

A Guide to Preparing Your Child for School

What Can You Do At Home To Prepare your child for Kindergarten?

There are many ways that you as a parent can help prepare your child for school.

Firstly, you can provide a variety of experiences and activities to stimulate your child's imagination and knowledge of the world. When talking to your child, try to expand the conversation, pointing out new objects and places and giving them names, giving them context. Remember that conversational language is a great language opportunity and lots of fun, as well as helping to build healthy family relationships.

Be a reading role model

Try to read to your child every day. Read with expression and show your joy of reading.

Make reading a special time - with the simple act of reading, turning pages of books and inventing stories using pictures, the child will begin to match spoken words with print.

Turn on the Captions when Watching TV.

Emerging readers benefit greatly from the reinforcement of the importance of reading, that captions provide. Set up this habit at home and your child will learn a skill for life.

For information on how to access captions at home, visit:

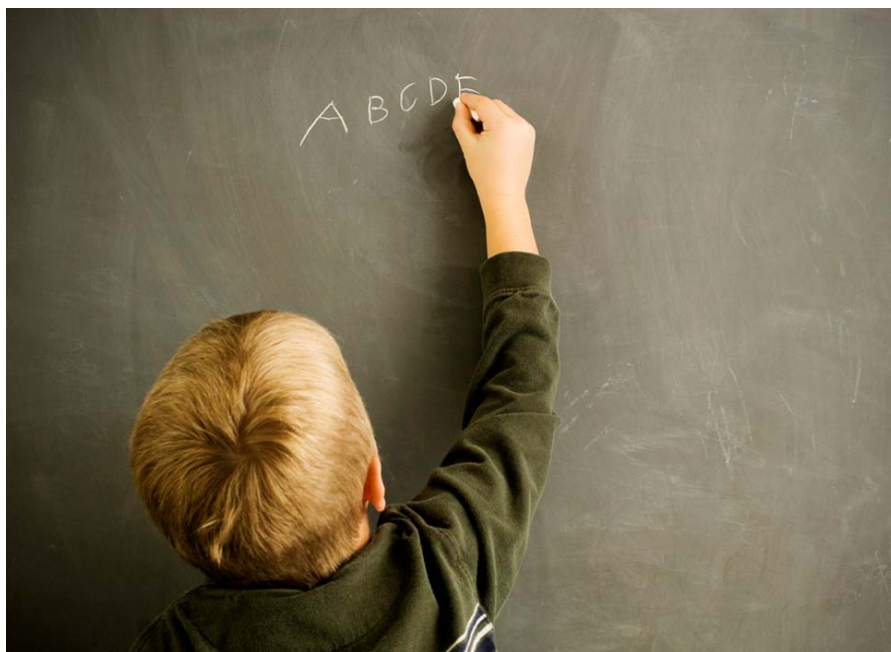
www.mediaaccess.org.au

Gather Information about the Schools in and out of your Area.

Information is the key to preparing yourself to make the decisions about the best school for your deaf child. Visit the aussiedeafkids website links below for relevant information on what questions you need to ask of the schools that you visit.

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/preparing-your-child-for-school.html>

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/starting-school-checklist.html>



What is an Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf (ITOD)?

An ITOD provides specialist assistance to schools and teachers relating to the inclusion of students who are deaf or have hearing impairment (HI)

An ITOD provides information to school staff about the impact of hearing loss on language acquisition and access to learning. They can provide school staff with support, advice and strategies to facilitate inclusion. They liaise regularly with school staff and can provide consistent support to students and advocate for their needs.

They may provide some in class support for students, assisting them to access the curriculum; and also using the curriculum as a vehicle to improve their language skills. They may work directly with students on language and audition skills. They can troubleshoot equipment difficulties / liaise with Australian Hearing. They can encourage independence in students including their management of hearing aids, CIs and FMs and their approach to their work.

Be involved in your Child's School.

The transition to school is often more challenging for the parent than the child. The parent's role changes as their child moves into this next exciting

stage of their life. Parents often feel concerned that they have less control over how their child is progressing.

Parents can still play a part in the life of their child at school. Your involvement in the school directly is a great way of keeping an eye on how your child is integrating and learning at school. One suggestion is to volunteer to help in the classroom once a week, with reading for example. Building good relationships with the teachers and school will be beneficial when you are advocating for your child.

Liaise with your child's ITOD on how best to navigate your school. Each school has its own culture. One suggestion is to become involved in the school community such as P&F or P&C committees and extend your own social network as a parent. This can be beneficial to your child and their integration.

What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Different sectors may give it a different title but this is a planning tool that relates directly to adjustments needed with regards to your deaf or hearing impaired child at school. This plan is written by school staff, with contribution from the ITOD. Parents /student are invited to a meeting and they provide feedback to the planning process. Changes are typed up



and all adult parties sign and receive a copy. This document will vary across the sectors but all will address similar principles:

- Focus Area /Priorities
- Goals
- Adjustments
- Additional Resources
- Assessment Process
- Monitoring/Evaluation

Access in the Classroom.

Access to the teacher's voice for students who are deaf or have hearing impairment will be impacted by:

- the degree of their hearing loss
- type of and use of assistive listening devices
- the listening environment

Many students who use hearing aids effectively in quiet environments have a difficult time following information presented in large classrooms. In the classroom, the teacher's voice is competing with background noise, room echo, and distance. Therefore, the intelligibility of the teacher's voice is degraded by the poor room acoustics as well as the hearing loss.

FM Systems

An FM system is part of the solution. An FM system is a microphone and transmitter worn by the speaker and a

receiver worn by the student. The receiver may be attached to the student's hearing aid or cochlear implant. By placing the microphone close to the teacher's mouth, an FM system can provide clear sound over distances, eliminate echoes, and reduce surrounding noises.

An FM is available as a fully subsidised device through Australian Hearing. Contact your audiologist at Australian Hearing to discuss your child's eligibility for an FM.

Soundfield amplification system

Soundfield systems enables every child in the classroom to hear the teacher's voice, no matter where they are sitting or where the teacher is facing. They can be used in conjunction with students'

FM for optimal listening conditions.. They have great benefits for all students in the classroom, not just hearing impaired students.

Soundfield systems increase the signal-to-noise ratio in the classroom and consist of a transmitter microphone, receiver/amplifier and speakers. This technology can be linked to

Interactive Whiteboards, laptops, FM systems and iPods

For more information on Soundfield systems visit:

Printacall -

www.soundfield.com.au/index.htm

Multimedia Wheels-

www.multimediaonwheels.com.au/Lightspeed.html

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For further information on schools and school support for your child you can contact:

- ◇ NSW Department of Education and Training:
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/programs/disability.php.
Telephone: 131536.
- ◇ RIDBC School Support Services (supporting students in mainstream independent schools) Phone: 9872 0309
- ◇ The Catholic Education Office in your local Diocese (supporting students in mainstream systemic or Parish Schools).

Contact With other Parents:

If you would like to make contact with another parent who has navigated this path before you, contact PCDE at 9871 3049 or join an online group where you can ask other parents about their experiences.

<http://www.aussiedeafkids.org.au/parent-forums.html>