

School Readiness

PART FIVE

Parents Edition

The Curiosity
Approach



School Readiness

Transitions

Welcome to this final edition of our School Readiness series. At The Curiosity Approach® we encourage Early Childhood educators, parents, and carers to recognise the importance of play. To understand the stages of child and brain development and to push back premature focus on academics, phonics, pencil control, and getting children ahead quicker faster sooner.

We recognise that there is a societal push to help children get ahead in today's modern world; however, it's also important to remember that childhoods are fleeting moments in time and for our youngest children, play is critical in these earliest years.



Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning, but for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.

Fred Rogers • Artist: Lucelle Raad

Fred is trying to tell us something critical about children here, and if we have our education-teacher hats on we might miss it. Play is to children like breathing, walking and talking - it's universal. The human child learns and constructs the foundations for success, including success in their abstract symbolic learning, by playing. Work is regarded as 'serious stuff' by adults, and so is 'learning', so Fred - and Maria Montessori - hoped that by calling play "children's work" we would get it. Get it?

Image Credit: Dance With me In The Heart

For many parents and carers, the prospect of their young child starting school can be a worrying time. It may be assumed that children need to be able to write their names in order to be school ready. However, this is one of the last things as a parent, carer, or educator we need to worry about. There are so many other ways we can prepare children and support children in readiness for school. In this Curiosity Approach 'School Readiness' series, we will share useful knowledge, information, and helpful hints and tips to prepare children for school.

As your child prepares to start school, it's natural to feel a mix of excitement and apprehension. This period of transition is a significant milestone for both you and your child. If you haven't yet read magazines one to four. These previous editions can be accessed via our Curiosity Approach App.



In this final easy-to-read magazine, we aim to help parents and carers navigate the transition of their child to reception class. It covers essential skills for children, emotional readiness for parents and children, as well as practical hints to assist before the big day.

According to research conducted by Disney Junior, a poll of 1,000 parents found the top concerns among those with children starting school, with 71 per cent citing 'settling in' as their biggest worry.



Psychologist Linda Blair said,
"To make friends, children must be able to consider life from other people's points of view so they can appreciate and react to what others want to do and enjoy."

Although young children show they're capable of appreciating other view points, they don't normally apply this skill until they're about five years old."

The top 10 concerns for parents when their child starts school, as reported in the article in FQ magazine, are as follows:

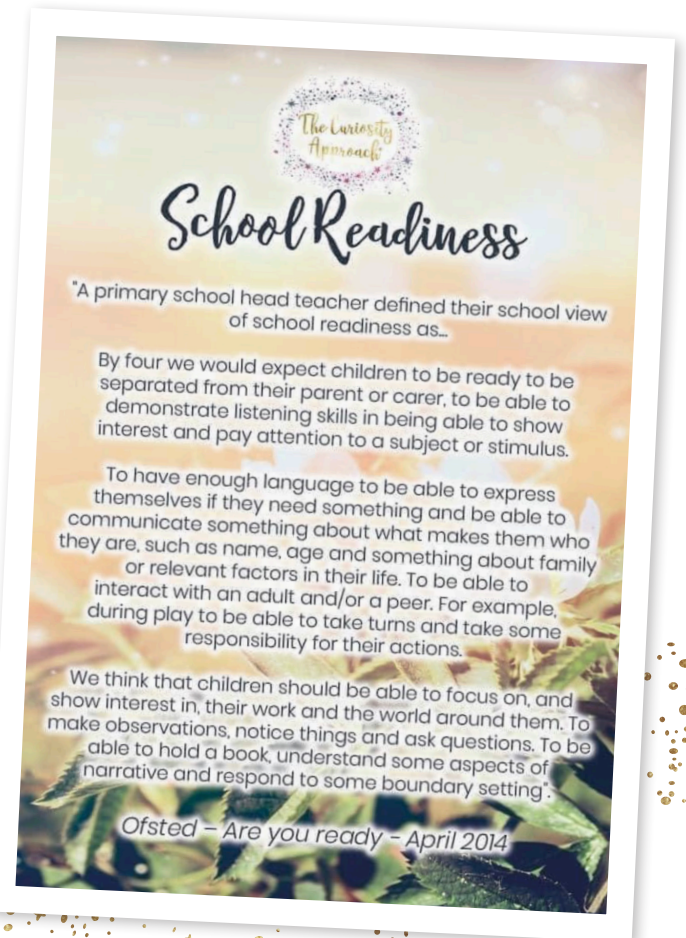
- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Settling in | 6. Not eating their lunch |
| 2. Making friends | 7. Losing their belongings |
| 3. Going to the toilet | 8. Not drinking enough water |
| 4. Misbehaving | 9. Getting lost |
| 5. Liking their teacher | 10. Being bottom of the class |

“All children start their school careers with sparkling imaginations, fertile minds, and a willingness to take risks with what they think.”

KEN ROBINSON

There can be so much pressure for children to be school-ready. But what does it actually mean, and where has the notion come from that children need to write their name before they begin school?

Don't worry; your child does not need to write their name in order to start school. In fact, school readiness is very much about whether your child is emotionally ready, has the ability to make friends, and can communicate their needs, ideas, and concerns. Will your child be able to separate from you with ease? Are they excited to start school, eager to learn, and curious about finding out new things? Does your child have the skills necessary to be able to help themselves, e.g., managing at mealtimes, toileting, and looking after their personal belongings?



School Readiness

If a child can hold a pencil,
write their own name,
count to 100,
recognise all the colours & shapes.
But doesn't know how to make friends.
Manage their emotions
and conflict resolution.
To be independent
& have self help skills.
None of the other stuff matters.

The Curiosity Approach

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Starting school is a significant transitional change for children, and it's important that children can navigate the transition with ease. Instead of focusing on academic outcomes such as formal handwriting and writing their name, as parents, carers, and Early Years educators, it's important that we help children develop skills such as emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence for young children means recognising and expressing feelings, understanding others' emotions, and managing

strong feelings positively. It involves identifying emotions like happiness and sadness, having the ability to express feelings through words or actions, and showing empathy towards others.

Developing emotional intelligence helps children build better relationships, take turns, regulate their emotions, show kindness and compassion, and succeed in school and life.



As parents and carers, we must be role models to children, preparing ourselves for the time when our child starts school. Maintaining a positive attitude about the upcoming transition. Your child will pick up on your emotions, so try to convey excitement and confidence about this new chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS: Recognise and acknowledge your own emotions about your child starting school. It's normal to feel a mix of pride, worry, and nostalgia. Talk to other parents or a support network if needed.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: With your child, start to get mentally prepared. Find out as much information as possible about the school and class your child will be starting at. Attend trial sessions, meet the teacher, go for walks to see the school. Have discussions about the uniform, lunch times, etc. Look at the school website online and talk, chat about what it will



Don't be afraid to ask questions. School is the place to satisfy your curiosity and grow your mind.



UNKNOWN



Find out important information...

WHAT

What class is my child in?

What is the daily routine?

What are school start and finish times?

What do I need to know about school meals?

WHERE

Where should my child go on the first day?

Where shall I stand to collect my child?

WHO

Who is my child's teacher?

Who is the support teacher, or teaching assistant?

Who are the senior staff?

Who is in my child's class?

WHEN

When can I chat about how settled my child is?

When are the school term dates and are there any PTA meetings (parent, teacher association)?

REMEMBER

It's also important that the school has as much information about your child as possible. Two way communication is always important and building that parent/school partnership. Share any information on allergies, medical information, additional needs and ALSO express any worries or concerns you may have.

The more information the teachers and school know about your child the better. This will help ease transition and enable the school and staff to make reasonable adjustments if required.



Did you know that children of all ages do better at school when parents are involved and engaged in their education.

The John Hattie's seminal 2008 study, Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement found that "the effect of parental engagement over a student's school career is equivalent to adding two or three years to that student's education".
Reference: Parentkind.org.uk.

When parents are involved in their education, children do better on a wide range of measures.

These positive effects include:

- Better behaviour
- More confidence and greater self-esteem
- Higher attendance rates
- A lower risk of exclusion
- More enthusiasm about learning
- Better results

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IN READINESS FOR SCHOOL?

In the upcoming months before starting school, there are lots of fun and helpful ways you can help your child make the transition to school. If you haven't yet read editions one to four of this series, we highly recommend you take the time to have a read. These will empower you to understand more about child development, stages of handwriting, gross motor, and fine motor skills. In the meantime, here are some simple hints and tips to get ready for the big day.

READ BOOKS ABOUT STARTING SCHOOL

Reading some books together about children starting school is a great way to open up a conversation or discussion, allowing children the opportunity to discuss any anxiety or nerves they may have.

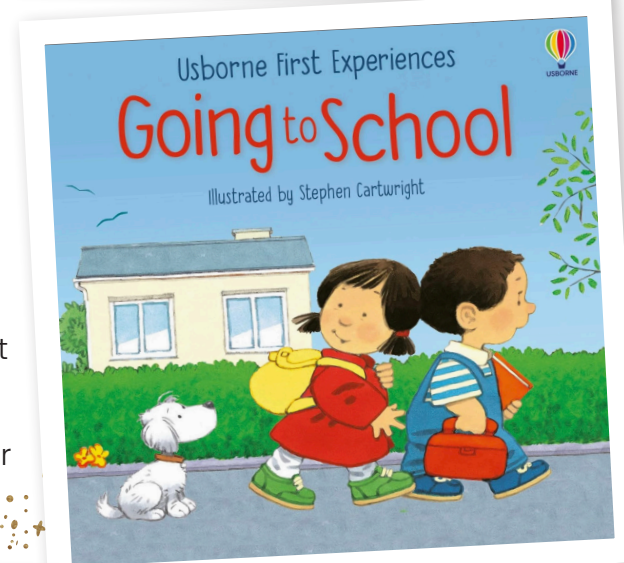
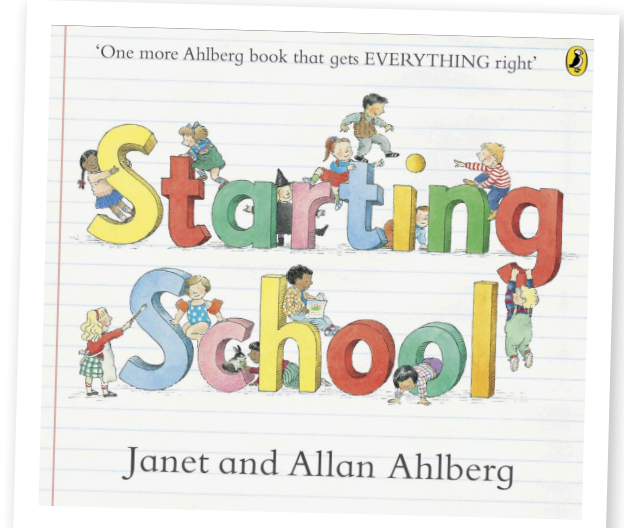
Kimberley Crisp and Anja Geelen Early Years experts from The Heart School say *"Provide a language rich environment for your child. Lots of books to browse through, reading aloud, telling stories from your own childhood, having conversations about everyday experiences, drawing their attention to meaningful print examples in the environment."*

Before starting school, children can benefit from developing a range of skills that will support their transition and early learning. Here are some key skills to focus on:

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO BE INDEPENDENT

The more independent your child is, the more this will help children feel more confident and relaxed as they start their first few days at school.

Support independence by encouraging your child to put toys away after themselves, use a knife and fork, scrape their plate after a meal, find their coat and shoes, dress themselves, and attempt to do up fastenings, buttons, or zips. All these skills will aid your child when at school.



SHOES

Laces can be a real challenge for young children, so a good idea would be to choose school shoes that have a velcro fastening.



SELF-HELP SKILLS

Foster further independence by helping your child practise practical skills such as opening their lunchbox, using the bathroom independently, and basic hygiene practices such as washing hands.



NAME RECOGNITION

When your child starts school, their given name will be everywhere, from the label inside their clothing, on their book bag, drink bottle, and even inside the classroom. While it's not necessary for your child to be able to write their name, it would be really beneficial if they could easily recognise and identify it. Why not play some simple matching games to help your child identify their name easily.



NEW ROUTINES

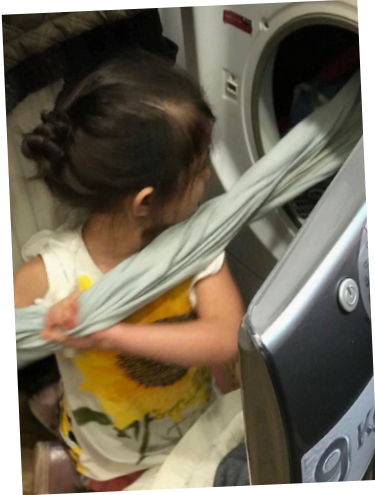
New Routines help your child and you establish school routines a few weeks before the term begins. Set regular bedtimes, morning routines, and meal times to help your child adjust to the schedule.

TRIAL SCHOOL RUN

Practise the school run a few times before the first day. This will help your child get used to the journey and reduce any anxiety about the commute.

NATURAL FAMILY EXPERIENCES

At home there are many natural family experiences that can prepare your child beautifully for a school setting. Here are some of the ways that the wide range of skills and dispositions that set our children up for success are developed. In this final section of this 'Readiness for School' Magazine we are delighted to share some useful ideas from Kimberley Crisp and Anja Geelen from The Heart School in New Zealand.



HOUSEHOLD TASKS

Involve your child in everyday experiences. Household tasks, outings and errands all engage your child in communicating with others, solving problems, seeing a task through from start to finish, and often involve early mathematical concepts such as matching, counting and arranging. Why not get your child to help load and unload the washing machine or dishwasher, to hang up or fold the laundry? These are all great opportunities for physical and cognitive development, children will practise listening to and following instructions.

BAKING

Baking is also a wonderful learning experience – following processes, measuring, understanding symbols, patience and care. Children will be learning mathematical concepts and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).



PEELING AND CHOPPING VEGETABLES

This is a great opportunity to manage risk, be proud of their achievements and recognising cause and effect. Also a fantastic opportunity for developing fine motor skills, strength, dexterity of fingers, hand and eye coordination and dual manipulation. A great prerequisite for emergent and writing skills once at school.



Use your child's questions as an opportunity for discovery. Don't just supply the answer, pose questions that have them thinking, and show them how they can start to find out.

For example;
"What do you think?",
"How could we find that out?",
"I wonder where that information could be"?



PLAY GAMES TOGETHER

More traditional board and card games are great ways of developing concentration, turn taking, number concepts, resilience, thinking and strategy skills. (Many of the newer games are very electronic or do a lot for the child, so think more of games like Checkers, memory games, Snakes and Ladders, are examples of games that build skills while also being fun).

ART

Provide art and mark making materials for your child to use freely. Children will experiment with their own developing skills and will try out making symbols and expressing their ideas if they have paper, felt pens and pencils available to follow their own interests with. Drawing is also the best foundation for pencil control.

Find alternatives to the iPad or mobile phone. If you and your child are going out for a meal, to a cafe or restaurant take a bag with items your child can play with. Pens and paper your child can draw with. This is a great alternative to screen time and promotes a child's innate drive to entertain themselves instead of being entertained by a gadget or electronic game. Engineering and Math).



GET OUTSIDE, IN ALL WEATHER

Let children experience nature, as in this great backdrop they develop their curiosity, sense of wonder, observation skills, language, understanding of the world, and large motor skills.



See your child's strengths. If children feel capable, they thrive. Notice what they are good at and are drawn to, and provide the opportunities to engage in this activity. Talk to them about what you learn about them as you watch them play and explore. Use positive language, and focus far more on what they CAN do than what they can't.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, be a role model. Children absorb what they see us do. Read books yourself, write lists or keep a journal, help others, care for the environment, solve conflict positively, be resilient, positive and curious. Anything you want to develop in your child – start with YOU!



CONCLUSION

Starting school is a significant milestone in your child's life, and with the right preparation and support, it can be a positive and exciting experience for the whole family. Remember to celebrate this new chapter in your child's life and cherish the moments of growth and learning ahead.

Good luck on this new journey!



We hope you have enjoyed this final magazine in our Curiosity Approach 'School Readiness' series.

The Curiosity Approach® is a modern day Early Childhood pedagogy dedicated to helping parents, carers and Educators push back on the challenges of this fast paced world and to celebrate play, empowerment of children to become the thinkers and doers of tomorrow, nurturing a mentally healthy generation.

We take this opportunity to thank Kimberley Crisp and Anja Geelen of The Heart School NZ for their wondrous contribution to this magazine. Please see their website **WWW.HEARTSCHOOL.NZ**

Reference
<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/assets/resources/Be-School-Ready-Primary-English-July-2023.pdf>

School Readiness

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