Starting Kindergarten

Frequently asked questions

At what age can my child start school?

In New South Wales, children can start Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year if they turn 5 on or before 31 July of that year. By law, children must be enrolled in school by their 6th birthday.

Is my child ready for school?

Every child develops at their own pace, and schools are experienced in supporting children with a wide range of abilities, strengths and backgrounds. Starting school is a big step, and it's normal to have questions about whether the timing is right for your child.

It can be helpful for parents and carers to speak with their child's early childhood teacher or educator. They can offer insights into your child's learning and development and help you consider how ready they are for school.

School readiness is not just focused on academic skills like reading, writing, and maths, but rather a child's overall development and ability to thrive in a school environment. These skills can continue to grow across the year, so it's a good idea to check in regularly with your child's early childhood teacher or educator and keep the conversation going. You might find it helpful to use the Timeline to Kindergarten (edu.nsw.link/starting-kindergarten) to guide you through key moments in the 12 months before your child starts Kindergarten.

How can I find the right school to enrol my child in?

Every child is entitled to enrol at their local public school, which is the school whose intake area they live in. Attending your local school makes it easier for children to get to school and supports them to make friends with peers who live nearby and build connections within their community.

You can also apply to enrol your child in a school outside your local intake area, if there is availability.

Enter your child's residential address in School Finder (education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/school-finder) to see their local school as well as other nearby schools and whether they have availability for non-local enrolments.

For more information visit education.nsw.gov.au/procedures

When should I enrol my child in school?

Once you've found your child's school, it's a good idea to visit their website, request a school tour, sign up for newsletters and follow them on social media. This is often where schools share important updates about enrolment timelines, open days, orientation activities and events. Each school may run their enrolment and orientation activities a little differently to suit local context, so it's worth staying in touch.

If you're unsure or have questions at any stage, you can contact the school directly - they're there to help.

How can I help my child prepare?

Starting school is a big step and there's a lot you can do to help your child feel confident and ready.

Talk positively about school, create simple routines at home (like getting dressed and packing a bag), and give your child space to express how they're feeling. Building independence with tasks like dressing, toileting, and following instructions can also help.

Your child's early childhood teacher or educator can support you with ideas and insights tailored to your child. They can also share a range of Department of Education resources to help your child and family get ready for this important transition.

Attending your child's Kindergarten orientation sessions or transition program can help your child feel more comfortable and connected. Contact the school for key dates and keep an eye out for information on their website, newsletters or social media.

What support is available if my child needs extra help?

NSW public schools are inclusive and offer a range of support for children with diverse learning, development, health and wellbeing needs. Every child is different, and schools work in partnership with families to understand each child and plan for a smooth transition.

If you think your child might need additional support, contact your local public school as early as possible so the school has time to work with you to plan the right support for your child. Find out more about how your child can be supported at your local public school on the department's primary school webpage (education.nsw.gov.au/inclusive-learning-support).

Your child's early childhood teacher or educator can also help. They can share relevant information with the school and support you through the transition process.

How can I meet my child's teachers before school starts?

Most public schools offer orientation events in Term 4. In addition, there could be multiple opportunities to visit the school and participate in activities throughout the year prior to starting school. Check your local school's website or contact the school directly to learn more.

What documentation may be requested at enrolment?

- child's birth certificate or identity documents
- schools may require documentation for a 100-point residential address check
- immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register
- any family law or other relevant court orders, if applicable
- if your child has health, disability or other support needs you will need to provide copies of medical/healthcare or emergency action plan and evidence of any disability and learning and support plans.

What happens during Kindergarten orientation or transition programs?

Orientation or transition sessions help your child get to know their new school, meet school staff and classmates, and feel more comfortable with the school environment. These might include short visits to the classroom, group activities, or family information sessions.

Each school runs these programs a little differently, so check your school's website or contact them directly for details and dates.

What does my child need to bring on their first day?

Most children will need a school bag, a lunchbox, a drink bottle and a hat for sun protection.

Your school will give you all the details before the first day, usually during orientation or on the school's website. If you're unsure, it's always okay to ask.

What if my child is nervous or has trouble settling in?

It's completely understandable for children (and parents and carers) to feel a bit nervous in the early days of school. Most children settle in over the first few weeks with support and encouragement.

If your child is having difficulty, talk to their teacher. Schools are experienced in helping children feel safe, supported and included as they adjust to new routines.

Can my child go to an outside of school hours care service?

Many public schools have an outside of school hours care service, either on-site or at a nearby location.

Ask your school about what's available and how to register. You can also find more information for on-site services using School Finder (education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/school-finder).