



Taking transition steps

'I don't feel well. I don't want to go to school.'

For some children times of transition can be exciting and they charge full steam ahead ready to tackle it head on, while for others it can be a period of change where they feel scared, worried, helpless and nervous.

Children need the help of their families and school staff, not only at recognised transition times such as moving from Pre-primary into Year 1 and from Year 6 into secondary school, but also at the beginning of each school year when they have to settle into a class with a new teacher and a different group of peers.

The transition experience starts well before and extends far beyond a child's first day at school. Having a positive school experience is also important so that a child's attendance pattern is established at an early age and lays the foundation for future years.

Parents and school staff can make transition times as smooth as possible by teaching and modelling skills such as expressing their emotions, seeking help from others, speaking assertively, solving problems and making responsible decisions.

Back to school tips for parents

- **Set up a routine.** Practise what your child will need to do each day to get ready for school. Support them to be well organised so they feel in control.
- **Set realistic expectations regarding school.** Let your child know that some days will be fabulous and that they might not enjoy other days as much, and that this is normal.
- **Prepare your child.** Make sure your child knows who will take them to school and pick them up, and where to wait at the end of the day. Check that they can pack their bag, tie shoelaces, and have the right equipment they need for class.
- **Build positive relationships with your child's teachers.** When families and schools work together in positive and collaborative ways, transition times can be more successful.
- **Keep talking to your child.** Find out about what they are learning at school. Ask them about their new experiences, what they like and what they find hard, and how they are feeling about the new school year.
- **If things aren't going well.** Talk with your child's teachers. Be prepared to listen to their suggestions, but also have some of your own ideas that might help your child.