



Preparing for Prep



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Soon your child will be starting school and you might be wondering how you can help them prepare for Prep. This booklet is full of ideas that may help you to assist your child to get ready for this exciting stage of their life.

STARTING SCHOOL...

...is a 'mixed bag' of excitement, nerves, enthusiasm, apprehension, anticipation and adjustments.

Starting school is a very important time for every child and can be an emotional experience for many, including mums and dads.

To ensure a smooth transition, our school is an environment in which your child will feel that they belong, they are safe and also supported.



Most children are very enthusiastic about starting school and most will continue to feel that way. However, some children lose that enthusiasm quickly and parents of these children may become discouraged.

The first term of school is hot, humid and very busy. There is a great deal happening as the children learn many new things, meet new people and try to be 'very good' all day. Expect your child to be tired after school. It will be important for you to be understanding, calm and listen to your child when he/she wants to talk.

TEARS AND FEARS

For some children, tears can be a natural emotional reaction to the initial adjustment of school life.

If this happens, remain calm and speak positively about the day. Positive reinforcement, patience and time are the best ways to overcome this stage. Teachers are experienced in these situations, so please have faith in them, as they also have your child's best interest at heart.

BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS

Once your child has started school, encourage and support new friendships with their classmates by having other children at your home to play. This will allow you to get to know other parents from your child's class and also help you to feel comfortable within the school community.



THE PREP TEACHERS

Your child's Prep Teacher will play a vital role in their adjustment to school. The teachers at St Kieran's are very understanding, so please be sure to maintain open communication with them throughout the year.

What else do I need to know?

BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

- In the weeks leading up to the start of school, drive past St Kieran's and remind them that this is their new school.
- After the festivities of the Christmas Season settle down, establish a routine for bedtimes and mornings as soon as possible. This will help your child in getting ready for school on time.
- Use our Transition Book to start to talk about school and all the exciting new things that they will do. Explain to them that there will be times that they will have to sit at their desk, but also times where they will get to play and learn fun new things. Talk about all learning aspects of school and that they will get to meet many new friends.
- Take your child to Church so that they are familiar with the surroundings and are aware of the proceedings of Mass.
- Initially it can be very daunting for your child trying to find their school bag in the bag rack. Please label your child's school bag in some unique way (keyring, small toys, ribbon etc) to make it easier for them to identify.

- Read to your child picture books about the start of school. The book “The Kissing Hand” is a wonderful story which addresses the nerves and excitement of this important time.
- Discuss with your child that some children might seem sad or worried as they adjust to school life. If this happens, tell them it would be a wonderful idea if they support their new friends by helping look after them. The reassurance of peers can be a great support at these times.

NAME EVERYTHING

From books, to clothing including shoes and socks. It is important that you name all of your child’s belongings. Children become upset if they lose things, so please assist them as well as the teachers by naming items.

AFTER SCHOOL STARTS

- It is extremely important that you have your child at school each day before 8.20am. This will give your child time to unpack their bags, go to the toilet and get a drink before lining up outside their classroom. However, children are not permitted to arrive on school grounds before to 8.10am as there is no teacher on duty.
- Staying involved in your child’s education is the key to a successful year. Engage your child in conversation about his/her day, but know that children will not always give out much information. There will be opportunities for parental involvement throughout the year and this is a good chance to see first-hand what the children are learning in the classroom.
- Children will be very tired at the end of the day. Some will come home and not stop talking about school however others will need to have some down time before they are ready to talk. Instead of saying, “What did you do at school today?” take notice of the weekly class letters, newsletters and other correspondence from school to initiate a conversation about the current events.
- If your child tells you a story that seems at odds with our caring and supportive approach, please contact the class teachers. You might say “My child has mentioned this, could you tell me what happened?”

LUNCHES

At St Kieran's, our Prep breaks are Healthy Snack, First Break and Second Break. In the beginning it will be beneficial for you to discuss with your child what you have given them to eat at break times. Make suggestions about what they could eat at each break or even separate food items into different containers.

Try not to pack too much food as the children feel that they need to eat everything. It may take a few weeks to establish suitable portions. Encourage the eating of sandwiches and larger items at first break. Give consideration to things that may take longer to eat (a large apple can be sliced) and please if you give your child yoghurt, remember a spoon.

Each classroom at St Kieran's has a fridge for the storage of lunchboxes and therefore children do not require cooler bag lunchboxes. Small plastic lunchboxes are ideal.



How to Survive the First Day of School

The first day of school is one to celebrate! It is an important milestone in both you and your child's life.

- There may be a mix of emotions on the first day of school. As already mentioned, there will be a lot of excitement, apprehension and a few nerves. You will probably find that your child will be up nice and early and be dressed in their uniform ready to go! Please make sure that you are on time for the first day and your child has had a good breakfast for the busy and exciting day ahead.

WHAT TO PACK IN YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL BAG:

- **Book packs as per the Prep Booklist**
 - **Healthy snack, lunch and afternoon snack**
 - **A full bottle of water**
 - **School hat**
 - **Spare pair of clothes including underwear in a plastic bag**
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- Try not to build up your child's expectations too much. Many children think they will learn to read and write on their first day. They may then become worried or disappointed when they do not. Talk to them about reading and writing, but let them know it takes time.
 - The Prep classrooms will be open at 8.10am on the first week of school. You are more than welcome to come in and help your child familiarise themselves with the classroom. Take the time to look around the room and introduce your child and yourself to the teacher and other parents.
 - When the teacher informs parents that it is time to leave, give your child a kiss and a hug and tell them you will be back soon and then leave. If your child is upset please leave the classroom and our experienced teachers will settle your child and get the day underway.
 - Reassure your child that you will be there at the end of the day to pick them up. Please do not be late picking your child up. A few minutes can seem like a long time when you are four and five and all the other children have gone home.

The importance of reading with your child

As parents and carers, you are your child's first teachers. There is a considerable research evidence of a link between being read to regularly by a parent or carer and a child's later reading achievement. Parents and carers help their children to build a base for later literacy skills from birth by cooing, singing lullabies and nursery rhymes, talking to them, modelling reading and writing behaviours in everyday life and sharing picture books.

Reading picture books with a parent or carer provides children with many of the prerequisites necessary for the further development of reading and literacy skills such as sound structure and letter-sound correspondence,

print conventions, vocabulary building, the meaning of print, the structure of stories and language and sustained attention. It also helps to develop a love of reading. Reading to and with your child every day is one of the most important things that you can do to help them to develop the necessary skills to become successful readers and learners. It is important to begin reading to your child from an early age and to make this a pleasurable part of your daily routine.

When your child begins school and begins a home reading program, it is important for you to continue to read to them as well as to listen to them read to you.

READING WITH YOUR CHILD

Twenty minutes a day is all it takes to build key reading skills. Here are seven ways to build a better reader from birth to age five!

- Create reading rituals and read together every day
- Snuggle up close with a book
- Talk about the pictures and ask questions
- Share different kinds of books
- Read with expression
- Read favourite books again and again
- Record yourself reading and play it on a car trip or as an alternative to television



“Good readers are made on the lap of a parent”

Congratulations

As a parent, the first day of school can be an emotional experience for you too! Be proud of the many achievements you have made as a parent in the lead up to this day. You will find we are a nurturing community at St Kieran’s, and we look forward to walking this journey with you.



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