

Preparing for preschool

Starting preschool at a young age can give children a great start in life and set them on a path of lifelong learning. The early years are when children's brains grow and develop more quickly than at any other time. It's the perfect opportunity to develop their confidence, social skills and love of learning.

In South Australia some children can start preschool at 3 years of age. This will expand over the coming years to include more families. To give children the strongest possible start, families and educators can work together to support any learning or social needs before school begins.

Why start at age 3?

The early years are very important for learning, brain development and laying the foundations for wellbeing. Preschool provides a safe, play-based, caring environment. It supports children to:

- build confidence and curiosity in a new environment
- develop a sense of belonging before school begins
- practise routines and expectations.



It helps them develop:

- language and communication
- social skills (sharing, cooperating, making friends)
- emotional skills (managing feelings)
- thinking and problem-solving
- physical coordination.

Learning through play

Children learn best through play, movement and exploration. At preschool they may:

- explore art, blocks, sand and water
- listen to stories and develop language
- play outdoors and build physical skills
- practise taking turns and solving problems.

Supporting your child

Early childhood educators understand children at this age are still learning how to separate from

family members, manage big feelings and explore the world around them. They help children to:

- feel safe and secure
- build relationships
- develop confidence at their own pace.

There is no expectation for children to have specific skills before starting.

Getting ready for preschool

Starting preschool can be a big change for families. You might feel excited, unsure or a bit of both – and that's completely normal. There are simple things you can do to help your child feel more comfortable, such as:

- talking positively about preschool
- visiting beforehand
- practising small routines
- keeping goodbyes calm.

Routines and transition

Simple, everyday routines help children to adjust. It can help to:

- wake up and get ready at regular times
- prepare items the night before
- use praise and encouragement.

Working together

Families and educators work best as partners. Sharing information about your child helps educators provide the right support.

- Share your child's interests, needs, strengths.
- Ask questions and raise concerns early (there is no such thing as a 'silly' question).

Supporting children who need extra help

Preschools work closely with families and other services to support children's individual and additional needs. Support may include:

- extra time to settle in
- adjusted routines
- specialist support if needed
- translation/interpreting for non-English speaking families.

Every child has the right to feel included and supported. If your child needs additional support, preschool staff will work with you to help their learning and development.



Note: The term 'Parents' in this Guide refers to anyone caring for and/or raising children and young people.

Want more information?

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Important: This information is not intended to replace advice from a qualified practitioner.

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