

## Starting Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten can be an exciting time full of possibilities and adventures for both the kindy child and their family, but for some children it can also be a source of anxiety.

For many children coming to kindergarten it may be the first time they are away from their family. Kindergarten is a new and unfamiliar environment; there are many new faces, routines, rules and a lot of new things to learn.

There are a number of things that you can do to support your child's transition into kindergarten. Being familiar with the kindergarten gives your child a greater sense of comfort and what to expect on their first day,

Talk generally and positively to your child about kindergarten and some of the things they might do, particularly related to their interests. You may want to share your own positive kindergarten experiences, "When I went to kindergarten my favourite thing was to play on the swings". Sometimes talking about kindergarten too much can become overwhelming and create anxiety, keep it general and take your child's lead.

There are a number of children's story books about starting kindergarten. Reading books is a nonthreatening way of introducing the topic of starting kindergarten and providing reassurance.

Creating a morning routine helps support your child's transition into kindergarten, it provides predictability and a sense of security. Involve your child in the routine supporting them to pack their own bag, get dressed etc. Allow enough time and keep the routine calm.

Have a goodbye plan, many children will want to say goodbye before they are even out the car, but other children will need more support. It is vitally important that you involve your child in creating the plan and that you say goodbye, rather than sneaking out. Your plan might be, "We will have a little play inside and then I will give you a special hug; what would you like to do together?"

If you think your child will require support when saying goodbye, please let an educator know before you say goodbye so we can be with your child. Say "goodbye, I will pick you up at the end of the day" once and leave quickly. Saying goodbye multiple times or saying goodbye and not leaving is confusing and teaches your child that you say one thing, but do another. While as a parent it can be heartbreaking to see your child upset, once you have said goodbye it is important that you follow through on this, the longer you stay the more stressful the situation becomes for everyone. More often than not children settle quickly with the support of the educator and have generally stopped crying before you are even back in the car!

If you are concerned about your child please ring us to check on them, don't try and peak through the gate or window. Rest assured if your child is upset for an extended period of time and unable to be consoled we will call you.

Please never leave your child without saying "goodbye", while it may seem like a good idea to leave while they are happy and to not upset them, once they realise you are gone it is very frightening. Children can feel a sense of loss and abandonment, they will learn that you can't be trusted and will be anxious about coming to kindergarten the next time.

If your child is happy for you to leave please let an educator know that you have said

goodbye so we can keep an eye on your child. Sometimes children are happy for you to leave, but a few moments later realise what this means and try to follow you out of the gate.

Never leave your child in the kindergarten yard or just inside the gate. The mornings are very busy times at kindergarten and if educators don't know that your child has arrived we can't ensure their safety. Please ensure you bring your child inside once the kindergarten day has started, this routine assists in create a sense of security and predictability and supports educators in providing a safe environment.

If your child is anxious about attending kindergarten or doesn't want to come, please talk with us. Together we can make a plan to support you and your child. We want coming to kindergarten to be a positive experience for everyone.