

### **Visit the preschool to become familiar with the setting**

The more familiar your child is with the preschool staff and the environment, the easier it will be for your child to settle into the preschool. Visit preschool during orientation week, or at other convenient times. Parents/carers can observe the preschool in operation and have the opportunity to meet the staff, ask questions and discuss any concerns. Your child will have an opportunity to mix with other children, meet the preschool staff, and become familiar with the environment while feeling secure that someone familiar is close by.

### **Be positive**

Parents/carers play an important role in shaping your child's attitude toward preschool. A balance of enthusiasm and matter-of-fact acceptance is a good approach. Honestly discuss with your child about the friends they will meet and the activities they will be able to participate in.

### **Reassure your child**

Many children feel a little uncertain about starting preschool. Answer your child's questions honestly. Make sure your child knows you will be there to pick them up at the end of the session and ensure they know what to do if they feel worried about anything during the day. Help them to readily identify their own belongings and to be independent with personal hygiene skills such as toileting. **If you are confident when discussing preschool with your child, they will feel reassured that everything is all right.**

### **Be well informed**

Parents/carers need to be prepared for preschool, too. Talk to the Director and the preschool teacher to find out as much information as you can about your child attending preschool. If you know about the new routines and experiences your child will encounter, you will be ready to answer any questions they might have, such as: How will I get there? How long will I be there? How many days do I have to go? What if I want to go to the toilet? What room will I be in and what am I going to do there? Will I get to play?

The first day of preschool can be an anxious experience for both you and your child. Preparing your child for preschool by answering all their questions honestly and in as much detail as they can understand can curb potential anxieties.

### **Find out what your child will need to bring to preschool**

Read your Parent Handbook it will contain all the details you need to know about preschool and what to bring. If unsure about anything talk to your Director or preschool teacher to find out the preschool's requirements. Become familiar with all the content in the enrolment/orientation pack.

### **Encourage independence**

Children who are able to care for themselves and their belongings will feel more confident at preschool. Parents/carers can encourage children to practise personal hygiene, such as wiping their nose and toileting independently. Help your child to feel confident and independent by dressing them in clothing which is simple enough for them to manage with little adult help.

Children who assist in packing their bag at home each morning will readily identify their own belongings during the day.

### **Label equipment and clothing**

Children's belongings may look very similar to their classmates'. Labelling your child's equipment and clothing with their name will help prevent loss, confusion and possible upset for your child.

### **Pack a change of clothes for preschool**

Accidents do happen. There may be a toilet mishap, wet sleeves from hand washing, or mess from craft or outdoor experiences. When accidents occur children prefer to change into their own clothes, rather than "school clothes". Pack a spare set of clothes, labelled with your child's name, in your child's bag.

### **Share information with the preschool teacher**

Children learn best when parents/carers and teachers share together in a partnership. Your child's preschool teacher has many students to get to know. Because you know your child best, you can help the teacher understand your child by sharing information, concerns and insights. Regular communication between parents/carers and teachers bridges the gap between home and preschool and provides opportunities to exchange information which support children's learning.

### **Keep the preschool teacher informed of changes**

Changes to your child's family situation can impact on their emotional and academic well-being. If you keep your child's teacher informed of any changed circumstances the child can be supported if necessary. Examples of changes include the birth of a sibling; moving house; divorce or separation or the death or hospitalization of a loved one. It is also important to notify the school of changes to contact details, such as address and emergency telephone numbers.

### **Participate in the preschool and the school**

Parents/carers are welcome to participate in the preschool by attending special activities and by volunteering to help in the classroom. This may assist to reassure your child that you are interested in them and their preschool.

### **Provide information about your child's immunisation status**

Your child will be coming into contact with other children and infections can spread quickly. Immunisation records will be requested for preschool enrolment. Under the Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992, children who have not been immunised may be sent home during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

### **Separation Anxiety**

Separating from family and saying goodbye can be difficult for some children. If your child cries or is upset when you leave them, remember, this is a normal response. You are welcome to call the preschool to see how they have settled. Although you might feel anxious yourself, do not leave without saying good-bye.