

Parents - Did you know....

Getting your child ready for school can involve many different things. We've put together some ideas and suggestions that might be helpful:

Overall Readiness:

- ◆ Have your child used to being cared for by someone else—this will make the transition easier when school starts. It may reduce stress for the your child and yourself.
- ◆ Socialization—attend playgroups and have playdates when possible.
- ◆ It would be helpful if your child can recognize their own name. Learning to print their name using upper and lower-case letters will help as well.
- ◆ Check to see if your school partners with the local family resource centre to provide the Transition to School program.
- ◆ Practice using scissors, holding a pencil and using glue and glue sticks.
- ◆ Consider getting your child's eyes checked at the eye doctor. MSI covers eye exams every two years for children until they turn 10.
- ◆ Consider getting your child's hearing checked especially if you have any concerns about hearing and/or speech.
- ◆ If you or others have difficulty understanding your child's language, it may be helpful to get your child's speech assessed.
- ◆ Check out the website if you have concerns about hearing, language and speech: <http://www.nshsc.nshealth.ca/?q=takethetest>
- ◆ Dental exams—never too soon to introduce them to the dentist. Be sure to check what is covered by MSI before making an appointment.
- ◆ For MSI Eligibility and coverage please call:

1-800-563-8880 toll free

E-Mail: msi@medavie.ca

- ◆ Read stories about starting school. Your local library would have a selection of books about school and it would be a good way to introduce your child to the library if you haven't already done so.
- ◆ Help your child get to know their school—visit the playground, attend a school fair or event.



Label everything your child will take to school with them to keep their belongings from getting mixed up with others. Check lost and found frequently at school to retrieve all those items you spent hours labeling.

Make sure the backpack you purchase is big enough to hold everything, i.e:

- ◆ Change of clothes
- ◆ Spare sneakers
- ◆ School supplies
- ◆ Lunch bag



Oh and don't forget to label these items too!

To keep your child safe from stranger danger put your child's name on the **inside** of their items and show your child where for easy identification.

General Bus safety:

- ◆ Find out where your child's bus stop is in the morning and afternoon. Sometimes they aren't always in the same spot.
- ◆ Take them to the bus stop so they know where it is. This is a good time to talk about safety rules at the bus stop and on the bus.
- ◆ If you know where the bus will drop them off and pick them up at their school, you could show them that during a visit the playground.
- ◆ Find out the bus drivers name—use the bus drivers name when you are talking about the bus and bus safety.
- ◆ Talk about road safety - look both ways before crossing the road, stay on the sidewalk, etc.,
- ◆ If your child will walk to school, walk the route to familiarize them with it and the surroundings. Talk about safety during the walk.
- ◆ Find out if there is an older child nearby that might keep an eye out for your child either on the walking route or bus.
- ◆ Talk to your child about "what would you do if...?" i.e., You are late for meeting them at the bust stop? There is a snow storm and they leave school early? The bus driver misses their stop? Etc.



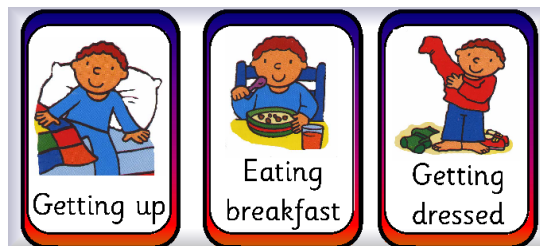
Lunches

- ◆ Containers—what type to choose?
 - ◆ Do they leak?
 - ◆ Can your child open them independently.
 - ◆ Consider a non breakable thermos instead of using the microwave to heat up food.
- ◆ Some schools have microwave ovens, but not every school has one. There is often a long lineup.
- ◆ They don't have a lot of time to eat so make their lunches easy.
- ◆ Not all kids like sandwiches so sometimes snack food is a good option.
- ◆ Be aware of any foods that are not allowed in your school due to allergies.
- ◆ Put a note for teachers in your child's lunch container with your name and phone number in case they have any questions about content, then they can call you.



Dressing:

- ◆ Make sure your child's shoes fit. Sneaker/runners are best and boots for rainy days. Sandals, jelly sandals and crocs are not good choices.
- ◆ Most schools ask for non marking soles on footwear.
- ◆ Try to teach your child to dress independently. Teachers don't have the time to do up 24 zippers and tie 48 shoes.
- ◆ Remind your child to put mittens on last when dressing for winter.
- ◆ Practice buttons, zippers, Velcro, snaps and any other fasteners. There should be no drawstrings in hoods for safety reasons.
- ◆ If your child has not mastered shoe tying there are other less frustrating options. Our good friend Velcro and the amazing curly laces.



Routines:

- ◆ Early to bed, early to rise
- ◆ If you don't already have a routine for bedtime and mornings, it is a good time to do this as you get closer to September.
- ◆ Breakfast—some kids aren't breakfast eaters so how to you deal with that?
- ◆ Pick clothes out at bedtime the night before.
- ◆ Some kids find a visual schedule helpful to keep on task.
- ◆ Encourage your child to share books with you. Often bedtime is a nice time to share a book or two.
- ◆ Screen time—researches suggest no screen time 2 hours before bed.

Personal Hygiene:

- ◆ Remind your child to tell the teacher if they need to go to the washroom (if your child waits until the last minute make the teacher aware of this, as often the teacher may make a child wait before letting them go to the washroom right away.
- ◆ Make sure your child can wipe themselves if possible (expect tread marks).
- ◆ Proper handwashing—very important especially to prevent the spread of viruses and germs.
- ◆ Tell them to close the bathroom stall door when using the washroom (practice locking and unlocking when possible)
- ◆ Teach your child how to use the paper towel dispenser, toilet paper dispenser, use the tap, and soap dispenser.
- ◆ Teach boys how to use urinal without pulling down pants.
- ◆ Send a change of clothes in a labelled Ziploc bag.



At School:

- ◆ Have your child know their full name, parents full name, address and a contact number.
- ◆ Make sure the school knows if your child has any allergies or medical conditions that they should be aware of.
- ◆ Keep your contact information up to date at the school.
- ◆ Let children answer questions directed to them. Don't answer for them.
- ◆ Make sure the child know the teacher or teacher's assistant are people to go to if they have a problem.
- ◆ If a parent has a concern, talk to the teacher first, then principal or vice principal, and local centre for education last.
- ◆ Make sure to sign and date all notes to the teacher—keep a copy if possible. An email is a great way to connect with teachers.
- ◆ When to keep your child home from school? Call the school if your child will not be there. Tell them if your child is sick especially if they have a contagious illness.
- ◆ Absences—it may only be grade primary but it is important to attend as regularly as possible. The children learn a lot every day and missing time can get them behind. They usually start by doing a letter a day.
- ◆ LICE—ok scratch your head now—Have nit combs at home just in case. Teach children not to share hats, keep hair up if long.
- ◆ Children taking personal items to school—remind them not to take items to school unless they are prepared to lose them.
- ◆ Check to see if your child's school has a Breakfast Program, how it works and what they serve.
- ◆ Try to attend the “Meet the Teacher” night if possible. It's always nice to put a face to a name.
- ◆ Try to build a relationship with your child's teacher and keep the lines of communication open.



Volunteering at your school is a great way to get a picture of what goes on there. It shows your child that you value school. Often casual conversations with your child's teacher in the hallway or during events can give a better idea of how your child is doing than the more formal communication at report car time.

Remember your child may be your one and only, but your child's teacher may have 24 one and only's in his or her class!