

Week 1:
Preparing for Prep



GET SET FOR PREP

Session Overview:

- 1. Why transition programs are important*
- 2. Why focus on independence skills?*
- 3. Encouraging independence at home*
- 4. Establishing routines*
- 5. Promoting Social Skills*
- 6. Building emotional resilience*
- 7. Encouraging Problem-solving and decision making*
- 8. Practical tips*



Why Transition Matters

- *School readiness: promotes academic and social success throughout schooling*
- *Social and emotional Competence: Fosters skills such as the ability to self-regulate, co-operate with peers and adapt to new skills*
- *Independence and adaptability: Following routines, managing belongings, and problem-solving without adult direction.*

Why Transition Matters

- Parental involvement: Evidence shows that parents engaged in the transition process have children who are less anxious about starting school
- Long-term benefits: Associated with better attendance, higher academic achievements and stronger relationships with peers.
- Transition to School

Independence and Social Skills

- *Foundation for Success:* "Research shows that children who enter school with strong social and independent skills are better equipped to manage the classroom environment and adjust to routines."
- *What Prep Teachers Expect:* In prep, teachers look for children who can follow instructions, take care of personal needs, and collaborate with peers. These skills help them feel more in control and less anxious."
- *Holistic Growth:* "Building these skills not only supports academic achievement but also helps children become confident, engaged learners and cooperative classmates."

Encouraging Independence at Home

- *Managing Belongings:* Encourage your child to take responsibility for their belongings—whether it's packing up toys after playtime or carrying their own backpack to school. These small actions build a sense of responsibility.
- *Give Opportunities to Lead:* Let your child have small leadership roles at home—such as setting the table or helping you pack for a family outing. This builds pride in their independence.

Encouraging Independence at Home

- **Daily Tasks for Independence:** Start incorporating tasks at home that promote self-reliance. Simple activities like putting on shoes, getting dressed, and packing bags for outings can boost their confidence.
- **Mealtime Practices:** Practice opening lunchboxes, peeling fruit, and unwrapping snacks. These are skills that children will need to manage on their own in prep.

Establishing Routines

Morning Routine: "Help your child practice the steps involved in getting ready for school. Establish a routine that includes getting dressed, brushing teeth, eating breakfast, and packing a bag. Make this routine the same every day so it becomes second nature.

Bedtime Routine: "A calming bedtime routine that includes winding down with a book or quiet activity helps children rest well and feel ready for the next day. Consistent bedtimes are essential for well-rested, happy learners. routines with as little help as possible. The more they practice, the more confident and capable they'll feel.



Establishing Routines

- *Teach Time Management:* "Use visual schedules or simple charts to help your child understand the sequence of events. For example, 'First we brush our teeth, then we pack our bag, and then we have breakfast.' This helps children develop time management skills.
- *Practice Makes Perfect:* Give children time to practice these routines with as little help as possible. The more they practice, the more confident and capable they'll feel.



Promoting Social Skills

- **Playdates and Group Activities:** Encourage socialization with other children through playdates or community activities. These opportunities teach sharing, turn-taking, and how to play cooperatively with others.
- **Role-Playing Scenarios:** Act out common social situations they may encounter at school, like asking to join a game or meeting new children. Role-playing builds confidence in handling these scenarios.
- **Using Words to Solve Problems:** Teach children to express their needs and feelings verbally rather than reacting impulsively. Phrases like 'Can I play too?' or 'That made me feel sad' can help them navigate social interactions with peers.
- **Model Positive Social Behavior:** "Children learn by watching. Model polite greetings, active listening, and positive problem-solving so they have examples to follow.

Building Emotional Resilience

- **Recognising Emotions:** Encourage your child to talk about how they're feeling. Labelling emotions like 'happy,' 'sad,' or 'frustrated' helps them better understand and communicate their feelings.
- **Calming Strategies:** Teach simple calming techniques such as deep breathing or counting to 10 when they feel upset. Having these tools in their 'toolbox' helps them self-regulate when they're feeling overwhelmed.
- **Support Through Books:** Books can be a great way to introduce emotional topics. Read stories that focus on managing emotions, making friends, and handling challenges.
- **Provide Reassurance:** Reassure your child that it's okay to feel a range of emotions. Focus on validating their feelings while also guiding them toward solutions.

Encouraging Problem Solving

- *Letting Them Decide:* "Encourage small choices throughout the day—like choosing between two outfits or picking their snack. This helps them build decision-making skills.
- *Problem-Solving Opportunities:* When conflicts arise (like a disagreement with a sibling), guide your child through simple problem-solving steps. Ask questions like, 'What happened? How could we solve this?'
- *Promoting Independence in Problem-Solving:* Rather than immediately stepping in to resolve conflicts or challenges, give your child time to think through solutions on their own. This fosters independent thinking and resilience.

Practical Tips

- *Be Patient:* Give your child time to complete tasks on their own, even if it's slower than you'd like. This teaches them persistence and builds confidence.
- *Offer Positive Reinforcement:* Praise your child when they demonstrate independence or handle social situations well. Highlight their efforts to boost their motivation.
- *Allow for Mistakes:* It's important to let your child make mistakes. Mistakes are a valuable part of learning, and it's through these experiences that children develop resilience.

Recap

1. Over the next three months, focus on fostering independence through daily routines and providing opportunities for social practice. Small, consistent actions will make a big difference in preparing your child for prep
2. Whilst “nice”, a child knowing their 123 and ABC is not crucial to a successful prep year, whereas social skills and independence is key.