



Starting School

PRACTICAL ADVICE
FOR FAMILIES



Includes a school directory for
Ashfield, Burwood, City of Canada Bay
and Strathfield local government areas



Welcome

This book is part of a regional initiative facilitated by the Families NSW Child and Family Interagency to assist families with children starting schools who live in the Ashfield, Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield local government areas.

It is a practical guide, and is the result of local research into the needs of local families. Schools, childcare centres and families were surveyed in 2009 about their needs. We have taken this information and produced an easy to read practical guide to preparing for school.

The goal is to distribute this resource at the point when families are starting to think about enrolling their child for school.

All research into transition to school or school readiness indicates that:

“There is a wealth of evidence that identifies the significant benefits of a well planned and resourced transition to school experience on a child’s ability to engage with their learning environment and fulfil their ‘whole of life’ potential.”

“Positive transitions can work to create a foundation of enjoyment and appreciation of the academic environment for a child.”

“A successful transition to school results in ‘children who like school, look forward to going regularly, and show steady growth in academic and social skills’.”

We trust this will be a handy resource in helping you and your child ‘transition’ from home and/or the childcare setting into primary school.

The Project Committee

Source: Policy Brief 11 (Rethinking the Transition to School: Linking schools and early years services). 2008. www.rch.org.au/ccch

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Information on the education system

Rights and responsibilities of parents*

If you have a child starting school you will have new levels of responsibilities to ensure your child's school experience is as positive and beneficial as possible.

Along with these new responsibilities, you have rights to access information and discuss any concerns you may have about your child's education or school experience. There are a range of useful websites and resources to help you find out more about your rights and responsibilities. Some of these are included below.

These are some of the most important things for parents to know.

School is compulsory

As a parent it is your responsibility to make sure that your child is attending school by the age of six years old. The law states that all children of compulsory school age must go to school.

You have the right to choose the school your child goes to and to ask for as much information as you need to help you to make this choice. Refer to www.schools.nsw.edu.au or www.det.nsw.edu.au

'School' can also include 'home schooling' where your child is educated at home. You can find out more about this option at www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents/#home-ed or by calling the Home Education Unit on 9367 8149.

Attendances and absences

Once your child has been enrolled and accepted in school, by law you as parent are required to have your child attend every school day. If your child cannot go to school you must tell the school what days they will not be going and explain why.

Acceptable reasons for children to be absent from school for short periods include:

- an unavoidable medical or dental appointment
- attendance at a special religious ceremony
- attendance at a serious and/or urgent family situation (e.g. a funeral)
- they are too sick to attend school or has an infectious illness.

You are also responsible for ensuring that your child arrives at school on time and school procedures are followed for a child arriving late and/or being taken out of school early.

You as a parent have the right to request leave and/or an exemption from school if required, and can request the school provide work that can be completed while their child is absent (e.g. an extended family holiday).

Parents who have difficulties in maintaining their child's attendance and/or time keeping have the responsibility and the right to talk to the school principal or school counsellor to ask for assistance.

** The word 'parent', in this document, also includes legal guardian.*

Progress reports

At least twice during the school year, parents will receive both written and verbal reports on their child's progress. Parents who have concerns about their child's progress have the right to contact the school to discuss the matters of concern. Parents also have the right to request the assistance of telephone interpreter services if required.

Medical issues

Parents are responsible for informing the school if their child has any medical conditions e.g. asthma, allergies, is at risk of anaphylaxis or requires the administration of prescribed medications. This information will usually be provided as part of the enrolment process; however it is also important that the school is informed of any changes to medical conditions and/or medication.

Information on any allergies a child may have are particularly important for the school to know about. See www.allergyfacts.org.au

Uniforms

Parents are responsible for finding out about their chosen school's uniform policy, where the appropriate uniforms can be bought and ensuring that their child attends school wearing their uniform on each school day. Hats are part of the school uniform to provide sun protection. There is usually a summer, winter and sports uniform.

To keep costs down, many schools run a clothing pool where uniform items are donated after children have outgrown them.

Parents have the right to request their child to wear clothing of religious significance e.g. traditional Muslim headscarfs.

Financial contributions

Government schools may ask parents for voluntary contributions to enhance educational and sporting programs. Parents may also be asked to pay for excursions throughout the year to enhance their child's classroom learning, and if a child is involved in extra activities such as sport or band, parents may be asked to pay for things like instrument hire and transport to events

Financial assistance

Parents of children attending Government schools that may be having difficulty with the costs of schooling, can make an appointment with the school principal to discuss their situation.

Some families may be eligible for the Student Assistance Scheme. The school principal will be able to advise on this as the scheme may only provide school related expenses, such as uniforms or excursions.

Education Tax Refund

Families in receipt of Family Tax Benefit may be entitled to claim a tax refund of up to 50 per cent off eligible expenses for their child's education for items such as stationery, computers, printers, internet and educational software.

Visit www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au or check the Australian Taxation website and search for Education Tax Refund at www.ato.gov.au or contact on 13 28 61.

If English is not your first language and you want to talk to a tax officer you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service for help on 13 14 50.

Travel to and from school

Some children attending Government schools may be eligible for subsidised travel through the School Student Transport Scheme. This provides subsidised travel on trains, buses, ferries and long-distance coach services. In areas where there is no public transport, a subsidy is also available for transport to and from school in private vehicles.

Ask your chosen school for an application form or for details visit www.transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts/ssts.html or call NSW Transport on 9268 2800.

Outside of school hours care

Services that care for children outside of school hours (OOSH) are often run from schools or near schools. Parents may be able to find out where the nearest OOSH services are from the school their child is attending.

OOSH services charge fees and some parents may be eligible for Child Care Benefit to help with OOSH fees. Visit www.centrelink.gov.au and search for Child Care Benefit to see if you are eligible or call the Family Assistance Office on 13 6150.

For more information about OOSH services www.netoosh.org.au

Useful resources

Parenting advice, information and resources, including a school holiday parent kit and parenting programs, visit:

- www.community.nsw.gov.au
- www.raisingchildren.net.au
- www.resourcingparents.com

Parent information and resources - Government Schools

- www.parentscouncil.nsw.edu.au
- www.schools.nsw.edu.au
- www.pandc.org.au
- www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Parent information and resources – Non government Schools

- www.privateschoolsdirectory.com.au
- www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Language and Learning Support

- www.tale.edu.au - Teaching and Learning exchange (TaLe); Information on learning and helpful resources for schoolwork
- www.det.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport - translated school information
- Telephone Interpreter Services: 131 450
- Kids Help Line - A free and confidential telephone counselling service
- www.kidshelpline.com.au
Phone: 1800 551 800



Is your child ready for school?


The following is a range of skills that are suitable for most children starting school. Remember that children develop at different rates, and that the list should be used as a guide only. If most of your ticks are in the yes column your child is probably ready for school.

Don't be concerned if your child is not displaying all skills. If you are uncertain about your child's 'readiness' to attend school, talk with your child's health professionals, early childhood teachers, or the teacher/principal at your preferred school for further information and advice.

Don't forget to have your child's eyesight and hearing checked prior to school. Your local Early Childhood Clinic or GP can help.

Skill/behavior	Yes	No	Sometimes
Follows simple directions			
Asks and answers simple questions, using when, why and how			
Communicates needs e.g. that they are thirsty or hurt			
Joins in singing familiar songs			
Looks at books for enjoyment			
Talks to others about familiar events and objects			
Separates from parent or carer without too much distress			
Can look after their own belongings			
Recognises their own belongings such as bag and clothes			
Takes turns and can share			
Goes to the toilet by themselves - for boys this includes using a urinal			
Dresses or undresses by themselves			
Wipes their own nose			
Is able to open a lunch box, drink bottle and packaging			

Skill/behavior	Yes	No	Sometimes
Plays co-operatively with other children			
Can share an adult's attention with other children			
Knows to hold an adult's hand when crossing the road			
Can make friends			
Is aware how their own behaviour affects others			
Displays an awareness of rules and the reasons for them			
Uses scissors			
Beginning to print a few letters of the alphabet			
Holds and uses a pencil with control			
Displays balance and coordination in physical activities			
Is able to sit still and concentrate for 15-20 mins			
Recognises their own name in print			
Beginning to write their own name			
Recognises that numbers can be used to count			
Demonstrates an understanding of opposites – up/down, under/over			
Recognises and matches objects that are similar shape, colour and size			

 *Start making your child aware of stranger danger and teach them that they should not leave school with someone they don't already know.*

Choosing a school

The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) has prepared a comprehensive set of guidelines to help parents in choosing a school. Below is an edited version. The full version is available at www.asg.com.au/Assets/Files/Tip_Sheet_How_To_Choose_A_School.pdf

Know and understand your child

You know your child best. What kind of school environment would suit your child's characteristics and qualities?



Recognise your education preferences and values

If you have strong philosophical or religious views this will form the basis of what type of education you want for your child.

Be aware that you need to match your child's needs with your preferences.

Explore the school's focus – is it on discipline, nurturing of children and their happiness (also known as pastoral care), or on skill and academic development, or behavioural management.

Seek out the approach and balance that seems right for you and your child.



Match your preferences with your child's needs and personality

Now you know what type of school might best meet your child's needs and your own preferences, you can begin to put together a list of desired qualities that you want.

You can change the list as you gather more information.



Gather information about schools

School location – long daily travelling and inconvenient travel arrangements can make children very tired.

Philosophical or religious focus of the school.

The education curriculum offered.

Your affordability of the school fees and associated costs.

The predominant emphasis of the school – academic achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, balanced individual, etc.

The facilities offered by the school and its focus – science, sports, performing arts, etc.

Class size and structure.

Reputation and education performance of the school.

Values and attitudes

Read the school's charter or philosophy statement and its parent newsletter to assess values and attitudes of the school. The Annual Report and school motto are also examples. Talking to students' parents can help you assess the school's level of inclusiveness, acceptance, welcoming attitude and whether students feel listened to, comfortable and enjoy attending school. How does staff engage children who are very bright or gifted, or help children who have challenges with school work or sport?



Relationships between students, parents and teaching staff

Does the school have a Parents and Friends Committee, is it open to attendance and participation?

Children have the right to feel safe and respected during their school years. What is the bullying policy? Bullying can thrive in schools where student concerns are ignored.

How does the principal ensure that he or she is approachable and accessible to the students?

How can parents assist in the school's classroom programs?

Does the school welcome parent concerns and discussion? Ask to see the procedure for resolving parental concerns.

School environment

Ensure the school's facilities and environment is adequate, clean and in good repair.

Check the technology facilities and the policy for updating computer equipment, software, internet access and technology-based teaching tools.

Does the school have access to an oval for recess times and sports?

Is the playground attractive, with appropriate equipment for children's different developmental levels?

Is there sufficient shade and seating around the playground?

Is there sufficient space for more children to run and play safely?

School facilities and services

What happens if your child becomes ill or is injured at school? Does the school have a first aid or medical facilities and trained medical staff or first-aid providers?

If your child has specific health needs, such as an allergy, be sure to ask detailed questions to determine how the school will cope with these.

Do you require a school with a before or after school care program?

Can the children visit the school library throughout the school day?


Are extra-curricular programs available at lunchtime or after school?

Consider the school canteen, does it encourage healthy eating? Is it regularly available?

Class size and structure

Small classes are more likely to be found in private schools, with Catholic schools generally having larger class sizes than government schools.

Occasionally schools separate multi-age or composite classes. These may contain students from two or three grades. This need not be a concern, as it offers opportunities for children to work at their own levels of ability and interest.

 *Do some craft activities together so your child can practice using scissors and glue*

The curriculum

Ask about what knowledge and skills the school will be working to develop in your child, how they will do it, and how you can help.

Is the school teaching government-developed courses or their own?

What is the range of academic and elective courses on offer? Does this support what you want for your child?

If your child excels or has difficulty, how would the school assist him or her?

How does the school help your child develop socially?

Other important issues

Does the school have a homework policy?

How much homework should your child expect to receive?

What opportunities are there for doing things outside the curriculum and how much time will these take?

Does the school participate in representative cultural and sporting activities?

What is the school's technology policy – when will students start using computers? Will you need to buy or hire a computer for your child?

Reporting student progress

How does the school report on its students progress? Does the school rely on grades that compare your child within the class or report progress against set criteria or both?

Does the school give you samples of your child's work to show how new skills are appearing and where attention is needed?

How else do you hear about your child's learning, for example, are there regular parent-teacher interviews? Are students welcome to attend the regular interviews with their parents?

Are teachers happy to discuss your child's progress without appointment before or after school?

Is your presence in the classroom welcomed and do the teachers allow you to observe lessons? (This is a real test of a school's openness).

Where to source information

Collect brochures and reports from the schools (see the school directory at the back of this booklet for contact details).

Compare information about schools from the internet.

Ask other parents for feedback.

Visit the school and meet with the principal and teaching staff. Think about what you want to ask.

Watch how teachers and students work together.

Speak to students of the school and their parents.

Check newspaper articles about the school and its relationship with the community.

Once you have all the information you and your family can choose the schools that suit you best and enroll your child.

Important note:

You have a right to choose the school your child goes to, however each school will have policies about priorities. Many schools will only take children from outside of the catchment area* once they have received all enrolments from within their school catchment area.

*Catchment area - each school has geographic boundaries set by the Department of Education. For more information check with your local school.



** Read to your child every day. Visit your local library to borrow new and interesting books.*

Getting ready for school

Below is a time line to help you and your child prepare for school. It should make things easier for you, don't worry if you don't get everything done at the times given, they are just suggestions.

If your child has a disability or developmental delay, approach your local school as early as possible to give the school time to prepare for your child. (If your child has a physical disability, schools need at least 18 months notice to prepare as they may have to install ramps, hand rails etc.)

1 year before starting school

- Consider if your child is ready for school. Think about your child's emotional readiness as well as academic skills. Talk to your child's paediatrician, health and early childhood nurse or early childhood teacher if you need guidance.
- Start considering school options e.g. what school will they attend?
- Contact your local school to find out how to enrol your child, when they hold their open day and orientation/transition program.
- Complete your child's immunisation schedule.
- If possible enrol in an early childhood environment such as occasional care, long day care, preschool or playgroup to provide a 'stepping stone' to big school.

9 months before starting school

- Check that you have original copies of your child's birth certificate or identity documents, court orders (if appropriate) and immunisation record - order new copies if required.
- Encourage your child to develop independence in going to the toilet and dressing themselves.
- Develop your child's curiosity by asking and encouraging questions.
- If your child has a disability or developmental delay, meet with the school to discuss your child's individual needs.

6 months before starting school

- Enrol your child in a school if you haven't already.
- Share information with the school about any health and medical issues relevant to your child.
- Check you know the dates for your child's transition to school program or any orientation days.
- Make sure that your child has their free dental and vision check at your local child and family health service.
- Organise before and after school care arrangements if required.

3 months before starting school

- Practice going to public toilets - show boys how to use a urinal.
- Organise work commitments as appropriate for your child's first day/weeks at school.
- Find out about purchasing school uniform.
- Read books with your child about starting school (these can be found in local libraries).
- Reassure your child that the teacher is there to look after and help them as well as teach them new things.
- Find out about when and how the school canteen operates.

1 month before starting school

- Go past, visit and discuss school regularly with your child to familiarise them with the school environment, routines, expectations and activities.
- Purchase school supplies e.g. school bag, lunch box, drink bottle, rain coat, paint shirt, library bag and shoes.
- Label everything.
- Let your child get dressed in their school uniform and show this to family and friends.
- Provide opportunities for your child to open and unwrap packed lunches.
- Show your child how to use a bubbler.
- Plan bed time routines to ensure a good nights sleep.
- Purchase school shoes and get your child to wear them in (avoids blisters on the first day of school).

- Ensure you have an emergency contact person (someone who lives nearby and is well known to your child) who can pick up your child from school if you are detained. Ensure your child and their school knows who this person is.

The night before starting school

- Lay out everything for the morning; uniform, shoes, hat etc. It is a good habit to get into and it makes mornings much easier. Remember, things often take longer than expected and it's important to be at school on time, every time.
- Help your child pack their bag - remember to pack some spare clothes in case there are any 'accidents' at school.
- Get your child to assist you to make lunch, explain what is eaten at recess and lunch.

The BIG day - their first day at school

- Prepare a healthy breakfast.
- Take some photos.
- Show your child where you will pick them up in the afternoon.
- Reassure your child that they will receive instructions from their teacher about when it is time for recess or lunch etc, and if they are uncertain about anything, they just need to ask the teacher.
- Make sure you say goodbye to your child before leaving. If your child becomes upset, do not prolong the farewell. Saying goodbye can be hard, doing it more than once is even harder.

- Be on time to drop off and pick up your child at school.
- Ask your child about their day.

After starting school

- Get involved in your school - join in classroom programs, excursions, and fundraising activities or P&C committee. Getting involved demonstrates to your child you have a rewarding relationship with the school, and this may help your child to settle more quickly.
- Do not plan too many activities after school until your child adjusts to the school routine. Children are often very tired during this time.
- Plan nutritious snacks for your child to have when they get home from school.

** Be aware of all the times during the day that you use literacy and mathematics and involve your child in these, for example:*

- *writing a shopping list*
- *shopping*
- *reading the tv guide*
- *reading a menu*
- *measuring ingredients when cooking.*

- Do not keep your child home from school unnecessarily as this can impact on the child's learning and settling process.
- Spend time asking questions and listening to your child talk about school.
- Speak with your child's teacher about any concerns you may have.
- Ensure you inform the school of any changes to contact details, health issues or family situations that impact on your child.



Children with special learning needs

For some families the transition to school seems more daunting because they have a child with a disability or developmental delay or other special learning needs. However, you will find that there are lots of people available to help your child and family through this process.

As soon as you have any concerns about your child's development seek help. You can contact:

- your early childhood health nurse
- your family doctor
- your local community health centre
- your child's teacher if they attend long day care, preschool or occasional care
- the Early Childhood Intervention Infoline on 1300 65 68 65
- your local school.

Your child may be referred for an assessment with a paediatrician, psychologist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist or other professional. This process will provide you with information about your child's skills and abilities as well as their needs. An assessment will determine what services your child and family are eligible for. At this time you may be referred to an early childhood intervention program. Staff in this program can assist your family with the transition to school.

In the year before school (where a child has a physical disability and the local school may need to install ramps etc, at least 18 months notice is required) an Early Learning Support Team will be formed to help your family plan the transition to school process. The core members of the team may include:

- you and other members of your family
- early childhood teacher
- early intervention teacher
- school staff
- advocate.

Others who may be part of the team are:

- school counsellor
- itinerant support teacher
- therapists
- interpreter
- paediatrician
- specialists from other government agencies.

The school will need information about your child to determine the type of services that they are eligible for. This information needs to be from a recognised professional like a paediatrician or psychologist.

Children with disabilities have a number of enrolment options including:

- regular classes
- support classes in regular schools
- special schools.

It is a good idea for families to visit the different types of classes to assist them in making an informed decision. The school principal, in consultation with the school's Learning Support Team, will assist you to find the right schooling option for your child, taking into account your choice, your child's specific additional learning needs and proximity to local specialist services. Where a child is enrolled in a support class or a special school this is done through a regional process known as a regional placement panel.

If there are no vacancies at your closest support class you may be offered a place in a class in a nearby suburb. Transport assistance is available to support young children with disabilities to get to school.

In addition to special classes and special schools, the following services are available in all public schools:

- The Learning Assistance Program provides an extensive range of specialist services to support any student in a regular class experiencing difficulties in learning.
- The Integration Funding Support Program is a targeted support program for eligible school aged students with confirmed disabilities enrolled in a regular class and attending on a full-time basis.

- Itinerant Support Teachers provide support for students with hearing and/or vision impairment or behaviour disorders and their teachers.
- Outreach Teacher Programs support students with moderate or high support needs with disabilities including autism or emotional disturbance and their teachers.

Useful websites

Department of Education

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentssupport/programs/disability.php

Early Childhood Intervention Infoline

www.parentline.org.au



Now your child is at school

Your child is wearing their uniform and carrying their school bag, about to embark on a new adventure. They are excited and nervous. Similar feelings to you. How is life going to change?

Time is at a premium

You may think you will have more time as your child is not at home for most of the day but this makes your time together smaller with more to do.

It is important amidst all this organising for you and your child to find some time together. They are picking up a lot of information from school and trying to make sense of it? Perhaps you could find an activity they like doing and carry this out with them; conversations will start to flow as you do something together.

Organisation

At first it can feel overwhelming with extra washing, getting bags ready and children out of the door. However, this does ease as you get used to it and organise yourself. Decide who is doing what. Have routine tasks which are done at the same time each day. This creates a rhythm in the home, which a child appreciates, and they may even help you with some of the tasks.

Mornings and afternoon pick-ups

These tend to be the busiest times in your home, especially if there are siblings in the family. Get as much ready the night before e.g. putting clothes out, filling school bags with what is needed, ensuring you have all your breakfast

items, and making part of their lunches. This should help make your morning smoother.

When you pick up your children they are often tired and hungry. If the drive or walk home is a long one, take some snacks.

Your child's behaviour

Your child doesn't just learn their ABCs at school, they are also coping with and learning how to play with other people who may be very different to themselves. It is great if you can talk to your child's teacher to find out how your child is settling in and who their friends are. This will help you see their day through their eyes.

A good way of getting a child to talk about friends and school is to ask around the table at dinner "what was the best thing about today?" and "what was the worst thing that happened today?". This way you can get some information and help them with any difficulties they are having.

Friends

As a parent you will make new friends through your children which can be fun. You will also come across lifestyles or ways of parenting which will not be the same as yours. It helps if you are clear about what you think is acceptable.

It is a good idea if your child is having a play date at another child's house to go with them the first time to help guide activities, and suggest to the other parent what you are happy for your child to eat and do.

Bedtimes

It will help if you have fairly standard times and routines around bedtime. Your child will probably be tired in the first few weeks of school until they have settled in. Making sure they have a good night's sleep will really help them, the rest of the family and their school experience.

Getting along with the school

You are now handing some of the responsibility for your child to a school and a teacher. To help your child and you get the best out of this it is important to keep in touch with the school. Some have newsletters or notes from the teacher that tell you things of interest. Check your child's schoolbag every night.

It is always a good idea to meet with the class teacher to see how your child is doing and discover what they are learning about. You may do some things at home to support their learning.

Some parents want a more active involvement in school and help in the class with reading, in the canteen with food, or become part of the Parents and Children's Committee. It is a time of change for you as you meet new people and learn new skills.

Holidays


As a family you will not be used to having long breaks so often and so regularly in a year. It is useful to block out on your calendar all the school holidays in the year. If you are staying at home with the kids or organising care for the holidays you will need to plan the holidays at least by the middle of each school term.

Holiday breaks are fun when everyone has things to do. Your local Council may host activities or have details of children's activities in your area.

Parents' time

As a parent you will be used to having less time for your relationship with your partner. However, once your child is settled at school you may feel they are old enough to be looked after by a babysitter. This will give you and your partner some extra time to get to know each other again as a couple, rather than as 'Mum' and 'Dad'.

These are just some of the changes you will see in your family. New ideas and friends will be continually brought into your home. This can be great fun but also challenging. Being prepared about what you think is important in your family will really help. Communication is the key. Keep on talking and asking questions, we all like to feel important and appreciated; the same is true for our children

 *Play with your child. Choose games like Snap or Snakes and Ladders that encourage turn taking and following instructions*



- * Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children.*
- * Join a playgroup or invite a friend to play.*
- * Say hello to other families when you go to the school's orientation program.*
- * Organise some play dates before school starts and continue this after school has started to assist your child to build friendships.*
- * Children are often tired at the end of the day; a short play at a local park may be a good idea rather than a long visit to someone's home.*

Great food for school lunches

Preparing healthy school lunches and snacks is important if you want your child to stay active and perform well throughout the day. Packing a different nutritious lunch everyday can be a challenge. Here are some tips to help you pack a great lunch box that your child will love.

Go healthy

Children need a wide variety of foods to help their bodies grow. Include different types of fruit, vegetables, lean meat and dairy foods in your child's lunch box and for snacks. Try out fruit and vegetables of different colours, shapes, sizes and textures. Get your child to help out, mixing and matching snacks to create new tastes.

Bread	bagel, baguette, croissant, English muffin, focaccia, lavash, pita bread, wholemeal and multigrain sandwich bread, tortilla, Turkish bread and waffle.
Fillings	avocado, chicken, cucumber, egg, lettuce, grated carrot, capsicum, low fat cheese, pumpkin, prawn, smoked salmon, spinach, sprouts, tomato, tuna and turkey and other lean meats.
Fruits	apple, apricot, banana, blueberry, cherry, date, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, kiwifruit, lychees, mandarin, mango, melon, nectarines, papaya, passion fruit, peaches, pears, persimmon, pineapple, plums, prunes and strawberries.
Vegetables	broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, corn, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, mushrooms, potato, pumpkin, shallot, spinach, sweet potato and tomato.
Snacks	air-popped popcorn, celery and carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, cheese sticks, crackers and vegemite, dried or canned fruits, frozen fruits, fruit dip, homemade pretzels and cookies, rice cake, roasted chickpeas and yogurt.

It is better to eat some foods occasionally. These foods are generally low in nutrients and high in salt, fat or sugar, which can lead to obesity, tooth decay and poor health. Below is a list of foods to have only 'sometimes'.

'Sometimes' food and drinks	biscuits, bars, cakes, chips, chocolate, cordials, fast food and take away meals, fruit juice, flavoured milk, ice creams, lollies, soft drinks and sport drinks.
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Go smart

- Practice opening and closing the lunch box with your child. Avoid using cling wrap, vacuum-sealed bags and plastic bags if your child can not manage these.
- Buy an insulated lunch box to keep the food inside cool. Alternatively, add a frozen water bottle to the lunch box. More food safety tips are on the NSW Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Avoid packing foods that need to be re-heated or to be cooked with hot water. Your child may not get any help from their teacher or other adults when eating at school.
- Small foods are easier for children to handle and fun to eat. Cut food into pieces and put them in smaller containers.
- Encourage your child to drink water regularly during school. Add a lemon or lime squeeze or fruit puree ice blocks in a bottle of water to give flavour to it.
- Check if your child can sit on the ground and balance food on his/her knees.

Go multicultural

- You can help your child to develop a positive identity and attitude toward your own and other cultures through food and eating.
- Teach your child about food and customs of your culture and encourage your child to share what he/she has learnt with other friends at school.
- Bring your child into the kitchen to cook your traditional food and pack into the lunchbox.

- Introduce your child to a variety of food from other cultures by preparing multicultural snacks and lunches together. Some suggestions include sushi, tamale, fajita, rice paper rolls, tzatziki, hummus, dumpling and frittata.

Make it fun

- Celebrate special days by packing special foods for the day. For example, pack an all-green lunch in celebration of St Patrick's Day or include ANZAC biscuits to celebrate ANZAC day.
- Cut foods into fun shapes using biscuit cutters.
- Pack sandwich ingredients individually to let your child make his/her own sandwich at lunch.
- Pack various sauces for dipping so your child can choose.
- Pack fun napkins and utensils.
- Include a special note from each parent.

Be mindful

- If your child is allergic to certain food, let the principal or teacher know.
- Explain to your child why they should not share or swap lunches and snacks with other children due to allergies.
- Check your child's school policy regarding students with severe allergies.
- For more information about severe and sudden allergies, visit www.allergyfacts.org.au
- Help your child learn how to use the school canteen and make healthy choices.

For more information

- Anaphylaxis Information
www.allergyfacts.org.au
- NSW Food Authority
www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Nutrition Australia
www.nutritionaustralia.org
- Healthy Kids
www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
- DET
www.det.nsw.edu.au



** Encourage your child to be independent and to care for their belongings by helping them to pack away.*

** When you are out and about hold hands when you are crossing the road. Talk to your child about road safety.*

School directory

OOSH (Out of School Hours Care) is childcare provided for school-age children (5-12 years) before, and/or after school, and usually during the school vacation periods. Contact the school for more information.





OOSH service operates
inside school






OOSH service operates
outside school





Ashfield Local Government Area

School details	Special programs	Enrolment/orientation	OOSH
<p>Ashfield Public School Cnr Liverpool Road & Murrell Street Ashfield NSW 2131 Principal: Robyn Hutchinson Phone: 9798 4400 Web: www.ashfield-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: ashfield-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Talent Enrichment Program, Transition to School Program, Chinese Community Language Program, Support classes for students with a moderate intellectual disability, Songroom Program, Choir and Drama groups, Inquiry-based Learning, Restorative Practice.</p>	<p>Enrolments: Accepted all year. Orientation: Year-long Transition to School Program, including: Introduction evening to APS & Kinder Term 2, Orientation to Kindergarten in Term 4, On-site ABC pre-school, Good Beginnings: Play and Learn Program on Wednesday throughout the year.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Dobroyd Point Public School Waratah Street Haberfield NSW 2045 Principal: John Quinn Phone: 9797 8249 Web: www.dobroydpt-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: dobroydpt-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Chess, Debating & Public Speaking, Recorder Groups, Choir, Band, Sports, Private Music Tuition.</p>	<p>Enrolments: Accepted all year. Orientation: October.</p>	 ON-SITE



School directory - Ashfield

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>Haberfield Public School Denman Avenue Haberfield NSW 2045 Principal: Karlynn Jacobsen Phone: 9798 8767 Web: www.haberfield-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: haberfield-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Gifted and Talented Program, LOTE program, Choirs, Bands, Recorder and String Programs.</p>	<p>Enrolments: Term 2 (usually after Easter break). Orientation: October.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Summer Hill Public School Moonbie Street Summer Hill NSW 2130 Principal: Greg McLachlan Phone: 9797 8160 Web: www.summerhill-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: summerhill-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Bands and Orchestras, Chess, Choirs, ESL program, Gifted and Talented Program, Debating & Public Speaking, Performing Arts Program.</p>	<p>Enrolments: Expression of interest 12 months prior to starting kindergarten. Orientation: Parent Information evening (by invitation only) late June/early July.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Yeo Park Infants School Victoria Street Ashfield NSW 2131 Principal: Stacey Furner Phone: 9798 7560 Web: www.yeoparkinf-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: yeoparkinf-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Fitness Activities, Art Programs.</p>	<p>Enrolments: at the end of January and/or early February depending on the calendar. Orientation: An evening event for adults only, then a morning event which is more focussed on the students, followed by two transition visits where the children are left for a few hours.</p>	 ON-SITE




School directory - Ashfield

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>St Joan of Arc Primary School 88 Dalhousie Street Haberfield NSW 2045 Principal: Margaret Woods Phone: 9798 9780 Web: www.stjahaberfield.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stjahaberfield.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>Enrichment and Extension Program, Gifted & Talented Program, Learn to Swimm classes, Karate, Chess, Keyboard, Choir, Reflection & Leadership Days.</p>	<p>Enrolments: March. Orientation: November.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>St Patrick's Primary School 9 Drynan Street Summer Hill NSW 2130 Principal: John Kennedy Phone: 9798 7478 Web: www.stpssummerhill.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stpssummerhill.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>Specialist teachers in Physical Education, Italian, Library, English as a Second Language, New Arrivals, Reading Recovery and Special Needs. Life Education and Musica Viva Programs.</p>	<p>Enrolments: March. Orientation: Term 4.</p>	 OFF-SITE
<p>St Vincent's Primary School 30-34 Charlotte Street Ashfield NSW 2131 Principal: Maria Havryliv Phone: 9797 6167 Web: www.stvashfield.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stvashfield.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>Gifted and Talented Program, ESL, Special Education Program, Swimming, Dance/Drama, Choir, Band.</p>	<p>Enrolments: March. Orientation: Term 4.</p>	 OFF-SITE
<p>Trinity Grammar School 119 Prospect Road Summer Hill NSW 2130 Principal: Simon Kelly Phone: 9581 6000 Web: www.trinity.nsw.edu.au Email: info@trinity.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Scout Group, Digital Art, Computer Club, Cricket Coaching, Self Defence, Tennis, Art Club, E.A.P. Athletics.</p>	<p>Enrolments: Accepted all year. Orientation: Term 4.</p>	 ON-SITE




Burwood Local Government Area

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>Burwood Public School 1 Conder Street Burwood NSW 2134 Principal: Paul Bates Phone: 9745 2299 Web: www.burwood-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: burwood-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Gifted and talented students are catered for in a class in each grade from 1 to 6. All students may participate in university competitions, maths olympics, creative arts competitions, writing, school band, dance group (4 ESL English as a Second language) teachers assigned to each stage). Korean, Chinese and Greek languages offered after school.</p>	<p>Enrolment: throughout the school year.</p> <p>Orientation: Kinder. Term 4. Children in classes whilst parents are given talks. Teddy Bear Picnic Day in December with the kindergarten.</p>	<p> ON-SITE</p> <p> OFF-SITE</p>
<p>Enfield Public School Beaumaris Street Enfield NSW 2136 Principal: Jack Liston Phone: 9747 3514 Web: www.enfield-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: enfield-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Gifted and talented ability based maths groups across Years 2-6. Ability based reading/spelling groups in class, differentiation of the curriculum, ESL/STL support for targeted students.</p>	<p>Enrolment: Anytime - involves a meeting of the child, parents and principal.</p> <p>Orientation program runs for one morning per week over three weeks. Parents and students are involved. Dates are in Term 4 and are set in Term 3.</p>	<p> OFF-SITE</p>



School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>Croydon Primary School 39 Young Street (PO BOX 192) Croydon NSW 2132 Principal: David Horne Phone: 9747 3557 or 9747 5457 Web: www.croydon-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: croydon-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>New arrivals program and ESL classes/support for non-English speakers K – 6. Also have ESL withdrawal groups in Reading K – 6 and Team Teaching support in Writing throughout the school. Special needs students have assistance from teacher’s aides. There are weekly lessons on creative and analytical thinking for brighter students. Japanese and Mandarin after school lessons.</p>	<p>Kindergarten enrolments start mid-year. Families will be invited by letter to the kindergarten orientation session. Out of area students will be placed on a waiting list and are advised to enrol at their local school.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Croydon Park Public School Georges River Road Croydon Park NSW 2133 Principal: Sandra Angel Phone: 9797 9753 Web: www.croydonpk-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: croydonpk-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers, STL (Support Teacher Learning), differentiated curriculum violin, band and recorder programs.</p>	<p>Enrolment: Throughout the school year. Orientation days/nights occur during Term 3 and Term 4. A four week transition to kindergarten program runs over four weeks during November.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Holy Innocents’ Primary School 86-98 Queen Street Croydon NSW 2132 Principal: Jennifer Gabbe Phone: 9744 2212 Web: hicroydon.catholic.edu.au Email: info@hi.croydon.syd.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>Literacy support teacher (ESL), special education teacher, gifted and talented workshops for maths, drama, dance, science, visual arts, computers. Japanese taught for Years 1-6.</p>	<p>Enrolment: mid March until the end of May. Orientation for Kindergarten is in November. Children spend the morning in the kinder classroom, parents are invited to attend an information session led by the Principal.</p>	 OFF-SITE

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>MLC School – Junior School Park Road Burwood NSW 2134 Principal: Diana Drummond Phone: 8741 3128 Web: www.mlcsyd.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>ESS staff support students in learning environments that are flexible and responsive to the special needs of different individuals. Opportunities and support also available to gifted students. After school Mandarin classes from Pre Kinder.</p>	<p>Enrolment: Any time - this may occur when the child is quite young. Parents and daughters come to an enrolment interview with the Head of the school. If a position is accepted a fee is paid and the place is secured.</p> <p>Orientation evening for parents in early November. Orientation day is late November for incoming girls. Open days are held each term for general information.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>St. Joseph's Primary School 126 Liverpool Road Enfield NSW 2136 Principal: Michael McGovern Phone: 9744 2811 Web: stjenfield.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stj.enfield.syd.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>Specialist programs are offered that cater for children with additional needs as well as adjustments to class programs to enhance student learning.</p>	<p>May every year for kindergarten enrolments. Also refer to school website.</p> <p>Orientation day is in May during Catholic Schools Week.</p>	 OFF-SITE
<p>Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney Boundary Street Croydon NSW 2132 Principal: Dr. William T. McKeith Phone: 9704 5666 Web: www.plc.nsw.edu.au Email: enquiries@plc.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Both in class and special programs are offered for gifted and talented, ESL and special education. Years 7-12 transition programme for students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities. ESL offered to HSC.</p> <p>Chinese (K-12), Italian (8-12) Latin (8-12), French (K-12), Japanese (8-12).</p>	<p>Intake years are reception, kindergarten, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 11. Places are offered strictly in order of application. Applications are accepted any time. Early application is advised as places are limited. Annual open day and fair on the Saturday before Mothers' Day. Tours are also arranged on any working day by ringing 9704 5695.</p>	 ON-SITE




City of Canada Bay Local Government Area

School details	Special programs	Enrolment / orientation	OOSH
<p>Abbotsford Public School 350 Great North Road Abbotsford NSW 2046 Principal: Peter Widders Phone: 9713 6220 Web: www.abbotsford-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: abbotsford-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Enrichment Units of work throughout K-6 Programs</p>	<p>Enrolments: Accepted all year. Orientation: Early November</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Concord Public School PO Box 522 Concord NSW 2137 Principal: Lyn Dolbel Phone: 9744 8427 Web: www.concord-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: concord-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>		<p>Kindergarten orientation and class visits in October to December. School tours at other times by appointment.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Concord West Public School PO Box 233 Concord West NSW 2138 Principal: Cathy Brennan Phone: 97431580 Web: www.concordw-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: concordw-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Student with special needs and gifted and talented students are well catered for within mainstream classes. Students are challenged and extended through Chess K-6, orchestra and instrumental program Year 2-6 (although students learn instruments from kindergarten), debating and public speaking, visual arts club and other rich learning programs.</p>	<p>Enrolments: Enrol at any time for next year (preferably by August). Pre Orientation interview: A brief interview with the Principal is held prior to kindergarten orientation. Kindergarten orientation will be held in November.</p>	 ON-SITE




School directory - Canada Bay

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>Drummoyne Public School PO Box 643 Drummoyne NSW 2047 Principal: Gail Charlier Phone: 9181 2636 Web: www.drummoyne-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: drummoyne-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>A specialist gifted and talented teacher funded by the P&C two days per week. This teacher works with staff to write and implement programs for gifted students. The P&C also funds our special education teacher for an additional day and a half to assist students with learning needs.</p>	<p>Parents may enrol children at any time during the year. Kindergarten orientation day is early November.</p>	
<p>Five Dock Public School Henry St Five Dock NSW 2046 Fax: 02 9712 1256 Principal: Mandy Dawkins Phone: 9713 7044 Web: www.fivedock-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: fivedock-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Support class for children with moderate intellectual disabilities. Applications for this class are through the NSW Department of Education and Training - Sydney Region.</p>	<p>Transition: November</p>	
<p>Lucas Gardens School Corner Queens Road and Walker Street Canada Bay NSW 2046 Principal: Mrs A Roberts Phone: 02 9744 6461 Web: www.lucasgarde-s.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: lucasgarde-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Lucas Gardens School is a special school for children with severe disabilities.</p>	<p>Enrolments are at any time during the year, and by referral to the NSW Department of Education and Training.</p>	



School directory - Canada Bay

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>Mortlake Public School Brays Road Concord NSW 2137 Principal: Jacqui Attard Phone: 9743 3001 Web: www.mortlake-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: mortlake-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>The school provides for children whose main language is not English (ESL program) and for those who are having difficulty acquiring reading skills (STLA). Gifted and talented students are met in mainstream classes through differentiating the curriculum. Students encouraged to enter the UNSW maths, English and writing competitions and attend talented and gifted programs outside the school.</p>	<p>Enrolments: Anytime. Orientation: Two mornings in November, check with school for more details.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Russell Lea Infants School Lithgow Street Five Dock NSW 2046 Principal: Mrs Lesley Pike Phone: 9713 8267 Web: www.russellea-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: russellea-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>The school caters for children with special needs and for gifted and talented children across the three grades. In 2010 the school had a specific gifted and talented class for Years 1 and 2.</p>	<p>Enrolment: At least 1 year prior to commencement. Orientation: October and November.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Strathfield North Public School PO Box 35 North Strathfield NSW 2137 Principal: Frances Brewer Phone: 9743 2126 Web: www.strathfien-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: strathfien-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>		<p>Enrolment: Mid year. Orientation: October and November. Parents will be advised closer to the time which group they are in.</p>	 OFF-SITE



School directory - Canada Bay

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>All Hallows Primary School 1 Halley Street Five Dock NSW 2046 Principal: Kathy Elliott Phone: 9713 4469 Web: www.ahbalwyn.catholic.edu.au Email: principal@ahbalwyn.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>The school provides gifted, talented and special needs classes.</p>	<p>General application for enrolment enquiries can be made during the first week of March.</p>	
<p>St Marks Primary School 31 Tranmere Street Drummoyne NSW 2047 Principal: Margaret Sargisson Phone: 9181 3042 Web: www.stmdrummoyne.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stm.drummoyne.catholic.edu.au</p>		<p>November</p>	
<p>St Marys Primary School 60 Burton Street Concord NSW 2137 Principal: Ms Trish Bevan Phone: 9744 0260 Web: stmconcord.com Email: info@stmconcord.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>Special education classes</p>	<p>Interviews in May.</p>	





School directory - Canada Bay

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>St Ambrose Primary School PO Box 42 Concord West NSW 2138 Principal: Cathy Young Phone: 9743 5605 Web: www.stambconcord.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stambconcord.catholic.edu.au</p>	<p>Special education classes</p>	<p>March to May</p>	 <p>OFF-SITE</p>
<p>The McDonald College 17 George Street North Strathfield NSW 2137 Principal: Maxine Kohler Phone: 9752 0500 Web: www.mcdonald.nsw.edu.au Email: registrar@mcdonald.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Learning support staff provide flexible and proactive learning environments that recognise and cater for different individual needs in each class group. Their support and the programs offered create learning experiences that are child-centred, motivating, engaging, multi-sensory and inter-disciplinary. All students engage in performing and creative arts that foster creativity through a 'rich' learning environment.</p>	<p>Application for enrolment at any time. Enrolment throughout the year by appointment with the College Registrar. Open days, Transition to Kindergarten and Preparatory Workshops. To organise a tour of the College please contact Margaret White on 9752 0507.</p>	 <p>ON-SITE</p>




Strathfield Local Government Area

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>Chalmers Road Public School 23 Chalmers Road Strathfield NSW 2135 Principal: Marline Dowbiggin Phone: 9746 6202 Web: www.chalmersrd-s.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: chalmersrd-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>The school caters for children with disabilities.</p>	<p>Enrolment: Done through District Office.</p>	
<p>Homebush Public School Rochester Street Homebush NSW 2140 Principal: Chris Russell Phone: 9746 9171 or 9764 4472 Web: www.homebush-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: homebush-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Has programs designed to assist children with learning difficulties.</p>	<p>Enrolment: Information Monday to Thursday 9-10.30am and 2-2.45pm.</p>	
<p>Homebush West Public School Exeter Road Homebush West NSW 2140 Principal: Estelle Southall Phone: 02 9746 9304 Web: www.homebushw-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: homebushw-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>		<p>June - September.</p>	

School directory - Strathfield

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>Strathfield South Public School 457 Liverpool Road Strathfield South NSW 2136 Principal: Annette Udall Phone: 9642 1359 Web: web3.strathfies-p.schools.nsw.edu.au Email: strathfies-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au</p>		Anytime.	 OFF-SITE
<p>Meriden 10-12 Redmyre Road Strathfield NSW 2135 Phone: 9752 9444 Web: www.meriden.nsw.edu.au Email: enquiries@meriden.nsw.edu.au</p>		Anytime.	 ON-SITE
<p>St Anne's Catholic Primary School St Anne's Square Strathfield South NSW 2136 Principal: Phill Townsend Phone: 9642 6149 Web: stastrathfield.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stastrathfield.catholic.edu.au</p>		April/May.	 OFF-SITE
<p>St Martha's Catholic School 88 Churchill Avenue Strathfield NSW 2135 Phone: 9764 1184 Web: www.stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au Email: info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au</p>	Special education teacher available when needed.	Anytime - conditions apply. Contact school for more information.	 OFF-SITE

School directory - Strathfield

School details	Special programs	Enrolment /orientation	OOSH
<p>St Patrick's College Francis Street, Strathfield NSW 2135 Phone: 02 9763 1000 Web: www.spc.nsw.edu.au Email: spc@spc.nsw.edu.au</p>	<p>Special education department caters for children with special needs.</p>	<p>Anytime - conditions apply. Contact school for more information.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Santa Maria del Monte 90 The Boulevarde Strathfield NSW 2135 Principal:Kate Clancy Phone: 9745 7700 or 9745 7000 Web: www.ssc.nsw.edu.au</p>		<p>Anytime - conditions apply. Contact school for more information.</p>	 ON-SITE
<p>Trinity Grammar Preparatory School 115-125 The Boulevarde Strathfield NSW 2135 Phone: 02 8732 4600 Web: www.trinity.nsw.edu.au</p>		<p>Anytime - conditions apply. Contact school for more information.</p>	 ON-SITE

