

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

As a parent, navigating the school system can be overwhelming when you have never done it before. Each family and child are unique and will need a transition plan tailored to their individual needs.

Your home school welcomes all children to register for Kindergarten. All children belong and have a place in the school system.

Registering sooner, rather than later, allows for you to collaborate with the school to best support your child's transition.

At times, our concerns can become a perceived barrier regarding whether or not our child is ready to go to school. The question families need to ask is; will the **school be ready** to welcome my child? As the parent, you know your child's potential, when given the opportunity.

Are you holding back because of any of the common concerns below?



Here are some points to consider...

Safety and Well-Being

- Be proactive and inform the school of your safety concerns
- Share with the school your child's current and/or past unsafe behaviours (e.g. runs away)
- Be specific when communicating your concerns (e.g. "I am worried that my child will leave the classroom")
- Share strategies that have been successful in preventing the unsafe behaviour (e.g. closing the door, using stop and go sign, etc.)
- Develop a plan together to ensure the safety of all
- If necessary, create a safety plan together, or share a safety plan that was used in the past
- Continue ongoing conversations and collaboration

Toilet Training

- Inform the school that at this moment, your child is not toilet trained and requires help
- Inquire about the school's toileting protocol and ask what supports are available
- If desired, you can incorporate this goal for your child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP)
- Collaborate with the Teacher and Resource Teacher/Learning Support Teacher to implement toileting goals for the IEP
- If the child is demonstrating toileting readiness skills, continue to practice at home and childcare

Communication Skills

- The classroom environment provides many opportunities for same age peer modeling
- Discuss how your child communicates
- Share the communication tools that are being used by your child (gestures, signs, pictures)
- The school in collaboration with the Resource Teacher/Learning Support Teacher, can develop communication strategies
- Share the strategies that professionals have used to support your child's communication skills (e.g. speech pathologist, Resource Consultant, OT, etc.)
- Ask the school how they will accommodate your child's needs

Attention Skills

- Young children have short attention spans and require very brief periods to focus on a task
- One of the main objectives of Kindergarten, is for children to learn through play
- Share any adaptive equipment (e.g. fidget, move and sit) that helps the child to focus
- Ask how body breaks are used in the classroom
- The teacher can include supports to foster various learning styles (e.g. visual, tactile, kinesthetic, auditory)
- Share your child's interests with the teacher

School Readiness

- It is not a prerequisite for children to recognize the letters of the alphabet and/or numbers before entering Kindergarten
- The Kindergarten curriculum is taught through a play-based approach while fostering social emotional development
- Children come from diverse experiences (e.g. some children didn't attend child care and others did)
- The school has access to a variety of resources to support all learners
- Accommodations and modifications to the curriculum can be applied with the support of the school team

CISS reached out to families who recently transitioned their child to school. Here are some testimonials:

"Within a week, we had checked in with her teachers and the transition was super easy. They had the full picture before she started and were able to accommodate her easily".

"She is getting out and meeting new friends at school. She has made gains socially and her speech has improved. She now comes home and tells me about her friends. Using the pictures in her communication book, she can talk about her day at school".

"I would have told myself not to be so stressed and so worried and to believe in my child. I'd tell parents to "believe your child can flourish without you there".

"Send your child to school. Give your child the opportunity to go to school. The teachers are prepared, and they have seen a lot of children with different needs before".

-Jessica

"Best advice is, it's going to be a roller coaster but don't give up, you know your child, you know what they need. Don't give up."

"Most importantly take time for you and your mental health".

"Try to set up a good support team and lean on them".

- Pauline

"What surprised me the most was how smooth his transition to school was and how quickly he was able to adapt".

"Carter's talking now. He picked up words very quickly. The school just sent me a video of him saying, "Come! Follow me!" He is more independent and more patient and interested in school activities. He now wants me to colour with him. Before he wouldn't pick up the crayon or marker! He now uses things the way they are supposed to be used."

"Do what feels right. It was a hard decision to send him to school because of the pandemic, but it was the right decision and the best decision I ever made."

-Isabelle