



# Preparing your child for school or pre school

by Michael Grose

“ *The early days of a school year can be hard work for some kids – it’s hard for some kids to stick to the rules and routines of school.* ”

During the holidays children need to be able to tune out from school. A break from school is good for your child’s mental health as well as giving them an opportunity to recharge their batteries.

As holidays draw to a close it is useful to turn your child’s attention to school and help him or her get ready for the year ahead. Some kids are excited by the prospect of going to school or pre school, whereas others are somewhat less thrilled that holidays are over and its back to reality. Here some ideas to consider:

- Be positive about the year ahead, even if your child is apprehensive about some aspect of the coming year. Children often pick up the cues of their parents so your attitude to school or pre school, your child’s teacher and learning can set the scene for a positive year ahead. Often children’s fears and concerns about a particular grade level or class disappear on the first day.
- In the days leading up to the start of school or pre school begin to readjust children’s routines in line with their routine they will experience when they start school. In particular, bedtimes and wake up times should resemble those of the school year.
- Children can participate in the purchase and preparation of uniforms, books and stationery for the coming year. School starters may even wear their uniform prior to the first day.
- Encourage discussion of school in a matter of fact manner and talk about possible friendships that they may renew or begin. Give children practice in becoming more independent at home particularly if they are in the early years of school.

- Be on time on the first day. This is important for children to help settle into class and not disrupt others or themselves. The start of the day is the most important part of the school day.

A word of warning: Don’t be surprised if some young children are less than perfect when they come home from school in the first days of term. The early days of a school year can be hard work for some kids – it’s hard for some kids to stick to the rules and routines of school. They often blow off some steam in the relative security of home. Be prepared for your patience and understanding may be stretched a little. It’s good to remember that many kids save their worst behaviour for their parents!!

