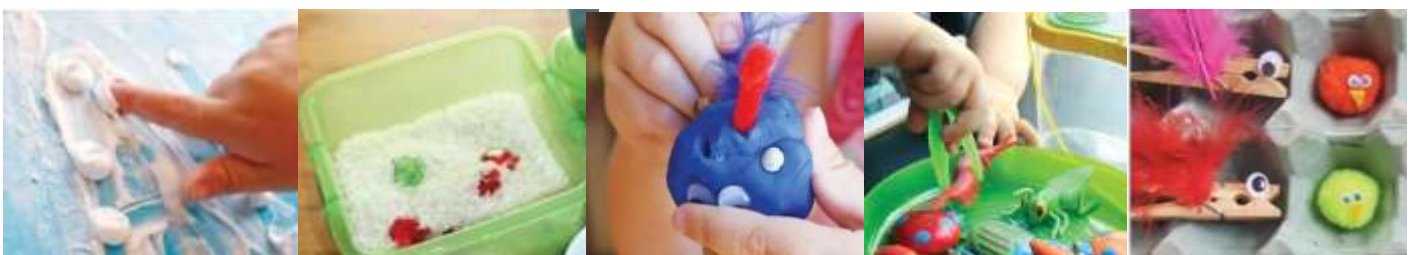
Children use their sense of touch to be aware of what their hands are doing. Here are some activities that will help your child to learn how to use their hands.

Sensory Play

Encourage your child to enjoy natural sensations such as playing with sand and working in the garden. Any new textures such as shaving cream, play dough, clay, goop, or finger paint. .

Sensory Tubs

Use hands on play techniques like sensory bins to encourage both strength of hand muscles as well sensory discrimination in the hands. Use old tissue boxes or containers and over time fill it with different material e.g. rice, beans, dry soup mix, cotton balls or sand. Then hide small items in these materials and the children have to use their hands to find them. Try simple sensory play to encourage fine motor skills and have fun!



Developing Scissor and Cutting Skills

Games like these will help your child prepare for the skill of cutting before they even hold the scissors in their hands. It will encourage the feel, shape, muscle strength and skills needed for cutting.



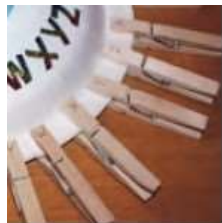
Playing with water spray bottles

These are readily available from supermarkets and discount stores and are loads of fun. Invite your child to help you water the garden or squirt the concrete to make pictures. Blow up a balloon and use some string to suspend from the washing line or tree. Children love squirting the balloon as it makes a great sound too. Peg paper to the fence and put coloured water in the spray bottle. Let them paint.



Hole Punches

Small, single hole punches help develop finger strength for cutting. They can help your child's hand to learn the cutting position (thumb on top). If you punch some coloured paper your child can use the confetti to make pictures or collage.



Play with plastic tongs, tweezers and pegs

Put plastic tongs in with the bath toys so that your child can fish for sponges or other toys. Take the tweezers outside to collect interesting things from the garden. Pegs can be sorted and clipped onto the edges of ice-cream containers. Egg cartons, pom poms and tongs are great. Small plastic animals and tongs/tweezers are good. Containers with water, plastic fish and tongs. Serving fruit for morning tea.



Threading beads, macaroni and cut up straws

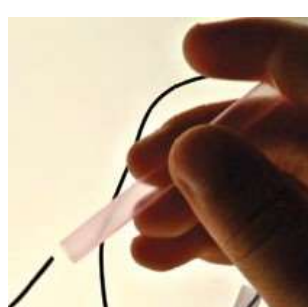
Use shoelaces or thin plastic tubing, pipe cleaners for threading a variety of beads. These can be undone and rethreaded again and again. Cut up straws into inch sized pieces. Colour macaroni. You can thread many things onto a shoe lace.



Playing with an egg beater

Put some bubble mixture/washing up liquid into a large container and see how many suds can be made using a hand-held egg beater. When cooking ask your child to help you with the beaters.

Other suggestions - Opening and closing plastic jars and small containers. Try filing jars with stickers or craft materials or anything your child likes to use, Hammering activities, Nuts and bolts games, Wind up toys, and construction toys.



Snipping, Cutting & Scissors

Selecting scissors

There is a huge array of different scissors that are commercially available. In general, look for scissors that

- Open and close easily
- Have small finger loops
- Can be used in either hand

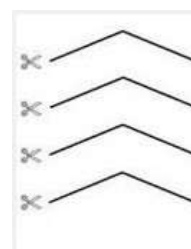


Snipping

Snipping is the first action that children make when they learn how to hold scissors in just one hand. Try to give your child a variety of things to snip - straws, play dough and a variety of paper and cardboard.

Cutting forward and changing direction when cutting

This takes time to master and obviously your child will need practise and encouragement.



Good tips for excellent cutting

- Smaller paper is easier to hold onto and manipulate than larger paper
- Shorter lines are easier than longer lines
- Thicker lines will be easier for your child at the start - gradually make them thinner over time.
- Thin cardboard is easier to manipulate than paper
- Sing "Open, shut them" while your child is snipping
- Tell your child that the thumb is the boss and stays on top when cutting
- Children often respond to thinking about scissors like driving a car. They keep their scissors on the road (lines), drive slowly (no speeding), slow down at the curve and stop and turn at a corner.

Sometimes a smiley face or sticker on your child's thumb will help to cue him to keep his thumb on the top during cutting.



How Writing Develops

Reading and writing are so closely linked that they are hard to separate. The early experiences that a child has sharing books with their educator and parents helps them to understand that not only do letters make sounds and combine to make words, but that writing tells a story - it communicates something to others.

Holding a pencil and learning to make letters is an important part of writing. But none of this will make any sense until they understand this very important point.

Writing has a purpose

When it is in a book, newspaper or sign, it can provide information. It helps you get organised when you write a list. It is a way that people communicate with each other when they write emails or cards. We can discuss signs when we are driving as they guide us where to go or what to do.

Writing can be enjoyable

It can take you places and be creative. It is a link to the adult world that children love to experiment with in play such as post offices, restaurants and shops. Create your own books with children. Ask them what you would like them to write down. Show them their words in print.

Writing is a long-lasting record

It survives along the visual images of television. It can be seen years later in the cards you have kept and the books you own.



Just like with reading, children need adults to help them make the links between writing and the world around them. You can point out to your child all the places that you see writing - in books, on television and computer, on signs, on food labels, maps and magazines. Be a good role model and show them that you use writing in your everyday life by making lists, leaving notes, writing in cards and copying down things that interest you, such as recipes. Help them by writing down their story.

Encourage your child to write and be patient. Be aware that writing develops in stages and that scribble writing and pretend is an important step to being a successful writer or short book later on. Have lots of different writing materials in the house such as blank paper, lined paper, post-it notes, stationery, cards and envelopes, as well as pencils and pens. Make writing fun rather than something that has to be done properly the first time.

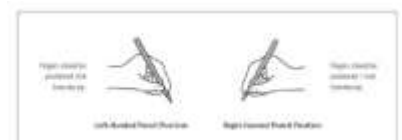
Tips to Develop Pencil Grip

Use upright surfaces - Take advantage of upright surfaces around the home environment such as fridge door, easel, blackboards, whiteboards, bath area or outdoor fences. By encouraging your child to play and draw in this position they can begin to position their arm and wrist in a way that may help to naturally promote a good pencil grip.

Play fun games for fine finger control and strength - Games such as pick up sticks, marbles, pegboards, spinning tops, threading and lacing all help to develop the small muscles of the hand that are important to an efficient pencil grip.

Learn about controlling pressure - Play games that help your child to control the amount of pressure they need to give during fine motor activities. This can help with controlling the amount of pressure when drawing. Some games to try - Use an eyedropper to drip coloured water onto paper or slowly add colour to clear water in a container. Practice doing one drop at a time. Use tweezers to pick up and sort things. Start with hard things like little balls of foil then try objects that are more delicate (such as rice bubbles or cornflakes) without breaking them.

Let your child experiment with different writing tools - Remember that the type of writing tool may make a difference to your child's pencil grip. Vary their experiences by changing both the implement and the places they draw and write. Some things to consider - Length of the tool, short implements such as chalk, fat felt pens, crayons can help children to naturally hold closer to the tip. Shape, tools with a round thick barrel are helpful for developing pencil grip in young children.



Key Area: Movement & Motor Skills

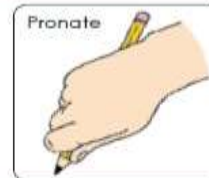
The Development Of Hand Function, Grasps And Drawing Skills

When children first begin to draw using crayons, pencils or brushes they use a dagger grasp. In a natural developmental sequence they will hold the writing implement in a variety of grasps until they settle on a functional tripod grip for handwriting. The developmental sequence is a result of neurological and physical growth in the child.

As we look below at the development of different grasps and drawing skills we can observe that there is a natural progression as the child's fine motor skills develop. The complexity of the drawing skills increases as the child develops more control over the pencil or crayon in his or her hand.

2 Years To 3 Years

- Crayon or tools may be held across all fingers, with the palm facing down. **Digital Pronate grasp (pictured right)** movement mainly occurs at the elbow, the forearm and hand move as a unit.
- Imitates drawing a circle
- Copies a horizontal line
- Copies a vertical line
- Draws 2 or more strokes when attempting to copy a cross



3 Years To 4 Years

Recommended Resources

- 1 2 3 4
5 6

- The fingers (often all four) are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb. **Quadropod grasp (pictured top right)**. Movement can occur from the wrist, the hand moves as a unit with the fingers static. **Static Tripod grasp (pictured bottom right)**. Adjustments to the pencil are made with the opposite hand (3½ - 4 years).
- Copies a circle
- Imitates a horizontal cross
- Imitates a zig zag line
- Joins two dots
- Draws a diagonal stroke by following a continuous dotted line
- Traces over a diamond shape (rounded corners)
- Draws a man with a head and one other body part e.g. arms, legs
- Traces and stays on most of the time a 7cm wide horizontal line.

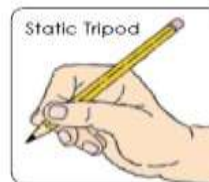


4 Years To 6 Years

Recommended Resources

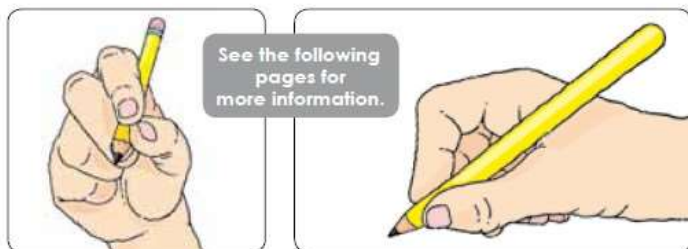
- 3 4 5
6 7

- Child developing ability to manipulate objects between the fingers and palm and rotate objects with the fingers.
- Uses a **Static Tripod grasp (pictured right)** of a pencil consistently
- Developing fine control to manipulate a pencil
- The thumb, index and middle fingers work as a unit for precise control of the pencil, the ring and little fingers provide support. Horizontal movement across the page occurs at the wrist elbow and shoulder (4½ to 6 years).
- Copies a diagonal line, a square, a diagonal cross, circle and triangle
- Draws a man with a head, arms and legs
- Colours in a simple picture staying mainly within the lines (no more than 0.6 cm)
- Draws a man with a head, trunk, arms, legs, feet and three facial features
- Connects a series of dots to make a simple drawing

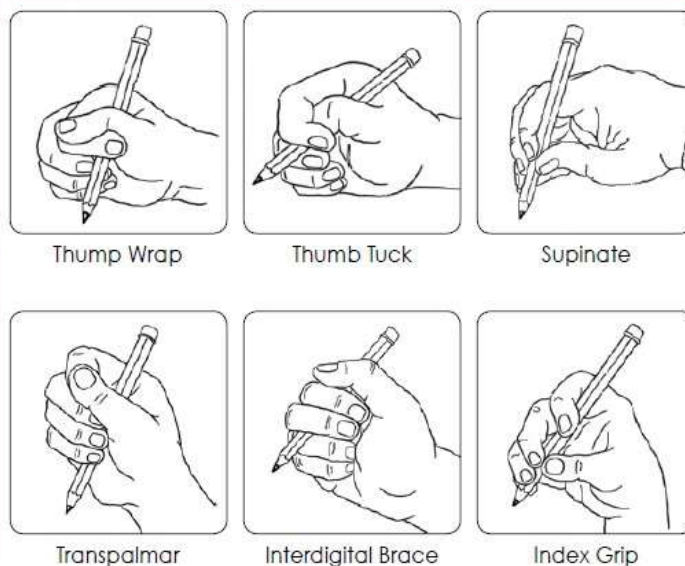


What Is A GOOD Pencil Grip?

- The pencil shaft is held between pads of index finger and thumb of dominant hand.
- The middle finger sits along side the index finger supporting under the pencil.
- The ring and little fingers curl gently into the palm.
- There is an open, fairly circular web space formed by the thumb and index finger. This is where the pencil shaft will rest.
- Sometimes the pad of the middle finger on the pencil too, this is acceptable if the web space remains open.



What Is NOT A GOOD Pencil Grip?



Drawing to communicate

Drawing provides children with opportunities to explore ways to communicate ideas and experiences. Learning to convey meaning through their drawings is an important part of developing early literacy skills.



Supporting your child as they draw

Children's drawing skills develop gradually over time when they:

- have daily access to crayons, pencils and other drawing materials
- are encouraged to draw in their own way without adults directing how to draw
- watch others draw and talk about ways to represent what they see, feel and do (e.g. What colours could you use to show this is a happy/sad drawing? How can you show your dog has black spots?)

Stages of drawing

Children develop drawing skills at different times. They begin by making marks and gradually build skills for representing ideas.

Scribble stage: Ages 2–3

This stage is basic to the child's development. At this age, movement of hand, arm and body is satisfying and important **Outline**

shapes: Ages 3–4

With increased muscular control and development comes the ability to draw a variety of simple shapes. These may be circles, ovals, rectangles or crosses.

The child and design: Ages 3–5

Shapes in outline form can now be combined to make a design.

Shapes can be side by side or inside one another.

Circles, suns and radials: Ages 3–5.

At age three, most children begin to draw circles and place crosses within them. This then becomes a sun shape with lines coming out from the circle shape. From here, children experiment by drawing lines from a point or a very small circle. These are called radials.

People and places: Ages 4–5

At about age four, most children begin to draw people. This follows soon after the sun and radial stage. The sun becomes the human head, and arms and legs are attached directly to the head. Other familiar symbols are added for facial features, hair and hands (small suns).

Animals: Ages 4–6

Between the ages of four and six, children begin to draw pictures of animals that stand on two legs. The child will often put two ears on top of a figure they have drawn and use sun rays for fingers or claws. People figures will now be made up of a head and a body, with arms, and legs attached to the body shape.

Children around the world develop their ability to represent ideas in similar stages. Understanding these stages can help you to value their drawing and support their learning.



Literacy

Phonics - When children first start prep they are taught the letter sounds rather than letter names. On the first day they will learn the first sound. They are 6 sounds that they will learn first up. They six letters are S,A,T,P,I,N. On the first day the teacher reads a story about “Sammy snake is on the sgrass”. They focus on the “S” sounds. There are puppets and the children draw a snake in the air with their two fingers. By the end of learning the first 6 sounds the children will know 40 words. Words such as “at/ sat/ mat/ it/ sit/ pat/ tap/ tip/ pit”. By the end of the first two weeks at school



they can

read and write 40 words. It is important to learn the sounds with the

letter. Because not all sounds actually sound like the letter. On the first day they learn “S” and on the second day they learn “A”. So on the second day of school they can spell one word “as”.

By day three they know “as, at and sat”. Amazing.

By the end of the first term they will know all of the 42 sounds that make up the English language.

You can google the Jolly Phonic program.

Buy a scrapbook for each child – Encourage the children to look through junk mail and old magazines to find pictures starting with the letter/sound of the day. Starting with “a” cut out the pictures and glue them onto the “a” page. One page per letter/sound. This also encourages scissor skills and learning how to use glue correctly. When you have finished you have a wonderful resource that children can use.



Letters/Sounds - Draw or take photos of things starting with the letter “A”. Drawing will help develop the pencil grip and muscles needed for writing. Taking photos helps children to identify objects and learn to use technology. Take the children outside in the environment. See how many objects they can identify. Draw letters in the dirt or sand. Form a letter out of leaves, sticks or rocks. Use play dough to make objects to match of the sounds. This is fun activity as the children are often more inventive and creative than us.

Lower case - Concentrate on lower case letters initially. That’s because a lowercase “c” is the same as a capital “C” only bigger. Then there are the letters that are quite different as an uppercase “r” and “R”. Learning one case at a time is challenging enough without introducing more. Remember capital letters only for first letter of names.

Oral Language

Oral language is the foundation for student learning. It is essential for literacy learning, and successful use of **language** is critical for students' wellbeing.

Rhyming games - Rhyme is found in poetry, songs, and many children's books and games. Most children also love to sing and recite nursery rhymes. Words that can be grouped together by a common sound, for example the "-at" family — cat, hat, and sat — can be used to teach children about similar spellings. Children can use these rhyme families when learning to read and spell.

Singing songs

Retell events

Asking questions

Following and giving directions

Lego games

Language: same and different, why? Positional language e.g. in front, behind, beside, between. Quantity: more, less, bigger, smaller, shorter, longer, longest,

Numeracy

Children learn about maths mostly by touching and playing with real things in the space around them. They explore ideas such as shape, size, weight, space, measuring, quantities, patterns, sequencing, numbers and positional language such as front, back, behind, on, under and between. These learning opportunities present themselves in the home environment everyday. Many children learn numbers by Rote counting (saying one, two, three). Learning by Rote teaches children to say a string of words in a row, but does not form the connection to recognising the number and the representation of how many are four apples.



Shapes - Shapes are all around us and learning shapes from the everyday objects and the home environment is easy. The basic shapes to learn are Square, Circle, Triangle and Rectangle. You have Round plates, Square containers, Rectangular coffee tables and triangular road signs. Play shape "I spy" in the car.

Size & Quantities - A growth chart is a great way to learn size. Measure all of the adults and children in the environment and record on the chart what size everyone is. Asking children to help set a table for dinner has so many learning possibilities. Work out with the children how many people there would be and work out the quantities of cutlery and plates you will need.

Weight & Measuring - Cooking with children is a great way to teach weighing and measuring. Prepare beforehand the measuring cups, measuring spoons, measuring jug and a set of scales. Learning that a recipe calls for 1 cup, 1 teaspoon, 100ml in milk or 150grams of flour is a fun way to learn these skills. Especially when you get to eat what you have cooked.



Positional language - Playing in the outdoor environment or at a playground is great to teach children positional language. Front, Behind, Beside, Between, On and Under. Directing children to go over or under equipment, to stand beside or behind the other children, being at the front of the line or placing the ball between the hoops.

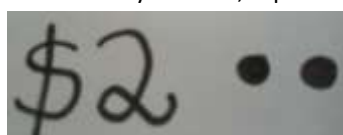
Patterns & Sequencing - Patterns are everywhere. You will notice them on animals and in clothing. A sequence is an ordered series of things. Could be numbers, shapes or objects. Once we understand the pattern behind the sequence, we should be able to figure out all the objects in the sequence.



Numbers - Start with teaching children numbers one to five and then five to ten. A great way to learn numbers is through rhymes and songs. Starting at an early age children can learn songs such as "12345 once I caught a fish alive", "Ten little Indians" or "Five little ducks". Again the scrapbook is a great way to teach children the representation of how many are three birds. Number charts can be made with the children and displayed. Children love making their own books to look through and making one about numbers would be great. There are plenty of games where children count how many of something there is. The best things for children to count are things that are around them in the home environment. This is more fun and active if you ask them to walk around and touch things as they count. Children love to count and pretending to be a rocket counting down from ten to one is the most fun. Blast off into space.



Money - Child see adults use money everyday and when given the opportunity love to include money in their play. It doesn't have to be real money. In fact the best money, is the money the children make themselves. All you need to do is write the number 3 and draw three dots beside it. With each number you write, represent that number with a dot.



Getting ready for learning

Being able to sit still and quietly listen to stories – In prep, children are often required to sit on the carpet in a circle for learning and stories. When children come from home or small group settings, they are not used to having to sit still quietly for a period of time. Your child will now be one of 25 children in the classroom. Introducing a group time where you encourage children to sit quietly and listen to a story, sing songs or do finger plays is a great way to prepare them for school and formal learning.



Engage children with stories – When you are reading a story to a child, engage them by asking question that relates to personal experiences . If you're reading a story about "Spot the dog ", then stop for a moment and ask the children, "Who has a dog?, What colour is your dog"? You will be encouraging language, confidence and engaging the children.

Following simple directions- Keep your instructions brief and to the point. Children of this age can only follow simple directions.

Encourage children to ask questions – Encourage children to ask for what they want. A child needs to build confidence in this area to ask for help at school. Asking questions helps children to build confidence and self esteem.

Use appropriate greetings and manners - When you see children first thing in the morning, greet them with manners. Say "Good Morning Johnny, how are you today". Role model the language, greeting and manners you want the children to learn. Say "please and thankyou" and encourage the children to do the same. You are teaching children social language and behaviours.



Engage in conversation – Talking to children constantly and asking open ended questions that require more than a yes/no answer, helps to build new words and knowledge.

Classroom

Carrying own bag to the classroom – Many parents in the first term carry their child's bag because it's big and heavy. When you do this for them you are telling them that you don't think they are capable of doing it themselves. Please encourage your child to carry his own bag and be responsible for it. Children will need to carry their own bag to the library or the sports oval. Empower the children to do it themselves.



Looking after belongings - Teach children independence and responsibility of their own belongs. Children can get very upset when they can find their belongings. Make sure the children can put there lunch box and drink bottle back in there bag. Also getting children to put their hat back in their bag after play, and putting the jumper back in their bag.

Knowing where to find name on clothes – All school have uniforms. Imagine 25 blue hats. Will your child know which one is theirs. Make sure your child has all of their items clearly labelled and that they know where the label is.



Packing/unpacking school bag - Consider having a bag big enough to fit in books, lunch box, drink bottle, jumper, rain coat, library bag. Peppa Pig lunch boxes are cool but consider how much room it takes up in the bag, can the child open and close it.

Tidying up and returning objects to the correct place – There are many toys and activities that children can play with in the class room. But when they have finished playing they need to be able to pack it all up and put it back where they got it from. One of the most helpful things you can teach a child is to pack the activity up and put it back where they got them from.



Gathering required equipment – Encourage children to think about what equipment they may need to do an activity. Again ask them open ended questions such as What resources do you need? Where is the glue and scissors located? Do you know how to carry scissors safely? Teach children how to wind down the glue when there are finished and put the lid back on. Put it back where it belongs.

Lunch Time

Carrying lunchbox and drink bottles – Children need to be able to locate and carry their own lunch boxes and drink bottles. Most prep classes will encourage the children to put their lunch into a crate and their drink bottles in another crate. Please label the lunch box and drink bottle with the child's name. The children will need to be able to identify their name. Start using that lunch box and drink bottle at least in the month before starting school so they recognise it.

Opening packages – Children need to be able to open their own sandwiches. Unwrapping glad wrap or even finding the end of the gladwrap can be hard for some children. Sometimes there are 5 classes that come together in a junior school for lunch with 100 children. That area may have one or two teachers on duty. The teachers cannot possibly open 100 Muesli bars, yogurts and fruit. Some hints that the teacher have given us is to cut a little slit in the packaging of the muesli bar so the children can just tear it open themselves. Consider putting sandwiches in a container.



Peeling fruit – If you are going to give the children fruit, make sure they can peel it themselves or pre-peel or cut the fruit.

Rubbish in bins - Always encourage children to put their scraps in the bin themselves once finished. With yogurts, make sure the children know to not to put a half-eaten yogurt back in their lunchbox. As you can imagine a half-eaten yogurt put back into the lunch box would be a huge mess at the next lunch break.

Closing lunchboxes securely including lids on small containers and fitting everything back in - Teach children how to close their lunch box. Put all of their little containers back into their lunch box and make sure it is securely closed. Don't forget to put in a spoon.

Feeding self – Make sure children can feed themselves. Difficult and messy foods are not the best foods to be trailing at school. Make sure your child can successfully eat these foods at home.

Opening/closing drink bottles – Can they open their own drink bottles. Can they then pack it away again.



Keeping lunches cool - Ensure you put an ice brick in your child's lunch box. Sandwiches often have meat or ham that needs to be kept cool and at a safe temperature. A child might have cheese or yogurt that also needs to be kept cool.

Cooking with children

Reading and following recipes - Learning to cook is a wonderful thing to experience with children. Especially when they get to eat what they have cooked. Reading the recipe with the child encourages new words and how to follow instructions. The children learn and start to use rich language such as mix, melt, stir, cook, heat, cool, cut and ice.

Measuring and counting - Learning mathematical concepts through cooking is a fun way to learn. Children might count 2 tablespoons, or measure 1 cup. They learn to level and pour. The children learn spatial awareness: how much will fit? How much more do I need? Size of tin, and pots. They learn more or less.

More or less

Colour and texture

Temperature: hot, cold, warm

Food names and origin e.g. milk-cow

Toileting

Identifying when need to go to the toilet – In the first 6 weeks of school, the teachers will allow the children to go to the toilet when they need to. At the same time they will be doing toilet timing. Before going into class they will encourage the children to go to the toilet. At each break, before coming back into the classroom they will encourage children to all go to the toilet. The hope is that children will learn to go to the toilet at the end of each break so they can concentrate in class and not have to run off. Toilet timing is something you can practice with children before prep.

Boys using the urinal – Little boys often go shopping with mum and go to the ladies toilet. They come to school and have never seen a urinal. They don't know what it is or how to use it. Please ask dad, granddad or uncle to take them to the men's toilet and show them how to use a urinal before coming to school.

Wiping and using toilet paper – Teach children how to wipe their bottom with toilet paper and how much paper to use. Teach them that the paper goes into the toilet and then you flush it. Then they pull up their pants and wash their hands. By the time children go to prep they need to be able to do these skills independently. It's embarrassing for the children as well.

Knowing where the toilets are – At the information session, you will be shown around the school. Make sure you know where the toilets are. On the first day of school, take the child to the toilet and show them where it is. Encourage them to use it there and then so they know and remember.

Play dress up games - Playing dress up games with children teaches them in a fun way how to do up buttons, do up a zip, put clothes on over their head and get their legs into pants. By a timer and have some fun. You might have a selection of clothes set out for the children to put on or just an old suitcase with a variety of clothes. Either way they will have enormous fun having a go and learning valuable skills along the way. Include items such as gloves, hats, sunglasses, big shoes, handbags, big shirts and pants, items with zip and buttons and socks.



Independence

Dressing/undressing self – In winter children will need to be able to take their jumpers on and off and put back in their bags. Some schools start swimming in the last term of the year. Can the children undress themselves, put their belongings back in their bag and then dry themselves and get redressed afterwards. Some parents send their children to school with their togs on underneath their school uniform. This causes problems during the day if your child is wearing a one piece.

Taking off and putting on shoes – There are many times where children may take off their shoes. All schools have sandpits and when children play in the sand their shoes get full of sand. Can the child take off their shoes and socks and put the back on again? Many parents will tie their child's shoelaces in double knots so they don't come undone. The reason many classes are late back into school after playtime is because teachers are trying to undo those double knots so children can put their shoes back on. Work with children to teach them to do up their own shoelaces.



Washing hands – Handwashing should be routine in every household. Do they know to use soap? Can they turn on the tap themselves?

Seeking help – Encourage children to ask for what they want. You might repeat what they have said using the correct language and manners to role model to them.

Using bubblers - Before going to school, children rarely use bubblers. If children don't know what a bubbler is or how to use it, they may not drink much during the day. There are bubblers in parks and around town. Stop and explain what a bubbler is and how to use it.



A Child's Name

Recognise and write first name – Can your child recognise their name in print? This is very important at school as most of the time their desk has their name on it. Their belongings have their name on it. Their artwork and books will have their name on it. Being able to identify their name so they can find their desk, belongings and artwork is important. Can they write their name on their artwork and pieces of paper?



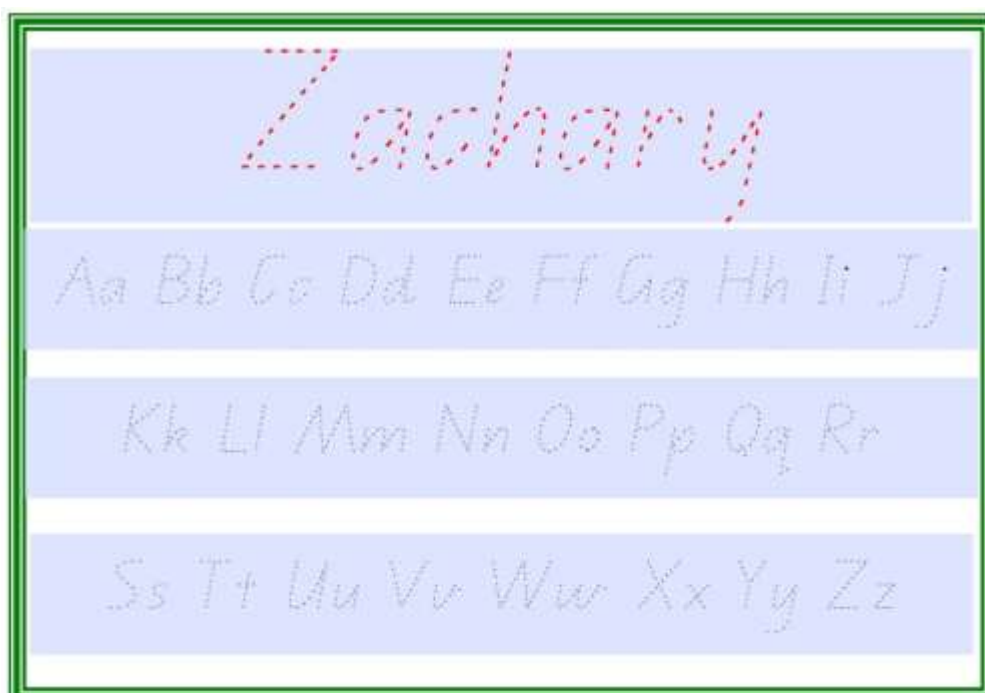
Capital letter only for first letter – When teaching children to write their first name please only use a capital for the first letter. You are teaching children how to write for the rest of their life with this one simple step. In all the books that they will read, it will have a capital for the first letter of a person's name. It is easy to teach children to use a capital for the first letter of their name, but it is so hard to reteach a child who has been taught to write their name in all capitals.

Check starting point for letters and formation – This again is important has once a child learns to always write from the bottom up it is hard to reteach it. In Queensland handwriting font all Tall letters always start at the top. Children naturally push away from their body when they start to write. This will mean they write a letter from the bottom up and not from the top down. Bad habits are really hard to break.

Make name using a variety of methods – When teaching children to write their name in the air get them to use 2 fingers. Using 2 fingers helps them to strengthen the muscles needed to write and also helps the message gets to the brain. Ask the child to write with their fingers on your back and then you write on theirs. Use plenty of different tactile mediums such as playdough, paint and clay to mould their name. Also coloured pens, rainbow writing, glue and coloured rice and with a stick in the dirt or sand.



Laminated name cards – Google and download the Queensland Handwriting Font. There are many different methods of the fonts. There is one with arrows that show you where to put your pen and start writing. There are tubular fonts that you can print out your child's name so they can make their letters out of playdough. Print out the child's name in big font on an A4 sheet of paper and laminate it so children can keep reusing it over and over again with a whiteboard marker. Many children in prep classes start to write with an A4 sized whiteboard and a whiteboard marker. These can be purchased from \$2 shops. The whiteboard maker is easier for them to learn to hold when they first start. You can print out the child's name in dots so they learn to trace over the top. One of the first activities a child will do on their first day is to draw a picture of themselves and try to write their name. This tells the teacher developmentally where that child is up too. If a child can attempt to write their own name they will already be starting to build that confidence and self-esteem from the first day.



Choices Transition to School Checklist

Can I:

Identity

- Recognise my first name
- Collect my belongings and put them in the right place
- Adapt to new environments and experiences
- Participate in imaginary play

Community

- Sit still and listen to stories
- Keep my hands, feet and objects to myself
- Follow simple instructions and directions
- Play cooperatively to meet a common goal



Wellbeing

- Carry my own school bag
- Pack and unpack my school bag
- Pack my lunch box in my bag
- Problem solve for a fair solution
- Wait my turn and share with others
- Ask for help when needed
- Use the toilet independently



Learning

- Hold a pencil using the correct grip
- Count to at least 10 or 20
- Name and identify colours
- Name and find the shapes: square, circle, triangle and rectangle
- Hold and use scissors carefully
- Demonstrate the concept of opposites

Communication

- Say my first and last name
- Write my first name – using a capital letter only for the first letter
- Use an inside voice in the classroom
- Communicate effectively with peers and adults

