

Primary School Nursing Program

2024 Edition



Is your child ready for secondary school?

Secondary school can be a time of fun and excitement, full of new experiences– but it can also be challenging and worrying for some children and their parents.

The preparation you do with your child will help them make a great start to their senior years at school.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

Preparing to start:

- Find out about the *transition* and support services offered at your child’s new school.
- Listen to your child- discuss what they are looking forward to or worried about- give lots of assurance.
- Talk about the positives- lots of new teachers, extracurricular activities, new friends and opportunities.
- Involve your child in decision making– where possible from how to get to school to how best to keep in contact with friends who are going to a different secondary school.
- Get to know the new school- who the principal is and the home group teacher, welfare staff, the people you can contact to discuss any issues that may arise.

During the transition to secondary school:

- Try to arrange parent/ carer/familiar adult to be home before and after school for the first few weeks of high school
- Set up a comfortable, quiet study place in your home free from distraction.
- Reassure your child that its normal to worry about making new friends and starting something new– share some of your own experiences.
- Be prepared for ups and downs. Adjusting to change takes time, but if things don’t stabilise after first term, talk to your child’s home room teacher.
- Stay calm, if you’re calm and reassuring you’ll give your child more confidence that they can get through the tough parts of high school.

“When children are making the move to secondary school, you have the biggest influence on how smooth the transition is. Your child’s friends do influence how your child feels about the move, but your support as a parent or carer has stronger and longer-lasting effects.”

Tips for a healthy school year

Sleep

Getting a good night’s sleep will help your child feel energised, focused and motivated. Adolescence is a time when a number of changes to the “body clock” impact on sleeping patterns and children are more likely to have problems with sleep. Developing a sleeping routine can help them sleep much better. Encourage them to wake up around the same time each day and go to bed around the same time each night; Avoid caffeine after lunchtime, encourage a quiet, dark and uncluttered bedroom and being mindful of shutting down their phone, laptop and other electronic devices before bed can also help with a good night’s sleep.

Eat Well

Eating well doesn’t only reduce the risk of physical health problems, but it can also help with your child’s sleeping patterns, energy levels, and general health and wellbeing. You might have noticed that your child’s mood can affect their appetite and food intake. A good balanced diet with less of the bad things (e.g. junk food and lots of sugars) and more of the good things (e.g. veggies, fruit, whole grains and plenty of water) will make sure your child has all of the vitamins and minerals to help their body and brain function well.

Relax

There are many ways to relax and different relaxation techniques to use to overcome stress. Some techniques you could try with your child include: Progressive muscle relaxation which involves tensing and relaxing specific groups of muscles from your feet all the way to your head, while focussing on feelings of tension and relaxation. You could also try breathing techniques, such as deep breathing or focussed breathing (breathing in through the nose and as you breathe out say a positive statement to yourself like ‘relax’ or ‘calm down’). Get your child to place a hand over their diaphragm to make sure they are breathing slowly – they should feel their hand move if they’re doing it right. Get them to focus on breathing in slowly for 4 seconds, holding their breath for 2 seconds and breathing out slowly for 6 seconds.

Information and Support for Parents:
Anglicare/Parentzone parenting courses- (03) 51 359 555 or Parentzone.Gippsland@anglicarevic.org.au
Poisons information- 13 11 26
Parentline- 1300 30 1300
Headspace: 03 51368300
Homelessness assistance: 1800 825 955 <http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/getting-help>
The Orange Door: 1800 319 354
SafeSteps Family Violence support: 1800 015 188 or www.safesteps.org.au
Food Security: www.askizzy.org.au/food
Royal Children’s Hospital– 9345 5522 www.rch.org.au
www.kidsmatter.edu.au
www.beyondblue.org.au
www.continence.org.au
www.headspace.org.au
www.raisingchildren.net.au
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

School Health Plans : Do you have your child’s health plans ready for school?
Allergies & eczema plans available at: www.allergy.org.au
Asthma plans available at: www.asthma.org.au
Please discuss your plans with your Family Doctor and once completed give them to the school.

When should my child's eyes be tested?



Optometrists Association Australia recommends that children have a full eye examination with an Optometrist before starting school and regularly as they progress through primary and secondary schools.

This has become more important as the hours of screen based learning and entertainment increase.

An eye examination with an Optometrist takes approximately 25 minutes and attracts a Medicare rebate- no referral is required

Signs that could indicate a possible vision problem:

- One eye turns in or out while the other points straight ahead.
- Frequent blinking/rubbing of the eye
- Red or watery eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Tilting head noticeably
- Poor hand eye co-ordination
- Covering or closing one eye
- Difficulty learning to read
- Holding a book very close to read
- Leaving out or confusing words when reading
- Squinting or sitting very close when watching TV
- Complaints of headaches, blurred/double vision



Regular dental check-ups (6-12monthly) are recommended as part of your child's dental health routine. Healthy teeth and gums are vital to your school-age child's general health. Dental care for children's teeth starts with cleaning their teeth twice a day and regular dental checks at the dentist.

Your child may be eligible for the Commonwealth Child Dental Benefits Schedule, which provides \$1000 worth of basic dental care over a 2 year period for eligible children. Contact LCHS Dental Services on 1800 242 696 to make an appointment.

Dental Health

Everyday Mindfulness

T This activity can teach children about how strong emotions and take hold, and how to find peace when these strong emotions come up.

H Firstly find a clear jar (eg. Mason Jar) and fill it almost to the top with water. Now add a big spoon of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter. Put the lid on and shake the jar to make it swirl.

E Now use this script or similar:

M *"Imagine that the glitter is like your thoughts when you're stressed, mad or upset. See how they whirl around and make it really hard to see clearly? That's why it's so easy to make silly decisions when you're upset- because your not thinking clearly. Don't worry this is normal and it happens to all of us."*

I ———NOW PUT THE JAR IN FRONT OF THEM———

N *"Now watch what happens when you're still for a couple of moments. Keep watching. See how the glitter starts to settle and the water clears? Your mind works in the same way. When you're calm for a little while, your thoughts start to settle and you see things much clear"*

D This exercise not only helps children learn about how their emotions can cloud their thoughts, it also facilitates the practice of mindfulness with focusing on the swirl of the jar.



F You can use everyday moments to build and practise mindfulness. The more you practise, the more benefit you'll get.

U You can also **encourage your child to build mindfulness**. In many ways, this is just about getting your child to do what she naturally does. Young children are naturally mindful because every new experience is fresh and exciting for them. Older children and teenagers can learn mindfulness.

L Encouraging your child to be in the here and now can give him skills to deal with the stress of study, work and play as he gets older. There are many ways to help your child build and practise mindfulness. For example:

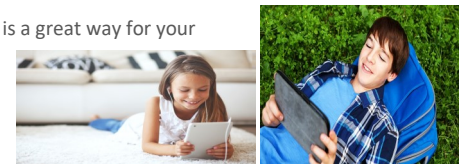
- Colouring in is a great way to get your child focused on a task.
- Walking through nature with the family can get your child interested in exploring the beauty of nature. Your child could collect and examine autumn leaves, or she could feel the sand beneath her toes during a walk on the beach.
- Taking photographs or drawing something interesting or beautiful – like a sea shell or an insect – encourages your child to look closely at details.
- Looking after a vegetable patch encourages your child to notice how plants grow.
- Listening to music and focusing on the instruments or lyrics is a great way for your child to focus on the present without distraction.

Screen time for teenagers

Screen time for teenagers is about choosing quality programs and apps and developing healthy screen habits.

Child development experts also recommend **limiting daily screen time for children and teenagers**. Screen time limits can help lower the risks of screen time for your child, which include physical, developmental, safety and other risks.

For children aged 6 years and older and teenagers, the most recent guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) say that there should be **consistent limits on the time they spend on electronic media and the types of media they use**. It's also important to make sure that screen time doesn't take the place of sleep and activities like physical play, reading, creative play like drawing, and social time with family and friends.



If your teenage child can combine good-quality media choices with healthy screen habits and some screen time limits, they can make the most of screen time now and in the future.