



SCHS

Sunraysia Community
Health Services

Stepping Up To School Online Forum – Mallee

Thurs 8 Oct 2020

Starting soon ...

Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Housekeeping

*This session will be recorded.
(You may like to change your display name.)*

*Questions – Please type them into the chat as we go. We'll
address as many as we can at the end of the session.*

*You don't need to frantically write!
We'll email you a copy of these slides.*

Thank you for joining us! Who are we?

Sunraysia Community Health Services (SCHS) is a service provider for the Victorian Department of Education and Training's School Readiness Funding (SRF) program, which provides support to kindergartens across the Mallee.

SCHS staff facilitating today's session:

- Jessica Curnow (host) – Speech Pathologist
- Emma Frankel-Vaughan – Speech Pathologist
- Caitlin Hancock – Occupational Therapist

We work with kindergarten staff, building their knowledge and confidence in supporting children.

Guest presenters:

- Sheleigh Bant – Kindergarten teacher (St Margaret's Preschool, Mildura)
- Ally Williams – Preschool Field Officer
- Polly Healey – Prep teacher (Leitchville Primary School)

What will we cover?

- Some key messages (Jessica)
- What does it mean to be 'school ready'? (Emma)
- School readiness skills (Emma and Caitlin)
- What can you do to support your child? (Emma)
- What can you do if you're concerned? (Jessica)
- Preschool Field Officer role (Ally)
- Kindergarten teacher perspective (Sheleigh)
- Prep teacher perspective (Polly)
- Recapping some key messages (Jessica)
- Questions / discussion

Before we start...

If your child is starting school in 2021, have you enrolled?

If you're still in the decision-making process, or need help with the process, please have a chat with your kindergarten teacher.

Before we start...

How confident are you feeling about the idea of 'school readiness'?

If your child is starting school in 2021, please rate your confidence.

Some key messages (Jessica)

2020 has been far from 'normal'. You might be feeling a sense of loss / grief for your child's kindergarten year, and you might be worried. You're not alone.

Even though your child may have missed some time at kindergarten, at home this year, your child has likely learned valuable 'lessons' about:

- Communication and relationships
- Life and change
- Coping with challenges, even if you feel like you're not coping sometimes
- That it's okay to be not okay
- The importance of family and community, and helping one another

We can sometimes accidentally put pressure on children by talking too much about being 'ready' for school (even if we think we're being positive).

Every child is unique, and we adjust our expectations for every individual.

What does it mean to be 'school ready'? (Emma)

Confusion about school readiness can cause a lot of anxiety.

School readiness IS NOT ...

- ✗ Reading
- ✗ Writing
- ✗ Maths

School readiness IS ...

- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Social skills
- ✓ Emotional regulation
- ✓ Thinking skills
- ✓ Physical skills
- ✓ Independence

Like the foundation of a house, school readiness skills are the foundational skills children need *before* reading, writing and maths.

School readiness skills (Emma)

✓ **Communication skills**

✓ Social skills

✓ Emotional regulation

✓ Thinking skills

✓ Physical skills

✓ Independence

This might look like:

- Expressing needs and wants
- Being understood by others
- Listening and understanding
- Starting to tell and understand stories

Children develop these skills through:

Play

Involvement in regular everyday routines



School readiness skills (Emma)

- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ **Social skills**
- ✓ Emotional regulation
- ✓ Thinking skills
- ✓ Physical skills
- ✓ Independence

This might look like:

- Playing and working with others
- Saying hello and goodbye
- Waiting and taking turns
- Making friends

Children develop these skills through:

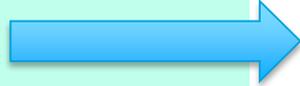
Play

Involvement in regular everyday routines



School readiness skills (Caitlin)

- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Social skills
- ✓ **Emotional regulation**
- ✓ Thinking skills
- ✓ Physical skills
- ✓ Independence



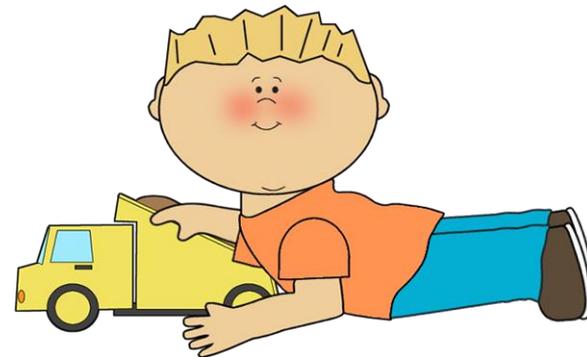
This might look like:

- Understanding basic emotions (happy, sad, angry, worried)
- Beginning to manage and express feelings
- Cope with changes
- Have a go and try new things

Children develop these skills through:

Play

Involvement in regular everyday routines



School readiness skills (Caitlin)

- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Social skills
- ✓ Emotional regulation
- ✓ **Thinking skills**
- ✓ Physical skills
- ✓ Independence



This might look like:

- Solving problems with some help
- Concentrating for short times
- Making some decisions
- Remembering things

Children develop these skills through:

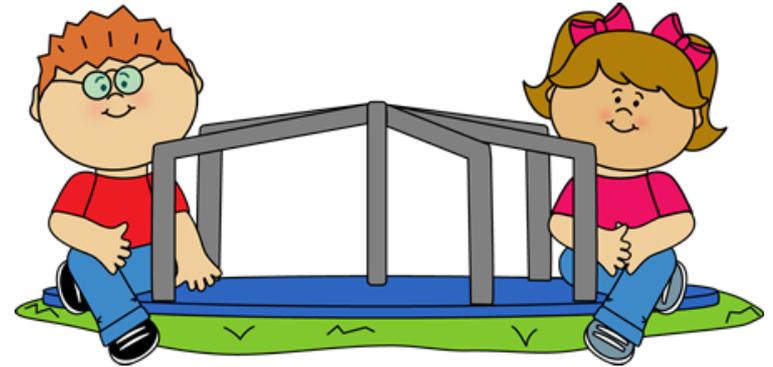
Play

Involvement in regular everyday routines



School readiness skills (Caitlin)

- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Social skills
- ✓ Emotional regulation
- ✓ Thinking skills
- ✓ **Physical skills**
- ✓ Independence



Children develop these skills through:

Play

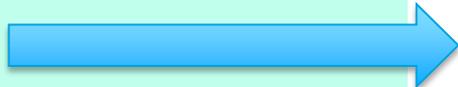
Involvement in regular everyday routines

This might look like:

- Gross motor – running, jumping, climbing, balancing, hopping, throwing, catching
- Fine motor – holding a pencil, picking up small items, drawing basic shapes, using scissors
- Eating a wide variety of foods
- Adequate hearing and vision
- Attending maternal health visits

School readiness skills (Caitlin)

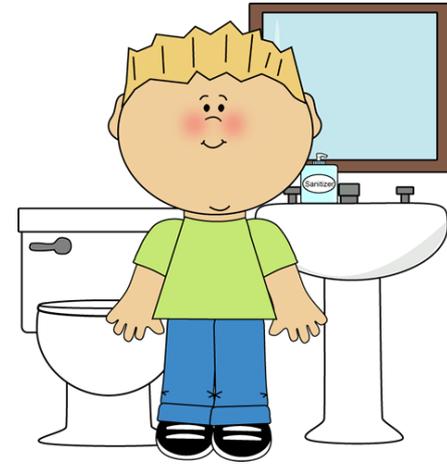
- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Social skills
- ✓ Emotional regulation
- ✓ Thinking skills
- ✓ Physical skills
- ✓ **Independence**



Children develop these skills through:

Play

Involvement in regular everyday routines



This might look like:

- Taking care of self
- Toileting
- Dressing
- Managing belongings (bag, lunch box, clothes)

What can you do to support your child? (Emma)

As discussed, children develop school readiness skills through play and involvement in regular everyday routines:

With that in mind:

- It's not all up to you at home – we're in this together.
- You don't need to set up special 'learning' activities at home – lots of valuable learning just happens in your normal routine.
- There are lots of different things we could do, and each family has a different routine. Don't try to do too much – use what you're already doing.
- Lots of regular things that you're already doing can support school readiness across several areas.

What can you do to support your child? (Emma)

- ✓ Communication skills
 - ✓ Social skills
- ✓ Emotional regulation
- ✓ Thinking skills
- ✓ Physical skills
- ✓ Independence



Scenarios:

- Getting dressed
- Preparing food
- Going for a walk
- Playing with blocks
- Grocery shopping

Opportunities for practice through play and involvement in regular everyday routines:

- Talk with your child about what you're/they're doing
- Talk about feelings with your child
- Use the language you know best
- Observe, wait, listen and respond to your child
- Play with your child – talk and listen while you play
- Read to your child – talk and listen while you read
- Sing songs with your child
- Talk about routines – plan / problem solve together
- Explore together – talk about what you can see/hear/feel/smell/taste
- Make and build things together
- Spend time outdoors – climbing, running, jumping
- Encourage your child to help you
- Encourage your child to have a go at things themselves

What can you do if you're concerned? (Jessica)

- Talk to your child's kindergarten teacher
- If something's not working, don't struggle away on your own at home - ask your child's kindergarten teacher for advice
- Getting help as early as possible is best

The solution to a concern might surprise you.

- For example, if a child isn't yet writing their name, extra writing practice at home might not be what they need. Before being able to write their name, children first need to develop:
 - Core strength and gross motor skills (for sitting)
 - Language (understanding and talking)
 - Emotional regulation (for attention, motivation, enjoyment)

We need to think about what each child CAN do, and build their skills from there.

Preschool Field Officer role (Ally Williams)

- Support for students with additional needs via a referral from the preschool
- Options regarding a second year of kindergarten
- If you're concerned or want more information, talk to your child's kindergarten teacher

Kindergarten teacher perspective (Sheleigh Bant)

- Advice for families
- Play-based learning
- ‘Transition Statements’
- What you can do at home
- If you’re concerned or want more information about school readiness, contact your kindergarten teacher
- If you haven’t already, starting your child’s school enrolment process as soon as possible will help kindergarten staff to assist a smooth transition to school

Prep teacher perspective (Polly Healey)

- All children will be catered for
- What you can do at home
- What a child's first term at school looks like
- If you're concerned or want more information about school, contact your child's school

“school ready” vs “ready schools”

Recapping some key messages (Jessica)

Remember that all children learn and develop at their own pace.

School readiness is less about 'making' children ready for school, and more about supporting their communication and wellbeing, and providing support for access and inclusion. It's about meeting their needs for success.

If you're worried, you're not alone. Speak to your kindergarten teacher if you're concerned or want more information.

Now... (Jessica)

How confident are you feeling about your child's school readiness?

If your child is starting school in 2021, please rate your confidence.

Questions / discussion

Last chance to pop any questions/comments into the chat! 😊

Thank you for participating!