

Information For Parents

The Primary School Nursing Program is a free service offered by the Department of Education and Training.

Your child will receive the School Entrant Health Questionnaire in their first year at school—please complete this form and return it to school as soon as possible. If you do not wish for your child to be seen please tick the ‘no’ box, & sign on page 5 of the questionnaire.

The information in the questionnaire helps the Primary School Nurse understand any concerns you may have about your child’s health & development & the impact this may have on their learning. This information is important in providing support for you & your child. If your child needs a brief further assessment such as a vision or hearing test the nurse will see them at school.

You can contact the nurse directly if you wish to discuss the screening which may include checking your child’s distance vision, hearing, speech and oral health. The nurse is also available to parents to discuss on any concerns with parenting and child health & wellbeing issues.

Transition to School– changes for your Child

Starting school involves a number of changes for children and families. Some useful tips to assist in the transition to school include:

Getting familiar with your child’s new school

In the months and weeks before starting school, it’s good for your child to get familiar with the school environment. This includes routines and rules as well as the classroom, playground, toilets, drinking fountains and so on.

If your child is going to attend a school with a **school transition program**, try to make sure your child is able to attend on the days the children visit ‘big school’.

Managing feelings about starting school

Starting school can be a big change for your child, and they might feel a bit anxious as well as excited. Letting your child know that you think they’ll go well at school can help them feel positive. Give your child lots of love and support.—Be excited and enthusiastic about your child starting school. This sends your child the positive message that school is exciting and that they’ll manage well and have fun.

Starting school: the early weeks

Here are some simple things you can do to help the first few weeks go smoothly:

- Try to drop off your child at school before the bell goes in the morning. Also pick your child up on time. If you’re late it could make your child feel a bit anxious.
- Try to make after-school time a bit special, with a snack and time for the two of you to chat.—You could try saying something like, ‘Tell me one good thing about your day’.
- Don’t expect too much academic progress too soon. If your child is happy and seems to be enjoying school, that’s a real achievement. The rest will come later.
- Remember that it’s normal for children to play with lots of different children, and even to play on their own sometimes. It takes a while before they settle into a group of friends.



Your Visiting Primary School Nurse is:

CATHERINE MCDONALD

PH. 0477 320 246

Information and Support for Parents:
Anglicare/Parentzone parenting courses- (03) 51 359 555 or Parentzone.Gippsland@anglicarevic.org.au
Poisons information- 13 11 26
Parentline- 1300 30 1300
Homelessness assistance: 1800 825 955
SafeSteps Family Violence support: 1800 015 188 or www.safesteps.org.au
Food Security: www.askizzy.org.au/food
Royal Children’s Hospital– 9345 5522
The Orange Door: 1800 319 354
www.rch.org.au
www.beyondblue.org.au
www.continence.org.au
www.raisingchildren.net.au
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

School Health Plans : Do you have your child’s health plans ready for school?
Allergies & eczema plans available at: www.allergy.org.au
Asthma plans available at: www.asthma.org.au
Please discuss your plans with your Family Doctor and once completed give them to the school.



When should my child's eyes be tested?

Optometrists Association Australia recommends that children have a full eye examination with an Optometrist before starting school and regularly as they progress through primary and secondary schools.

An eye examination with an Optometrist takes approximately 25 minutes and attracts a Medicare rebate- no referral is required.

Please record any vision testing and/or family history of vision problems on the School Entrant Health Questionnaire.

If there has not been any vision testing prior to starting school the Primary School Nurse is able to check your child's distance vision and provide a referral if needed.

Signs that could indicate a possible vision problem:

- One eye turns in or out while the other points straight ahead.
- Frequent blinking/rubbing of the eye
- Red or watery eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Tilting head noticeably
- Poor hand eye co-ordination
- Covering or closing one eye
- Difficulty learning to read
- Holding a book very close to read
- Leaving out or confusing words when reading
- Squinting or sitting very close when watching TV
- Complaints of headaches, blurred/double vision



Regular dental check-ups (6-12monthly) are recommended as part of your child's dental health routine. Healthy teeth and gums are vital to your school-age child's general health. Dental care for children's teeth starts with cleaning your child's teeth twice a day.

Dental Health

Your child may be eligible for the Commonwealth Child Dental Benefits Schedule, which provides \$1000 worth of basic dental care over a 2 year period for eligible children. Contact LCHS Dental Services on 1800 242 696 to make an appointment.

Tips for better sleep:

1. Set up a regular bedtime routine
2. Relax before bed
3. Keep regular wake times
4. Make sure your child feels safe at night
5. Check noise and light in your child's bedroom
6. Limit screens/ TV before bed



Sleep and Learning

About sleep and learning

Good-quality sleep helps your child concentrate, remember things and behave well. These all help them to be a successful learner.

Poor sleep or not enough sleep affects concentration, memory and behaviour, making it harder for your child to learn. Children who don't sleep well are more likely to feel sleepy and to have difficulties with learning.

Concentration

Children who are sleepy have trouble concentrating during the day. If your child can't keep their attention on what they're trying to learn, whether it's climbing a tree at the park or singing a song at school, it will affect their learning.

Memory

Remembering things is part of learning. When your child is tired, it's harder for them to remember basic information such as learning the alphabet, numbers, words and following instructions.

Our brains create and strengthen different types of memory in different sleep cycles. Just before your child wakes in the morning, their brain uses the last stages of REM sleep to sort and store memories and information from the previous day and get ready for the day ahead.

Behaviour

Sleepy children tend to have more problems with behaviour at school- and at home too! For example, a sleepy child might play up in class or refuse to follow the teacher's instructions. A sleepy child might miss out on learning because the teacher is busy managing their behaviour. The child might also miss out on playing with other children if they don't like the way s/he's behaving.

If your child is having problems with their concentration, memory or behaviour, checking their sleep is a good place to start.

If you're worried, or the problems go on for more than 2-4 weeks, talk to your doctor, Primary School Nurse or Maternal and Child Health Nurse.

Information taken from the Raising Children Network- www.raisingchildren.net.au