

## Selecting a School

Select a school carefully. Be fully informed about the school, its policies and whether it meets the needs of your child.

Remember that you are the adult. It's best for you to make the decision regarding which school your child will attend.

Giving them some choice is not really appropriate. You are the best judge of how well a school meets the needs of you and your child. Your child may simply choose the one he/she remembers last, or the one where they played sport when you visited.

School should be talked about from now-on in a matter-of-fact manner. Avoid making it a big issue or something magical or mysterious.

Drive past the school when it's operating and on weekends.

Gain the principal's permission for you to enter the grounds and look around or play on equipment.

Show your child where the toilets are. Point out that there are toilets for girls and separate toilets for boys.

Most schools are happy for you and your child to visit the prep room a few times during fourth term whilst the class is in action.

Make sure you attend all orientation days, social get-togethers etc.

If you have a friend's child or another child from this centre attending the same school, organise for your children to play and meet during the holidays. Plan to meet together on the first day.

You may make requests for your child to be in a particular class if you feel strongly about this. It is worth mentioning that while this helps children to feel a little less anxious, they will usually mix quickly with all other children in a class, if they already know some children attending.

Make a special trip to buy school bag/lunch box etc and use it often. Do not save it up for the first day of school. Practise having your child open glad wrap,

eating sandwiches first before cakes, etc. Greaseproof paper is often easier.

Encourage your child to dress him/herself, practise buttons, zips, etc. Laces are often difficult for a child under six years to manage.

Avoid statements to your child such as "I'll miss you," or "Will you miss me?"

These may add to the emotional pressure or cause anxiety. Statements such as, "I'll pick you up from the classroom," or "I'll look forward to hearing about what you did today," are far more reassuring.

If you can walk to the school, practise during the holidays and on the weekends.

Over the holidays and for the remainder of this year, encourage your child to spend some time drawing or writing, using paste and scissors, to help them to feel confident with these working tools.

Check with the centre staff about which areas your child needs to work on in terms of school preparation.

Remember: concentrating and attending and finishing tasks are important aspects of school and should be encouraged at home as well. Introduce a small job or responsibility in the home, eg. collecting mail each day.

Ensure your child knows their name, address and age.