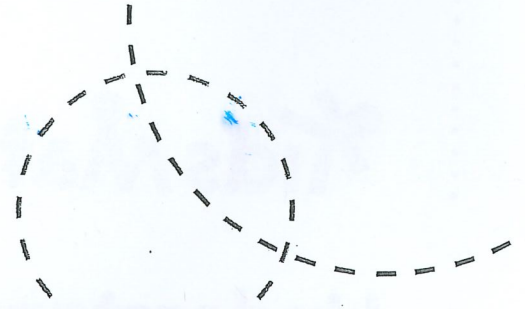


A change for the whole family

Starting school is not only a change for your child. Amid the excitement and preparation it can be important to take a moment to think about how this change affects you and your family. As you help your child to prepare for the changes ahead, it is important to monitor your own feelings. Having your child start school may lead to a new routine for you and your family. There may also be a period of adjustment as you begin to connect with the new school community and feel the loss of strong relationships formed at your child's early childhood education and care (ECEC) service. Thinking a little about how things are going to change for everyone can help you to make sure the whole family is ready for starting school.





Connecting with your child's school

As well as experiencing a mix of emotions about your child starting school, you may also experience a change in the strong relationships formed within your child's ECEC community. This is a good time to start linking in with your child's school community, which will help your family to feel supported and allow you to develop new relationships. Building connections between your family and the school will also help your child adjust to their new setting as you are able to provide and share valuable knowledge about your child. There may be opportunities where your child's school will seek information about your child. At other times you might find opportunities to communicate with them and take steps to become a part of the school community.

In preparing for starting school, it will be helpful to:

- Attend information nights and transition sessions held by your school.
- Share information about your child and their previous environment. One way to do this is to provide the school with a picture book about your child in their ECEC service (see the Starting School *A picture book about me* online resource). It's also a good idea to find out what information your ECEC service has passed onto the school.
- Speak with school staff if you are concerned about a particular issue (eg your child's fear of using school toilets, separation anxiety) and plan how you will address it before your child starts school.

Once your child has started school, there are many different ways you can continue to build connections. It is important to be involved in a way that suits you and your family. It can be helpful to:

- Maintain regular communication with your child's teacher and school staff. This includes talking to the school about your child's needs and interests, and discussing ways that the school can support your family.
- Stay informed through attending information evenings and activities at the school.
- Look out for social opportunities where your family can build relationships with other families throughout the school year.
- Take an interest in your child's learning. Talk to your child's teacher about what they are learning and how you can support this at home. Ask your child about their day and acknowledge their efforts in learning tasks.
- Look out for opportunities to share your knowledge, ideas and experiences with the wider school community (eg volunteering, sharing cultural traditions and customs).

Remember, everything you do makes a difference in supporting your child's learning and development, and building a positive relationship with your school community. If you are not sure how to be involved, ask your child's teacher or other families for ideas.

Starting school is a huge milestone for your child, but the changes also have an impact on the whole family. It is important to monitor your own emotions and consider how your routine will change. Supportive relationships and building connections with your school community will help your child and family during this time.

