



Starting School: A developmental checklist

Starting School?

Starting school is a big event in any child's life; it's a time of change for your child and for you as his or her parent/s. For some children, it's difficult to know if a child is ready for school.

The information in this pamphlet includes developmental skill checklists that might be helpful if you are making a decision about your child's readiness for school.

Encouraging your child's development of these skills will strengthen their foundation for learning at school. If your child can't do some of these things, feel free to contact us at your nearest centre to talk about things you can do to help and make an appointment to see us if need be (contact details are on the back of this pamphlet).

Personal and Social Behaviour

Starting school, your child should be able to:

- Be independent in using the toilet, dress and undress inc. shoes
- Complete everyday tasks without help (e.g. unpack and pack bag)
- Engage in imaginative play
- Use words rather than physical aggression to solve problems
- Take turns and share with others
- Show concern for others
- Usually cooperate with other children in longer play situations
- Show confidence and talk with others in familiar situations
- Engage in personally challenging tasks for increasing periods of time
- Separate comfortably from parent/caregiver
- Cooperate with adult directions

Gross Motor Skills

Starting school, your child should be able to:

- Walk up and down stairs with one foot to a step (alternate feet)
- Climb ladders and frames and playground equipment
- Jump from a step and land on feet
- Walk a narrow line on the ground, one foot in front of the other (heel to toe)
- Balance on one leg for 3-5 seconds
- Hop forward a few metres
- Throw a beanbag into a bucket
- Catch a soft ball with both hands
- Kick a soccer ball to another person
- Run without tripping
- Hang off the monkey bars for 5 seconds

Manipulative/Fine Motor Skills

Starting school, your child should be able to:

- Consistently choose one hand as their preferred or dominant hand in pencil and scissor activities i.e. not swapping hands
- Copy a model with 6-8 pieces using Duplo or Lego blocks, and put together a complex interlocking puzzle
- Hold scissors in 1 hand with thumb up, and cut along a straight and a curved line e.g. around a square and a circle
- Hold a pencil near the point, between thumb and first 2 fingertips when drawing and writing (tripod grip)
- Use medium pressure on pencil demonstrating good muscle tone
- Copy a circle, a cross and a square with reasonable accuracy
- Follow an object smoothly using just the eyes while the head stays still.



Listening, Speaking and Understanding

Starting school, your child should be able to:

- Talk fluently without stuttering
- Use a normal voice and pitch (i.e. not croaky or husky)
- Speak in sentences, using *grammar* such as use of pronouns (e.g. he, she, their), regular past tense (e.g. He **watched** TV) and plural (e.g. 4 **cats**) word endings - errors with irregular forms (e.g. **catched**, **mouses**) are common.
- Be easily understood by adults, using clear speech (**r**, **v**, **th** sounds may still be tricky)
- Answer questions such as Who? What's that for? Where? (receptive language)
- Ask questions such as Who? What's that for? When? Why? How? (expressive language)
- Understand most 3 part instructions (e.g. Find your shoes and put them on, then meet me at the door)
- Talk to you about their needs and feelings
- Understand *positional* words e.g. behind, under, next to, in front, over
- Use *positional* words (see above)
- Listen to stories read or told and answer questions about the story
- Talk about his/her personal experiences in a logical way
- Have some awareness of social language rules (e.g. greetings, please, letting others speak)

Cognitive Development

Starting school, your child should be able to:

- Recognise and name 4 different colours
- Tell you their name (first name and surname) and age
- Count to 5 with 1:1 correspondence
- Recognise their name in print
- Put 3 pictures in order, showing the steps involved in something they've done before (e.g. making a sandwich).
- Copy and continue a pattern using 2 items e.g. red, blue. red, blue block sequence
- Complete a 8-12 piece jigsaw puzzle
- Repeat back to you a sequence of 3 numbers between 1 and 10 (e.g. 3-2-8)
- Concentrate and hold attention to complete tasks
- Draw a person with head (including 2 or 3 facial features) and arms and legs
- Predict and explain: What do you think will happen next? What will happen if?

How you can contact us

Child Therapy services are offered at:

Byron Bay Community Health Centre

Shirley Street Byron Bay
(on site with hospital)
Ph. (02) 6685 6254 Fax (02) 6685 5729

Mullumbimby Community Health Centre

Azalea Ave, Mullumbimby
(on site with hospital)
Ph. (02) 6684 1677 Fax (02) 6684 1880

Child Therapists include:

- Speech Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Child Psychologist
- Audiometrist

No referral is needed; you can contact us directly if you have concerns about your child's development.

All services are free.



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