LET'S CHAT ABOUT

STARTING BIG SCHOOL

CENTRAL COAST TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We pay our respects to Elders, past and present for their valuable knowledge, wisdom and loving care passed onto our community.

This book is dedicated to the youth of Australia who will shape our world and continue to develop our country's future.

This book was adapted from the 'Off to Big School' and 'Let's Yarn about Big School' Publications.

The Department of Education would like to acknowledge and thank: the children, staff and community of Chertsey Primary School for their contributions to this publication.

www.centralcoasttransitiontoschool.com.au

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This book was funded through the Families NSW Strategy. A NSW government initiative supporting vulnerable children and families.

More copies are available from:
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NSW GOVERNMENT Education Public Schools

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The Big Questions

Beginning school is a big transition for any child and family. This booklet has been designed to help you make a decision about sending your children to school and about making this transition as happy as possible for you and your child. We aim to answer your big questions. These often include:

- Is my child ready to go to school?
- Who will be looking after my child?
- Will they be happy at school?
- Will they eat their lunch?
- Will they make friends?
- Will they listen to the teacher?
- Will the teachers care for my child and understand their needs?

Worries and concerns about big school are normal; starting school can be very scary. With encouragement and support, it can be a positive and fun experience.

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KINDERGARTEN

ENROLMENT AGE

Children may enrol in kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn five years of age on or before the 31st July in that year. It is the intention that children be enrolled in school by the beginning of the year that they turn six.

If you have any questions concerning the age of your child and when they should be enrolled, please contact your local school.

When do I enrol my child?

If you have further questions or concerns about enrolment age, please contact your local school or your child's preschool for school readiness advice.

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The Big Decision

Consider your child's:

- Age
- Emotional Development or Maturity
- Intellectual Development
- Specific Individual Needs.

Before starting school, it would be really valuable for your child to attend a preschool or early learning centre. This would allow them to become part of valuable learning programs and experiences. Local playgroups are also another good opportunity for children to learn and develop social skills.

The most commonly asked question is...

Is my child ready to go to school?

Social And Emotional Development

Social and Emotional Skills center around making positive relationships and being aware of the emotions of ourselves and others. Emotional skills are about learning to manage and express feelings appropriately.

Children need social and emotional skills when coming to school so that they can communicate effectively and start to build great friendships.

Preschools And Playgroups

Preschool and playgroups help your child prepare for school.

Children benefit from the social interaction that preschools and playgroups offer. Ask your local preschool about their transition to school programs.

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How Do I Help?

Having a routine is very important in setting a child up for a smooth transition to school.

Some good routines to consider are:

- Sleep Routines - A good night's sleep is very important. Set up regular sleep times.
- Breakfast Routines - Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Going to school with a belly full of good breakfast, kick-starts a great day of learning.
- Morning Routines - Help your child develop positive morning routines, including getting dressed independently. Practising packing a bag and lunchbox is a helpful routine to begin before starting big school.

Routine is the key!

Literacy Development

To help with your child's literacy development you can:

- Read to your child every day. Ask questions about the stories you've shared together.
- Talk to your child. Practise talking and listening by taking turns in conversations.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes.
- Have lots of reading and writing materials available for your child. Books, paper, pencils, chalk etc.
- Help your child to learn to write their name. This might be unrecognisable for some time, and this is OK.

The best thing that you can do for your child's education and overall development is read to them everyday!

Numeracy Development

The following is a list of everyday things that you can involve your child in to help them develop their numeracy skills.

- Counting pegs and grouping in colours.
- Cooking to explore volume and measurement.
- Identify the size of things with simple language. For example, 'Your cup is big, but my cup is little'.
- Supermarket shopping- Weight. You could talk about some items being heavy and others being light. Shopping is also a great way to talk about the position of things. 'The baked beans are above the Weet-Bix on the shelf'.
- Use other mathematical words such as up, down, in front, behind, more, less etc.
- Sharing- Encourages the beginning thought of fractions. For example, 'I'm eating half of the pizza.'
- Pairing socks is a great activity that encourages matching and grouping. This is the beginning of multiplication.

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Preparing your Child for School

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PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

ENROL

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO ENROL IN YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL EARLY AND MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD GOES TO THE SCHOOLS' ORIENTATION DAYS.

ATTEND ORIENTATION DAYS

AT THE ORIENTATION DAY YOU WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- LOOK AROUND THE SCHOOL.
- MEET TEACHERS AS WELL AS OTHER CHILDREN WHO WILL BE STARTING KINDERGARTEN.
- MEET OTHER PARENTS WHO HAVE CHILDREN BEGINNING KINDERGARTEN.

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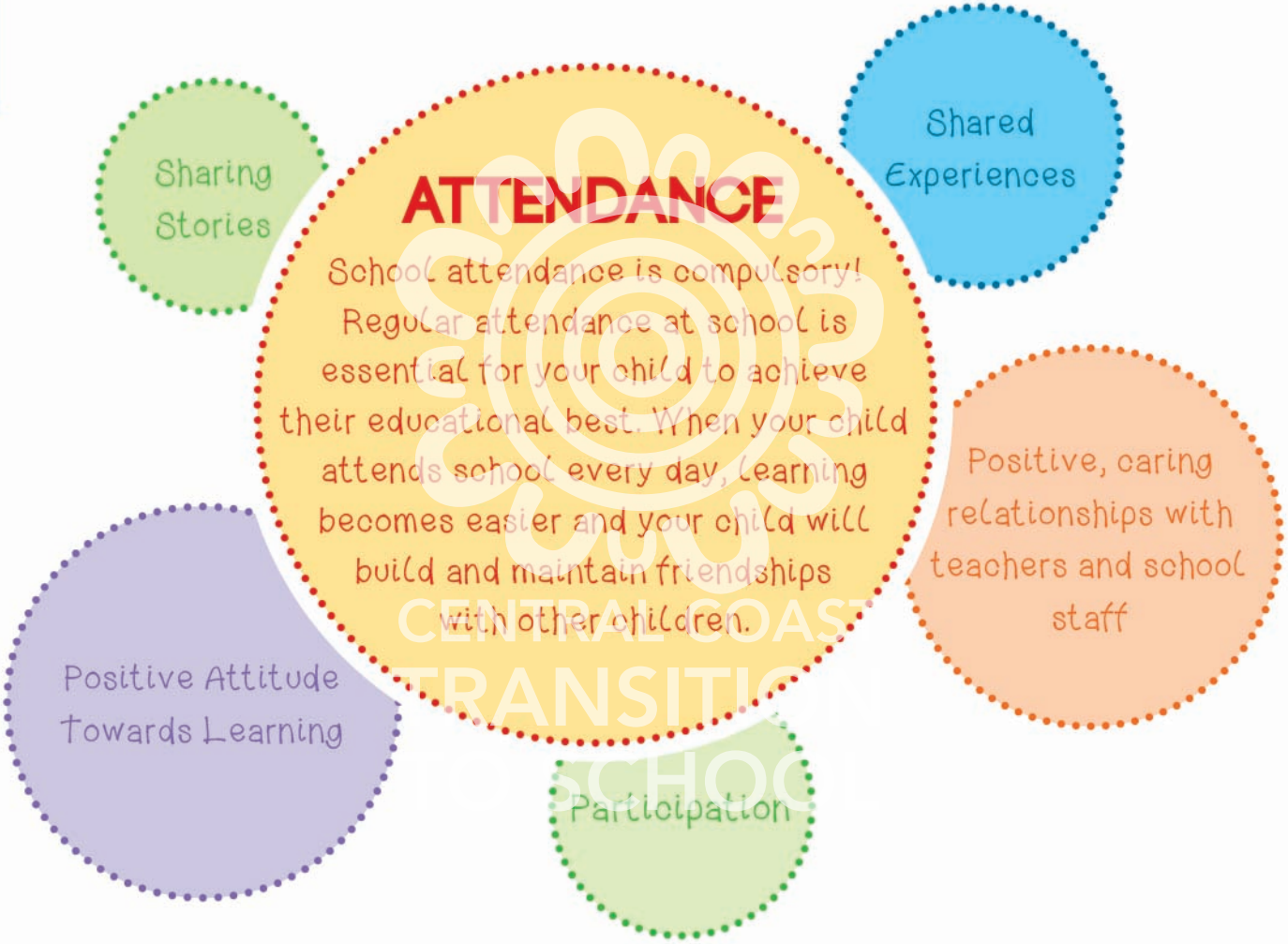
ATTEND PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS

MOST SCHOOLS HOLD PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS.
AT A PARENT INFORMATION SESSION, YOU WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- ASK QUESTIONS
- MEET TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

What Makes A Successful School Life?



Parents and carers play an essential role in developing the foundations to learning, on which the rest of their child's education is built. Remember to talk to your child about their day. You may even like to volunteer to help at school. You could help in the canteen, for classroom reading groups or to even share some of your cultural stories.

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Best Start Assessment

What is it? A statewide Kindergarten assessment that helps teachers identify the literacy and numeracy skills of each student at the beginning of kindergarten.

Why Does My Child do a Best Start Assessment? The Best Start assessment is designed to provide teachers with information to best plan effective teaching and learning programs for their students.

Who Will Be There? Your child will sit with a kindergarten teacher. You are welcome to be in the room with your child if they are feeling worried or apprehensive.

When Will It Happen? The Best Start Assessment will usually be carried out in the first week of term 1 before your child officially begins school.

Remember: The Best Start Assessment <u>is not</u> used as a test to see if your child is or isn't ready for school.

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WHERE TO BEGIN

If you have a child with a disability or additional learning needs, it is recommended that you make contact with either your local school or your regional Department of Education (DOE) office **12 months prior** to your child starting school. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your child's specific educational and support needs with relevant staff.

Where your child has specific physical access needs, it is recommended that you make initial contact with your local school or regional DOE office **two years prior** to starting school. This will give the Department time to ensure your schooling options are identified and any infrastructure is ready when your child starts school.

Have relevant recent medical and therapeutic assessments available when meeting with school staff

and when enrolling your child in school.

Your preschool or other early childhood service can also assist with transition to school. If your child is not supported by these services, you can contact your local school or regional DOE office, which may offer an extended transition to school or early intervention program in your area.

To assist in a smooth transitional journey for your child, chat with members of your support network for advice. These people may be members of your family, friends, your GP, paediatrician, advocacy group, therapists or other parents with children with additional needs.

HEALTHY lunchbox snacks

Swap snacks that are high in fat, sugar, salt and low in fibre for quick and easy healthy snacks!

HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS: ✓

- ✓ Pikelets
- ✓ Fruit bread
- ✓ Plain rice cakes
- ✓ Air-popped popcorn
- ✓ Wholegrain crackers
- ✓ Reduced fat yoghurt
- ✓ Reduced fat cheese
- ✓ Vegetable sticks eg celery, carrot, capsicum
- ✓ Cherry tomatoes
- ✓ Corn cob
- ✓ Cucumber
- ✓ Fruit (whole or sliced) eg grapes, orange segments, kiwi fruit, mango slices, pear, apple, banana

✗ SNACKS **BEST LEFT OUT** OF THE LUNCHBOX:

- ✗ Muffins and cakes
- ✗ Sweet biscuits
- ✗ Savoury biscuits
- ✗ Muesli bars
- ✗ Sweet rice bars
- ✗ Fruit straps
- ✗ Chocolate
- ✗ Lollies
- ✗ Potato chips
- ✗ Corn chips
- ✗ Processed cheese & biscuits
- ✗ Soft drink
- ✗ Flavoured milk
- ✗ Fruit drinks

swap!

munch & move®

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

This resource was developed and designed by the Health Promotion Service, Western Sydney Local Health District, with contribution by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.

Pack your child a

HEALTHY LUNCH BOX

Choose a variety of foods from each food group

Fruit

+

Vegetables

+

Dairy

+

Wholegrains

+

Lean meat & alternatives

= A Healthy Lunch Box

CENTRAL COAST TRANSITION TOOLKIT

MAKE WATER YOUR DRINK

PACK ICE BRICKS TO KEEP FOOD COOL

USE A THERMOS TO KEEP FOOD WARM

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Important Things To Remember

At Enrolment:

- You will be asked for a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunisation register. Your child's immunisation register can be found online by searching 'Australian Child Immunisation Register'.
- Your school will require proof of address to make sure you are in their catchment area. A bill of some description is fine to use for this.
- Your school will also need to know about any medical conditions your child may have. You could be asked to supply a medical health plan available from your GP.

How to Get Involved Within the School Community:

- Most schools would love volunteers to help within the canteen and during classroom activities such as reading groups or creative arts.
- Attend school assemblies.
- Organise social activities outside of school to network with other families from the school community.

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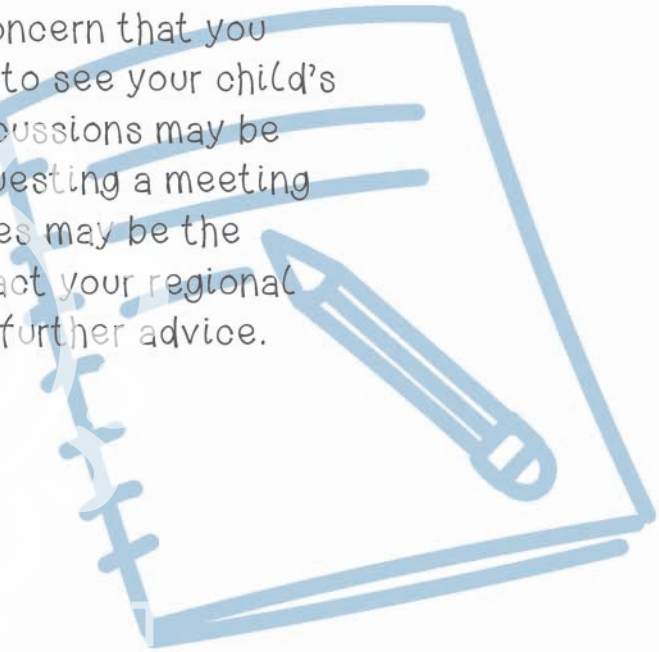
Extra Support

At times you may have an issue or concern that you would like to talk about. Remember to see your child's classroom teacher first. Further discussions may be had with the school principal by requesting a meeting time. Other available support avenues may be the school counsellor or you could contact your regional Department of Education Office for further advice.



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Learn Lots and Enjoy Big School!

If you would like to chat some more, please contact your local school.

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