

## MY FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL – HOW TO PREPARE FOR SUCCESS

**S**tarting school can be one of the most exciting experiences for both children and parents. It can also be a time that is filled with a variety of feelings, emotions and challenges including anxiety, fear, guilt and uncertainty. However, with the right preparation, your child can feel confident, ready and excited about starting school.

It is important to prepare, parents need to sit down with their kids and discuss the topic of "starting school" and what is involved, including routine, feelings and emotions. If you avoid this topic, kids may experience greater anxiety shortly after school has begun because they have not been prepared emotionally for this transition. With any transition, kids need repeated reassurance, encouragement and support to help them understand the change and their feelings associated with the change.

### Other Transition Tips

**1)** Get excited with your child – Start talking about how great school will be; what they might learn; new friends they will meet. If you generate an excited and enthusiastic energy, your son or daughter will as well.

**2)** Take them shopping for their new school items – let them pick their books, pens, and other stationary. If there is a choice, let them choose their school shoes and clothes. This gives them sense of ownership and something else to look forward to, using and wearing their new things.

**3)** Discuss and plan the school routine – including when to wake up, brush teeth, have breakfast, and any afternoon activities. If needed, create a "Daily Schedule" chart.

The key to an enjoyable, successful and happy experience is to help prepare your children for the transition and always offer lots of support and reassurance.

### Other useful sites:

[www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=114&np=122&id=1770](http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=114&np=122&id=1770)

Tahlia Mandie is a psychotherapist and family counsellor for Direction Exploring, which helps adolescents by inspiring, empowering and motivating them to find their potential and pathway while giving them more energy, confidence and belief in themselves and their abilities. Direction Exploring also works with parents and families and runs group programs and workshops.

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