



## School Readiness

As children grow and develop, they learn and practice new skills which help them to participate in everyday activities and become more independent in the lead up to school. Here we list some skills that you (and your therapist) can encourage and practice to help your child get ready for the transition to school.

**If your child is nearing school age and you are concerned that they are not developing the following skills, you may like to seek the advice of an occupational therapist, psychologist, or speech pathologist.**

### Self-Care

Self-care skills (also called 'independent skills') are skills people use to look after themselves and their health. By school age, children might be expected to complete tasks in the following areas with adult supervision, but minimal assistance:

- *Eating*: eating a range of foods as well as opening their lunch box and wrappers or using utensils to eat food
- *Grooming*: skills such as brushing their teeth and hair
- *Bathing*: washing and drying themselves; washing their hair and face
- *Dressing*: dressing and undressing with or without assistance depending on developmental age
- *Sleeping*
- *Toileting*

### Personal organisation

Personal organisation is your child's ability to organise themselves and their belongings, and to follow routines or processes. By school age, children might be expected to have the following level of skill:

- *Routine*: ability to follow a routine (e.g. simple bedtime routine that includes *toilet, story, sleep*)
- *Sequencing*: ability to follow a set of steps within a task (e.g. brushing teeth sequence of *toothpaste on toothbrush, wet brush with water, brush teeth, rinse mouth, wash brush, dry mouth, put toothbrush back into cupboard*)
- *Care for belongings*: can identify and look after belongings such as school bag, lunch box, and items of clothing
- *Recognition*: ability to locate objects within a familiar environment, such as the home or classroom (e.g. can find cup from kitchen or book from reading corner if requested; can put away toys)



## **Attention and Concentration**

Your child's level of attention and concentration will determine how well they are able to focus on a set task or complete series of tasks within set period of time. By school age, children might be expected to have the following level of skill:

- Can follow short 1-2 step instructions
- Can focus on tasks for short periods
- Can sit for appropriate length of time depending on developmental age. It is important that children are able to do this across environments (for example in a quiet environment such as at home, as well as in a busy environment such as at school)
- Can complete set tasks when broken into smaller parts with limited prompting from adult

## **Change and Flexibility**

Flexibility is your child's ability to cope with changes to their day. Your child might be expected to show skills in these areas:

- Can follow simple instructions from adult
- Can transition or move between tasks and environments when required
- Can move on from their preferred activity when requested
- Can cope with unexpected changes in routine with support (e.g. wet day timetable at school due to rain)

## **Emotional Regulation**

Emotional regulation is your child's ability to regulate (or manage) their own emotions to a level expected for their developmental age. Your child might be expected to display these skills:

- Can calm themselves down when upset. You may hear this referred to as self-soothing
- Reacts appropriately to emotional responses (e.g. Your child is able to manage their anger at a level expected for their developmental age)

## **Safety**

An important consideration to starting school is how well your child can keep themselves safe, and this includes the following:

- An awareness of road safety
- Can follow rules to safely cross the road with adult supervision
- Can use age-appropriate equipment safely, such as playground equipment

## **Asking for help**

It is important that children learn to ask for help when they need it. For success at school, your child should learn these skills:

- Recognise when they need help with a task or activity
- Know who they can ask for help (e.g. a teacher, sibling or peer)
- Know how to ask for help. This could be with words or with a sign or symbol to let the person know they would like help.