

Discover a world of opportunities

Public education



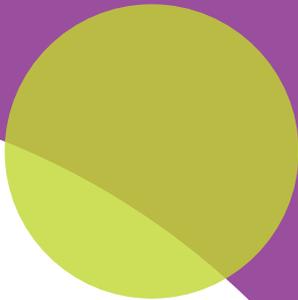
Learning begins at home

For parents/carers of young children



Department of
Education





TITLE: Learning begins at home:
For parents/carers of young children

SCIS NO. 1427588
ISBN 978-0-7307-4334-7

© Department of Education 2011

Reproduction of this work in whole or part for educational purposes, within an educational institution and on condition that it is not offered for sale, is permitted by the Department of Education.

This material is available on request in appropriate alternative formats.

Department of Education
151 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004

Further information please contact:
The Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning

T: 9264 5090

F: 9264 8951

W: det.wa.edu.au/education/ece/

ISBN-13 978-0730743347



9 780730 743347

When can my child start school?

Birth year	Kindergarten	Pre-primary	Year 1
1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006	2010	2011	2012
1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007	2011	2012	2013
1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008	2012	2013	2014
1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009	2013	2014	2015

Subscribe to our online parent newsletter at
det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou
to receive updates about what is happening
in our public schools.



From the Minister

As parents/carers you are the most important people in your child's life. You are also their first teacher and responsible for laying a foundation that enables them to benefit from their early school years.

As you and your family do routine things like household activities, shopping and playing games, you are helping your child learn. Each activity enables them to explore their environment and discover their own skills and abilities. With these experiences you are helping to prepare them for Kindergarten and Pre-primary at your local public school.

Experts in early childhood education at the Department of Education have prepared this publication to help you make the most of these early years at home. The ideas are simple but very powerful because they help strengthen family relationships and build children's confidence.

The booklet covers a wide range of topics from developing reading, writing and maths skills through to managing difficult behaviour and using technology.

I encourage you keep this booklet as a handy guide and discover the many ways that learning begins at home.

Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA
Minister for Education



Contents

Learning really does begin at home.....3	Fun activities
How children learn best.....3	Outdoor play.....9
Capturing learning moments.....4	Painting.....10
Tips on helping your child.....4	Brushes.....11
Play is a child’s work.....4	Water play.....12
What you can do.....4	Sand play.....14
Why is reading important?.....5	Dramatic play.....16
Tips on helping your child with reading.....5	Block play.....17
Developing science and thinking skills.....6	Dough.....18
Tips on helping your child.....6	Raising a happy child.....19
Concentration.....7	Building your child’s self esteem.....19
Easy ways to develop maths, reading and writing skills.....8	Feelings.....20
	How you can help.....20
	Managing difficult behaviour.....21
	How you can help.....21
	Healthy body, healthy mind.....22
	Healthy foods – fuel for growing bodies.....22
	Let’s get physical.....24
	Sleep right, sleep tight.....25
	Making the most of technology.....26
	What’s on? Making the most of television.....26
	Tips on TV.....26
	Kids online – how to be cyber savvy.....26
	What about the dangers?.....27
	Starting Kindergarten.....28
	Being involved.....28
	Getting ready for school.....29
	Supporting children’s learning.....30
	Children’s care services.....32



Learning really does begin at home

The early years of your child's life are very important. As a parent/carer you can have a positive impact by creating a loving and safe environment for your family.

We know from research that nearly three quarters of a child's brain is 'wired' by the time they are five years old. That makes it the fastest period of growth and development in life. It is also the time when the foundations are laid for all later development and learning.

How children learn best

Children learn best when they are happy, feel safe and have interesting things to do and interested people to help them.

Children are naturally curious, full of ideas and keen to learn about the world around them. They learn by playing, watching, listening, asking, talking, having time to think, doing and trying new things, practising and repeating the things they do, and getting feedback.

Learning should be spontaneous and feel like fun. Natural, unrehearsed everyday experiences you do with your child are much better than special educational toys, CDs or flashcards.

This booklet has lots of easy and simple things you can do at home with your child before they start school.



Did you know?

A three year old child's brain is twice as active as an adult's brain. By the time a child is three their brain has formed about 1000 trillion connections – twice as many as adults.

Capturing learning moments

So much learning is done through everyday experiences such as cooking, hanging out the washing, going for a walk and exploring the garden. Capture these moments with your child.

For example, talking about the types of clothes in the washing helps your child develop their vocabulary.

When your child guesses the number of pegs they are estimating; when they match the colour of pegs with the colour of clothing they are matching and learning colour names; and when they count the pegs they are learning about numbers and how many.

Tips on helping your child

- Make learning fun.
- Follow your child's interests and choices – and build on them.
- Allow time for your child to solve problems and repeat things.
- Listen to your child and give them a voice.
- Be positive, patient and supportive.
- Teach them to watch, listen, think and question.

Play is child's work

Play is a powerful and natural way for children to learn. Through play children develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively (intelligence).

Play involves climbing, making cubbies, dressing up, pretending, dancing, writing, counting, doing puzzles, drawing, reading, imagining, building things, making choices, exploring materials, testing ideas, developing confidence and so much more.

What you can do

- Allow children to play every day.
- Help them make up their own activities and games.
- Give them cardboard boxes, balls, buckets, cushions, hula hoops and dress up clothes.
- Create spaces that are inviting and fun to play in; provide choice and activity; spark learning; and are safe.
- Join in the play – let your child lead.
- Know when to step away from the play – it's as important as stepping into the play.

Why is reading important?

Children who are familiar with books and stories are better prepared for school.

People with good literacy skills are more likely to have higher self esteem, better health and a greater range of job opportunities. Children love being read to and sharing books is a great way to spend time with your child.

Tips on helping your child with reading

- Tell stories, say or sing nursery rhymes, poems and songs. Make up actions.
- Read a range of books. Read favourites over and over. Encourage your child to join in. Don't object if your child wants to hear the same stories.
- Identify words in the book. See how many times familiar words come up.
- When reading aloud, follow the words with your finger, point to pictures and talk together about the story.
- Let your child pretend to read. Children pretend to read at this stage by making up the story. This is a great start.
- Show your child how to look after books such as turning the pages carefully.
- If your child isn't showing interest in a book, don't push it.

- Young children lose interest quickly. Little and often is best. A good 10 minutes is better than half an hour.
- Turn off the television to avoid distractions.
- Visit your local library. Ask about different programs in your library such as Better Beginnings and Baby Rhyme Time.
- If English is not your first language, buy dual language books.



More information:

Our booklet called
Raising a reader will help
you once your child starts school.
W: det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou

Developing science and thinking skills



The world is a fascinating place full of things to wonder about and explore. Through play and experimentation your child will develop science skills as they begin to observe, explore and handle objects.

Science and active inquiry are great ways to develop good thinking habits. When your child asks *Why is the sky blue?* they are learning to think critically.

Tips on helping your child

- Encourage your child to ask questions. Help them to talk, act and think through problems. For example when making a cake you could ask them:
Why do you think the cake grew when it went in the oven?
Now that it's cooked, can we un-cook it?
What would happen if we added salt instead of sugar?
- Help your child experiment with everyday things. Why do some things float and others sink in the bath? What happens when water is mixed with oil?
- Do simple experiments together like making play dough, blowing bubbles and looking at insects.
- Talk about the technology we use each day and how it helps us to live a more comfortable life, for example cups, pencils, shovels, televisions and computers.
- Explore the garden and talk about how things change during the day or over the year.
- Pull apart and put back toys and simple machines and discuss what the parts do.

Concentration

Games are a fun way to help your child develop their ability to focus and concentrate.

Here are some popular activities.

- Make up a scavenger or treasure hunt in the garden. Hide different objects. Have fun finding them together.
- Sort things by size, colour or shape, for example blocks, food packaging, toys or pegs.
- Play 'What's on the tray?' Put an item on a tray. Ask your child to close their eyes and then ask them *What's on the tray?* Increase the number of items on the tray to two, three or four. See how many items they can remember. Take turns. Put three items on a tray – take off one. Guess which one is missing.
- Play 'I spy'.
- Find words beginning with 'b' when you visit the supermarket.
- Write words on paper and stick them around the house at child height. Encourage children to read them. Remove a few words and ask them to put them back in the right place. Only do this if children enjoy it. If it's too hard they're not ready.
- Listen to talking books from the local library.



Easy ways to develop maths, reading and writing skills

Children don't have to wait until school to learn maths, reading and writing. As they play they are picking up a range of these skills. Here are a number of ways you can help them learn.

- Play shops with things from the kitchen, shopping bags, purses and real or play money. Make lists, signs and prices together.
- Make a scrapbook together with drawings, photos, certificates, birthday cards, letters and tickets from places you have visited.
- Write events on the calendar like birthdays and special celebrations and talk about these with your child.
- Make birthday cards, thank you cards and invitations to send to friends.
- Provide a space on a small table to write and draw. Use scrap paper, textas, crayons, pencils, notebooks, old envelopes and cards.
- Display your child's work on the fridge or wall.
- Have a message board and write a message together every day.

Shopping and cooking are sometimes challenging when you have a little one in tow. However, you can turn these activities into a chance for them to learn basic literacy and maths skills – try these ideas.

- Count fruit and vegetables as you put them in bags.
- Let your child use the shop scales to weigh fruit.
- Talk about coins and notes in your purse and the price of things.
- Let your child give the money and collect the change.
- Unpack and sort the shopping at home. Talk about the size and shape of items as you put them away.
- Cook simple things together. Read and talk about recipes. Give your child simple directions to follow.
- Encourage your child to find ingredients in the kitchen and measure them.
- Cut food and talk about size, shape, colour and taste.

More information:

We have a handy booklet packed with ideas called *Counting on you* which will help once your child has started school.

W: det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou

outdoor play

A fun way to improve coordination, movement and imagination.

A BIG BOX



CRATE



Small frame and climbing gear



Children can use 'tickets' to board planes.



BOXES



TARGETS



painting

Painting helps your child learn about colours, textures and shapes – while they have fun!



FINGER PAINTING

1 tblspn soap flakes
6 tblspn starch
½ cup cold water
Quickly add 500ml-
1000ml boiling water
and stir quickly. Add a
few drops of food
colouring.



SQUEEZE PAINTING
Put different
coloured paint
into plastic bottles
and squeeze.



STRING PAINTING
Dip string into
paint and move
around paper to
make patterns.



COMB

Cut card into hair
comb shape and slide
through paint to make
interesting patterns.



SPONGE

Dip sponge
in paint and
dab or roll
on paper for
interesting
effects.

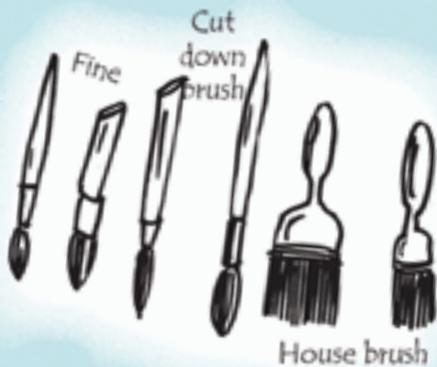


MARBLING
Place sheet of paper in
container. Drop paint
on then roll marbles
around to make
stunning patterns.



brushes

Experiment with things you find around the house and garden to make interesting patterns on paper.



TRY USING...

- Newspaper
- Brown paper
- Plastic
- Wallpaper
- Coloured paper
- Material
- Cardboard cylinders
- Computer paper



WHAT ABOUT
DIFFERENT PAPER
SHAPES AND SIZES?

water play

Fun for bathtime or a warm day. Talk about things like...
How much? How full? What happens if?

CONTAINERS



SIEVES



Pouring



PROVISIONS FOR WATER PLAY



COLOURED WATER?

Try edicol,
vegetable dye or
food colouring.

Experiment and talk about how and why things happen.



BUBBLES
 ¼ cup glycerine
 ½ cup water
 1 tblspn liquid detergent
 Stir in a bucket of water



sand play

A fun way to learn about shapes, volume and loads.

HANDS
are still the
first tools.



SIEVES



TRUCKS AND TOYS

DIGGING IMPLEMENTS



Shovels, spades and trowels



Scoops

CONTAINERS



Kitchen tools

Buckets

Funnels

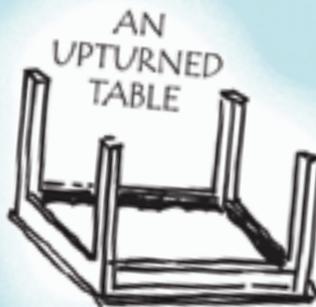
how to provide for sand play



HALF LARGE TYRE



MOUND OF SAND



AN UPTURNED TABLE



WADING POOL



A sandpit needs shade in hot weather.



Tie an old blanket to 2 poles and the fence.

BOUND SANDPIT



dramatic play

A fun activity that develops confidence.

HOME CORNER



A kitchen cabinet made from two fruit crates.



A crate with a plastic bowl insert becomes a sink.



Make a dressing table by putting a frill around the legs of a chair and tying a mirror to the back.



A stove can be made from a crate or carton.



Old telephone message pad, phone book, newspaper, calendar, paper and envelopes.

OR A HAIRDRESSERS...



Plait old stockings for long hair.

Cardboard scissors



Old clips



Set up a mirror and chair for the 'customer'.



Hairdryer



Curlers

Hand mirror



block play

Has your child made...?

A FARM...



Introduce plastic animals, toy tractors, trucks and get children to make sheds, wheat silos, water troughs from various boxes and cylinders.

A WHARF...

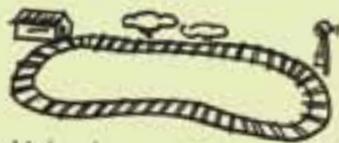


Build a jetty, add some boats and fill them with cargo, counters, marbles or blocks. Name the boats and make signs for passengers.

A CITY...



Children can plan a city or town and bring in toy cars and buses. Make signs for buildings, streets and roads.



A RAILWAY STATION...

Make the tracks from straws, the station and tunnels from boxes. Blocks can be used for bridges. Name the station, write signs for ticket prices and departure times.

AN AIRPORT...



Build an airport terminal and lookout tower. Make signs for arrivals and departures, baggage and tickets.

A ZOO...



Your child can plan the layout and build the animals' enclosures. Label cages, make direction signs.

AND ALSO TRY ADDING...
shoe boxes - great for houses, garages,
tunnels, shops, various other sized
boxes, tins, cylinders, egg cartons...



dough

For sweet smelling dough, try antiseptic, peppermint essence, oil of cloves or perfume.



HANDS FIRST
Children love to pound, squeeze, stretch, roll, poke, twist...

Dough can make a **GOOD IMPRESSION!**



CHANGE the texture by adding...



Add materials for **CONSTRUCTION**



BRING DOUGH INTO THE HOME CORNER
Great for rolling, cutting & cooking.



Add cooking utensils



PLAY DOUGH RECIPE

Ingredients

2 cups salt
4 cups plain flour
4 cups water
4 tblsprs oil
4 tspns cream of tartar
Food colouring

Method

Combine ingredients in saucepan, adding water and oil last. Cook 3-5 minutes until mixture forms balls. Continue stirring over heat until one mass forms. Cool and store in airtight container.

Raising a happy child

Children who respect others, understand routines and limits, and have healthy self esteem are more likely to enjoy school. The early years are a time when you can help prepare your child to thrive at school.



Building your child's self esteem

Self esteem is learning about:

- who you are as a person
- feeling worthwhile, valued, wanted and respected
- feeling you have a place in the world.

You can help build your child's self esteem when you:

- tell them often that you love them for who they are
- support and praise their attempts when they try new things
- spend time with them
- encourage friendships and make their friends welcome
- display their work, for example craft
- ask for their opinion.

More information:

W: kidscount.com.au

W: health.wa.gov.au

W: cyh.com

T: HealthInfo 1300 135 030



Feelings

Feelings are an important part of a child's social and emotional development. Children feel a sense of empowerment when they start to understand what they are feeling. Learning to put words with emotions and knowing that it's okay to feel a particular way can help reduce your child's frustration.

How you can help

- Help your child learn about feelings by giving feelings names, for example *You sound happy...sad...scared.*
- Talk about how others may feel, for example *How do you think Harry will feel if someone takes his toys without asking? How will daddy feel if you are angry with him? How would you feel if your friends didn't ask you to join them when they are playing?*
- Think aloud, for example *I'm going to ask if Jenny would like to help us build a sandcastle because she is playing by herself.*
- Encourage your child to talk about their thoughts and feelings.
- Listen to your child – be aware of what they say and do. What are their actions telling you?
- Read a book and act parts out, emphasising and naming the expressions and feelings of the characters.

Managing difficult behaviour

Children need discipline, limits and guidance to learn right from wrong and to make good choices in life. It's important that they understand the rules at home, school and the community and what happens if the rules are broken. They also need to feel safe and secure while learning the rules.

Discipline that builds on your child's wish to please you is more likely to produce a well-behaved child than discipline which involves threats or physical punishment.

Children misbehave for a range of reasons. It is how we as parents respond to the behaviour that is important.

How you can help

- Set limits based on your child's age and abilities. Make sure what you expect is reasonable.
- Be consistent.
- State the limits positively, clearly and explain the reasons, for example *Hold my hand while we cross the road because it can be dangerous and I want you to be safe. If you let go of my hand I will carry you.*
- Decide on a discipline plan ahead of problems.
- Talk with other parents about their rules.

- Give your child choices, for example *You can hold on to my hand or the pram while we cross the road. What would you like to do?*
- Praise your child when they follow the limits, for example *I like the way you held mummy's hand until we walked across to the other footpath.*
- The best way to help your child do what you want them to do is by doing those things yourself – or modelling good behaviour.
- Be patient. Learning new things takes time. Respect their needs and feelings.

The Positive Parenting Program supports parents to give their children a positive start.

W: www.triplep.net

Tip

Reward good behaviour with a smile, nodding, hugs or praise, for example "I like the way you shared your toys". Being positive gives your child attention. Children need it and love it. Catch them being good. Focusing on negative behaviour gives them attention and may reinforce the wrong behaviour.

Healthy body, healthy mind

The best way to make sure your child develops healthy living habits is to lead by example.

Three things are essential for a healthy child – a nutritious and varied diet, lots of physical activity through outdoor and indoor play, and plenty of sleep to help growing bodies and minds.

Healthy foods – fuel for growing bodies

Children don't do the food shopping or plan the week's meals, so your food choices greatly affect your child's approach to eating.

Children can be fussy eaters, making meal times difficult for you and other family members. Occasionally it can seem easier to give in and offer convenient, sometimes unhealthy alternatives.

To overcome this, involve your children when you do the shopping and plan for the week's meals. Help them understand the healthy food choices you make and why.

Food is the fuel for growing bodies and healthy, alert minds. The right diet will help your child grow and develop. It will also improve concentration and their ability to learn.





More information:

W: [det.wa.edu.au/
healthyfoodanddrink](http://det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink)

W: nutritionaustralia.org

W: heartfoundation.com.au

How you can help

- Children who eat a healthy breakfast are more able to concentrate, learn and develop.
- Mix it up — offer children a variety of food during the day and try to cover the five food groups. Use different colours, textures, shapes and flavours to keep meals and snacks interesting.
- Dinner should include plenty of vegetables and lean meat, chicken or fish. If pasta, bread or rice is on the menu, use wholegrain alternatives.
- Water is the best drink for children. Buy a water bottle with their favourite character on it and encourage them to drink water from it.
- Involve your child in food shopping — this is a great way to get them interested in healthy food choices and can also help develop maths skills!
- When making dinner, have your child help with the preparation using fresh ingredients you have chosen together.
- Become a green thumb! Plant a vegetable garden together and give your child responsibility for watering the vegetables and taking care of the garden.
- Schools have introduced the GREEN AMBER RED system to encourage healthy eating. Use this system at home — fill the menu with green foods such as wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and reduced fat dairy products. Amber foods, which include savoury and sweet snacks, should be selected carefully and eaten in moderation. Avoid red foods, which include soft drinks, crisps and chips and other foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt. These foods are not available in public schools.



Tip

Drink plenty of fresh water during physical activity. Freeze half the bottle with water and then top it up when your child is ready to play. This will keep the water cold and refreshing.

How you can help

- Walk instead of driving the car — not only is this good exercise, but it also reduces your carbon footprint.
- Involve your child in sports such as teeball or football, or enrol them in dancing or gymnastics. These activities do wonders for social skills and children's confidence.
- Buy birthday and festive gifts that encourage your child to be active, such as frisbees, skipping ropes or hula hoops — when presents are unwrapped, have a go yourself!
- Buy DVDs and CDs that encourage children to participate by dancing or moving around.
- Take a family bike ride or go bushwalking. Pretend you are all adventurers, explorers or scientists in an undiscovered land.

Let's get physical

Some great things about leading an active life include being healthy, fit, confident and developing social skills like sharing, cooperating and taking turns.

Children should be physically active for at least an hour a day and, with your encouragement, this is not difficult to achieve.

More information:

W: beactive.wa.gov.au

W: [det.wa.edu.au/
physicalactivity](http://det.wa.edu.au/physicalactivity)

W: [csiro.au/science/
WellbeingPlanForKids](http://csiro.au/science/WellbeingPlanForKids)

W: dsr.wa.gov.au

Sleep right, sleep tight

Children don't always like bed time and going to sleep, but did you know that children between three and five years old need between 10 and 12 hours sleep each night?

A restful sleep helps your child restore energy and remember what they have learned during the day.

Tip

Bedtime stories are a great way to get your child ready for sleep. Use different voices for different characters. Reading the same book often helps your child remember the storyline.

More information:

If you are having problems getting your child to sleep well, visit your family doctor or consult Ngala Family Resource Centre
T: 9368 9368
(1800 111 546 country only).
W: ngala.com.au



Making the most of technology

Television and other electronic media

As parents there are times when we are tired or busy and it's easy to let our child watch television or use electronic media. Used in the right way television, DVDs and electronic games can be beneficial, however too much exposure may be harmful. It can affect your child's ability to talk, listen and concentrate. This is because watching television and playing electronic games is one way communication and it's easy to 'switch off'. Two way communication involves listening, talking and thinking.

Tips on TV and electronic media

- Limit TV time to one hour a day for three to five year olds.
- Turn off the TV when no one is watching.
- Choose programs with your child that are designed for their age group.
- Allow them to watch the same DVD again and again. Repetition of phrases or words can make it easier for children to learn.
- Try to watch TV or DVDs together and talk about what happens.
- Don't place a TV or computer in your child's bedroom.

Kids online – how to be cyber savvy

The internet opens a window to the world of fun and learning. Children aged from two to seven years are old enough to begin to learn about the computer and explore the internet. Around five years of age children may start visiting children's websites and enjoy emailing friends and family.

National guidelines recommend that children three to five years of age should spend less than one hour a day watching television and using electronic media.



What about the dangers?

Unfortunately children can be at risk and it's important they learn how to use the net safely. You can play an important role in helping your children have safe and positive experiences online. By being aware of how children and young people use the internet, some of the risks they face and how you can manage the risks, you can help your children enjoy the best of the online world.

You can also protect your children by:

- checking out, selecting and bookmarking good age appropriate sites for young children;
- supervising all internet use closely
- limiting emails to a list of friends and family members you have approved
- using filters to limit access to unsuitable material.

For more information or advice about internet safety:

W: cybersmart.gov.au

W: cybersmartkids.com.au

T: 1800 880 176



Starting Kindergarten and Pre-primary

Kindergarten is an exciting place. Teachers encourage children to explore, discover, improvise, create, question, discuss and build. Above all your teacher wants to encourage in your child a lifelong interest in learning.

To start Kindergarten children must be four years old by 30 June in the year they attend the program. Kindergarten programs are offered for up to 15 hours a week, followed by a year of Pre-primary (five full days a week). Children must be five years old by 30 June in the year they go to Pre-primary.

To enrol your child in Kindergarten or Pre-primary, contact your school of choice to apply.

Being involved

Public schools value a strong partnership with families. As the first and most significant teacher in your child's life you have much to offer teachers. We invite you to be involved as much as possible.

Come five minutes early to do a puzzle or read a story together. Volunteer to help with classroom activities or excursions. Your child's eyes will light up when you join them at Kindergarten. Remember also that a solid parent-school relationship will help your child form a positive attitude to school.

For more information about Kindergarten and Pre-primary:
W: det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou

More information:

Our booklet called *Say hello to learning* includes information about what happens in Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Year 1 and how you can support your child as they start school.

W: det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou





Getting ready for school

Some children can find starting Kindergarten daunting. Here are simple and practical ways you can help them get ready for school.

- Read stories with your child about starting school. You'll find a list of books at W: det.wa.edu.au/education/cmis.
- Go past the school and chat with your child about how they will soon be going there, the exciting things they will do and the friends they will make.
- Make time to visit school together – contact the school first to find out a suitable time.
- Spend time at school looking at all the fun activities going on.
- When you're at school, show your child where their bag will go, where the toilets are and other things to get them used to school.
- Go shopping together to buy a special lunchbox and drink bottle.



Supporting children's learning

Playgroups

Playgroups offer a chance for parents and children under school age to learn through play and activities.

Playgroup WA (Inc)

T: 1800 171 882

W: playgroupwa.com.au

Libraries

Many community libraries run storytelling and craft sessions for young children and their parents.

T: 9427 3111

W: liswa.wa.gov.au

Community toy libraries

They have toys, games and books for loan.

T: 0417 884 687

W: waatl.org.au

Local councils

Many local councils and shires have recreation centres that offer a range of programs and activities for young children.

Perth Hills National Parks Centre

The Centre offers day and night time activities in the hills.

T: 9295 2244

Toy library for children with special needs

Noah's Ark Toy Library and Resource Centre lends toys to children of all ages with special needs.

T: 9328 1598

W: natl.org.au

Community and family centres

Many centres offer recreation and learning programs for young children including movement and music, gymnastics, dance and creative play programs.

Hersdman Lake Wildlife Centre

The lake is a wonderful environment to introduce young children to WA's plants and animals.

T: 9387 6079

W: wagouldleague.com.au

Landsdale Farm School

The welcoming rural environment allows people to see plants and animals and find out about living things.

T: 9343 1222

W: landsdale-farm-school.com.au

Infant aquatics program for water familiarisation

The Royal Life Saving Society has water familiarisation programs for very young children.

T: 9383 8200

W: lifesavingwa.com.au

Kings Park

Explore, discover and play in Kings Park all year round at Synergy Parkland; DNA Tower; bushland nature trails; Lotterywest Federation Walkway; Ivey Watson Playground; and Kokoda Track Walk.

T: 9480 3600

W: www.qwgp.wa.gov.au

Perth Zoo

Perth Zoo has a range of activities including free holiday programs for the whole family.

T: 9474 3551

W: perthzoo.wa.gov.au

WA Museum

Explore the collections and exhibitions in Perth and major regional centres.

W: museum.wa.gov.au

Gymnastics programs

Kindergym programs are affiliated with Gymnastics Western Australia and are run by accredited coaches.

T: 9228 9399

W: gymnasticswa.asn.au

Walking

Walking is a healthy activity and an easy and cheap way to introduce young children to the world around them. Suggested outings in Perth include beach walks, Herdsman Lake Walk trail, Lake Monger walk, self-guided walks at Kings Park and around the bridges walk.

W: transport.wa.gov.au/walking

Perth Observatory

Explore star viewing and the night and day sky through tours of the Perth Observatory.

T: 9293 8255

W: perthobservatory.wa.gov.au

Nearer to Nature Program

Programs for young children during school holidays include walking, collecting natural craft materials, frog walks and animal encounters.

T: 9295 2244

Penguin Island and Discovery Centre

Visit Penguin Island and the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park by ferry and see the wildlife sanctuaries and reserves.

T: 9591 1333

W: dolphins.com.au

Yanchep National Park

Enjoy Aboriginal heritage experiences, caving, lake tours and a walk through the koala compound.

T: 9405 0759

W: naturebase.net

Scitech

This interactive science museum is great for families to discover more about the world and how things work.

T: 9215 0700

W: scitech.org.au

Cycling

Many local councils have cycle tracks through scenic routes, bushland areas or parks. Bikewest provides maps and suggested trips.

T: 9328 3422

W: transport.wa.gov.au/cycling



Nature Play WA

A not-for-profit organisation that encourages children to do unstructured play outdoors. Getting kids outside to run, jump, climb, splash, invent, imagine and play makes them happier, healthier and is the bedrock of an amazing childhood.

W: natureplaywa.org.au

Children's Care Services

Several types of care services for families offer play based learning programs for children before they go to school. Services must be licensed under the *Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 2006*.

Long day care centres offer full-time, part-time and occasional care for children up to six years old. They are eligible to take children with additional needs or disability.

Occasional child care centres offer sessions of programmed care for children up to six years old.

Family day care offers licensed small group, home based care with flexible hours in carers' own homes.

In home care offers child care in the home for parents with a child with special needs; with three or more children; or where a parent has an illness or disability.

Outside school hours care provides supervised recreation activities and care for primary school aged children. Services may offer care before and/or after school; on school professional development days; and during school holidays.

Childcare Access Hotline

T: 1800 670 305

Family Assistance Office

(help with fees for eligible families)

T: 13 61 50

W: familyassist.gov.au

Pre-kindy programs offer licensed, informal programs. Families are expected to meet the full costs of the programs as they are not subsidised.

Department for Communities

T: 6217 8700



Useful contacts

Aboriginal Parent Support Service

T: 9377 7922

Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital

T: 9340 7800

Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline

T: 1800 686 268

Autism Association of WA

T: 9489 8900

Best Beginnings

T: 6279 1200

Freecall (country only)

T: 1800 654 432

Best Start for Aboriginal Families

T: 6279 1200

Freecall (country only)

T: 1800 654 432

Better Beginnings State Library

T: 9427 3104

Child Abuse Prevention Services

(national 24 hour crisis line)

T: 1800 688 009

Childcare Association of WA

T: 1300 062 645

CLAN WA home visiting for families with young children

T: 9228 9006

Community Kindergartens Association Inc

T: 0448 KINDYS

Crisis Care

T: 1800 199 008 or 9223 1111

(24 hour service)

Down Syndrome WA

T: 1800 623 544

Early Childhood Australia

T: 1800 356 900

Gifted and Talented Children's Association of WA (Inc)

T: 9487 0122

Gowrie (WA) Administration and Community Services

T: 9478 7500

ISHAR Multicultural Women's Centre

T: 9345 5335

Kidsafe WA

T: 9340 8509

Kids Helpline

T: 1800 551 800

Kwinana Early Years Services Incorporated

T: 9439 1838

Meerilinga Young Children's Foundation Inc

T: 9489 4022

Midland Women's Health Care Place

T: 9250 2221

Ngala Family Resource Centre Helpline

T: 9368 9368

Freecall (country only)

T: 1800 111 546

Parenting Line

T: 6279 1200

Freecall (country only)

T: 1800 654 432

Princess Margaret Hospital for Children

T: 9340 8222

Child Australia

T: 9249 4333

Safety House Association of Western Australia Inc

T: 9343 7611

Telethon Speech and Hearing Centre

T: 9387 9888

Wanslea Family Services

T: 9245 2441



W: det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou