

# School Readiness Checklist

Getting ready for the transition to school can be an exciting and scary time for children and their parents. School readiness can be assisted by a little bit of forward planning. Being 'school ready' means a child has the skills they need for optimal learning.

Below are some activities to assist with their skill development:

## Body awareness, postural strength, balance and coordination

Ask your child to close their eyes, touch different parts of their body and name them as they go. Larger body parts will be easier and then they can accept the challenge of finding the smaller body parts!

Drawing around your child's body with chalk and then label their body parts. Drawing on a face can be fun!

Throw and catch a ball together.

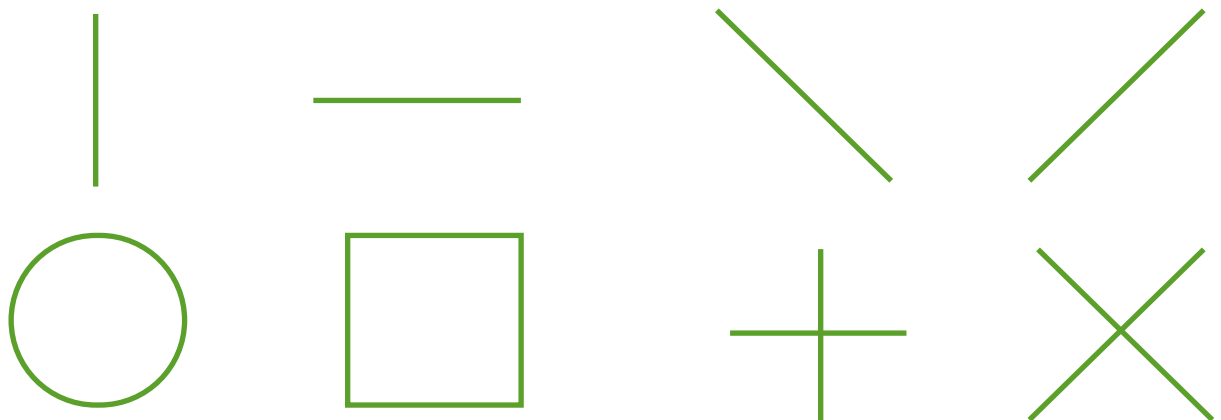
Roll your child up in a blanket with their head out and encourage them to see how quickly they can unroll their body.

Build an obstacle course. These are a fun and creative way to engage your child to learn a variety of skills. A range of balance, ball skills, crawling/animal walking, sorting numbers/letters, jumping, running and practicing left and rights can all be incorporated.

Try children's yoga. This can be a great way to help develop the postural strength required for extended sitting.

## Pre-writing lines and name writing

Children between the ages of 4 and 5 should be able to draw simple shapes. More complex shapes emerge between 5 and 6 years. Below are the pre-writing lines children are encouraged to work on prior to prep entry in order to lay down the foundations for handwriting skills:



Encourage your child to use a variety of these shapes and lines within their drawings.

Encourage your child to become a letter or shape detective! See how many of the shapes or letters you choose they can find around the house or out and about!

Use multi-sensory experiences. These make learning to write fun! Try some of these ideas:

- Sand or rice trays
- Finger or cotton tip painting
- Shaving foam
- Using lots of colours to turn letters or shapes into rainbows
- Playdough
- Gel or slime bags
- Sand at the beach
- Making letters or shapes out of items e.g. matchsticks, cotton balls, pompoms. Add in a challenge and use pegs or tweezers to move the pompoms!

## **Building shoulder and upper-limb stability**

Good shoulder and upper limb stability helps children to gain control over pencils and tools used in fine motor and handwriting activities.

Play with playdough – pushing, rolling and pounding. Try doing this activity standing up so your child engages their shoulders!

Try wheelbarrow walks

Use scooter boards. These are great tools to help your child build their upper limb strength.

Walk like an animal! Animal walking is a fun and engaging way to get your child to work on whole body strength building. Transitioning between dinner and bath time, play and toilet etc. can help motivate your child to engage in these movements throughout their day. Frogs, ducks, crabs and donkey kicking are examples.

## **Building wrist, hand and finger strength**

Encourage your child to engage in a variety of drawing, painting, colouring and writing activities on a vertical surface e.g. easel, fence or wall.

Play with playdough – this can be used to make a variety of fun items or to practice name writing and letter/number formation.

Play with water using sponges, washers and eye-droppers. Encourage your child to transfer water from one item to another – add colours or bubbles to make this activity more engaging.

Tear, rip and scrunch paper. This activity can incorporate name writing and letter or number practice too!

Use spray bottles and water pistols. Add some food dye and spray onto paper to make some great pictures or maybe help mum and dad clean the car!

Clip and zip containers – hide pieces of an activity e.g. puzzle pieces in separate containers and encourage your child to open each container to reveal the next piece! This is a great activity to work on building independence for opening lunch box containers.

Encourage your child to engage in threading and beading activities.

Use crayons or chalk to promote pencil grasp.

Play with Lego and other building toys to improve a variety of fine motor skills as well as sequencing and problem solving!

Encourage your child to help with household chores. Sweeping, cooking, pegging and sorting clothes into colours or clothing type can provide your child with opportunities to develop a variety of great skills.

Use tweezers or tongs to sort small items.

Engage in cut and paste activities.

## **Building attention and concentration**

Use visual timetables and schedules to help your child identify their morning and afternoon routine. This will let them know when their preferred activities are coming up.

Read books and act out the book in play. This can help children learn to sequence, substitute objects and plan during play. Try incorporating some actions not in the book to help your child build imagination and flexibility.

Use reward systems. Ensure expectations are clear and rewards are achievable.

Provide your child with whole body movement breaks throughout the day to help keep their bodies at the right speed for learning and playing.

Play games that use timers.

Use simple language to let them know when their bodies are too fast or too slow to learn or play can help children begin to understand how their bodies feel when they are starting to get too silly or stressed/frustrated and help them identify ways they can have a break to help their bodies to calm down or alert up as required.

Play 'Simon says' games.

Play a verbal follow the leader game: provide your child with verbal instructions to complete and gradually add in more steps to create some challenge!

## **Building independence in self-care tasks**

Use a visual sequence to teach your child how to complete tasks (blowing their nose, toileting, dressing etc.). Provide pictures of the steps to the task or make a short video to show the child how to complete the action. Social stories and video modelling are effective ways to teach children new and/or challenging skills.

After mealtimes, encourage your child to look at their face in the mirror and clean this off. Eventually, with adult prompt, they will be able to clean without a mirror. Gradually reduce the prompting until your child starts to become independently aware of messy hands and face.

Start toilet timing if your child is having frequent accidents. Start off by taking your child frequently throughout the day and over time expand this time e.g. start at every 30 minutes and move to every 45 then every hour.

Encourage your child to pack their lunch box with you so they get used to the zippers and containers.

Consulting with an Occupational Therapist is recommended if your child is showing strong reactions to sensitivities of clothing or shoes/socks.

## **Developing literacy skills**

Sing songs and nursery rhymes

Read books with your child every day – point to the words as you read them aloud. Talk about the pictures and ask questions. Talk about the front and back cover of the book and how we read from left to right. Encourage your child to turn the page.

Encourage your child to choose which book you will read together.

Point out words that rhyme.

Learn the alphabet and talk about letters.

Point out words throughout the day e.g. on signs, packaging at the supermarket.

Play 'I spy' – children are required to think of items that start with a sound or letter. Alternatively you can describe an item e.g. "It has four wheels, doors and windows, it goes on the road, we drive in it" and ask your child to guess what it is. You can then encourage your child to do the describing.

**If you have any concerns about your child's development and are worried about their transition to school:**

- Speak with your child's child care/kindergarten educator, General Practitioner or Paediatrician.
- Contact an Allied Health Professional such as a Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist or Psychologist.
  - Attend school readiness group programs.



**For more information or support please do not  
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