



Yarralea Children's Centre

Fact Sheet: School Readiness *Ready or Not?*

Readiness for school is in itself an important factor for consideration before starting school, despite the responsive and adaptable programs that schools provide for children and the emphasis upon individualising learning for each child.

Readiness is not about schools just adapting and attempting to meet the needs of children. International research emphasises that certain areas of development and maturity are essential for children so that once at school, they are able to maximise the opportunities provided.

Social and emotional areas are the key areas of development that are most important for a child in regard to school readiness. This is in contrast to what many people believe -reading, writing and knowing colours or numbers are NOT readiness indicators. Some schools may suggest this is necessary, however this is only a reflection of a particular school's position and not reflective of a child's readiness for school. The key areas of social and emotional maturity related to school readiness can be summarised by reviewing these questions. At preschool does your child....

1. Separate easily from parent/ carer at preschool drop off
2. Independently make a decision of where they are going to work / play
3. Self initiate, engage and sustain engagement (6 –8 minutes), have the skills to solve basic problems and ask for help from the educator if needed
4. Work and play besides other children
5. Have basic independence skills (able to put shoes and socks on, art smock on, toileting independently)
6. Sit with the group (eg mat time) and remain focused, ask questions and answer questions from the educator
7. Self regulate their emotional response when they need to do something they don't want to (eg don't tantrum when it is time to pack up)

The importance of these skills related to school readiness is highlighted when one imagines a class of twenty school children who do not have these skills. The good news is that most children when they start school have these skills; unfortunately however there will be some children who start school and do not have these skills. This is why making informed decisions about children and school readiness is paramount to giving children the opportunity to thrive and flourish.... not just cope.

The following information may help guide parents when making their decision related to when to start their child at school.

- Young boys, according to some research, may benefit from having an additional year to mature before commencement.
- Remember that Victoria has one of the youngest age entries into school anywhere in the world.
- Ask yourself, "am I in a rush to send my child to school?"
- There is no detrimental impact of giving a child an additional year; in fact it is often viewed as a bonus year.
- Don't assume children will magically 'catch up' once they start school. In the majority of cases, they don't, and in fact the problems in maturity usually become more pronounced.
- Don't send a child to school already thinking they can repeat prep if they have to. We want the first year of school to be exciting, successful and not just one where the child attempts to 'cope' and then has to do it all again.
- Readiness for school or kindergarten is about having the maturity to make the most of these early years.
- Being legally ready to start school does not mean the child will be ready and does not mean that the child must start school at that time
- For further information see the book, *Ready Set Go* by Kathy Walker which has a number of chapters related to readiness, preparation and choice of school or speak to your kindergarten teacher.

This information is taken from: <http://earlylife.com.au/info/sites/default/files/School%20Readiness.pdf>

Listed below are some school readiness indicators:

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

(1). Physical readiness for school.

Possession of adequate levels of energy and stamina to enable the child to concentrate for a full day at school.

(2). Age appropriate gross and fine motor skills.

Children are skilled at running, climbing and jumping.

Children can control a pencil and cut with scissors.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

(3). Responsibility and Respect.

Children can listen to instructions and can carry them out independently.

Children can be aware of how their own behaviour impacts on others.

(4). Readiness to explore new things.

Self-confidence so that the child does not have to devote energy to defending against fear of failure and is willing to try new tasks.

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

(5). Pro Social behaviour

Plays with other children and is able to take turns and engage in cooperative activities.

Children have basic peer relationships skills which can allow them to do things like enter a group of playing children.

(6). Ability to manage emotions.

Children can control their own emotions, such as anger or frustration, in many situations with minimal adult assistance.

Child has some ability to stop and think before deciding how to act.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

(7). Ability to clearly communicate one's own needs and understand others.

To do this, the child must be able to:

- join simple sentences together to describe a past or present action or experience.
- hold a prolonged conversation and express ideas.

(8). Interest in general knowledge about the world.

Child has an understanding of his/her place in the world and has curiosity about the world around them.

LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

(9). Basic Literacy

Children begin to understand that:

- a story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- language can be used symbolically to represent remote or even imaginary events.
- recognise their name on belongings, locker etc

(10). Basic Numeracy.

Child has an understanding of categorisation and can reliably sort by colour or shape.

Adapted from <http://planningwithkids.com/2008/04/29/10-indicators-of-school-readiness/>