

FACT SHEET

Kindergarten and pre-school years

Starting kindergarten and pre-school is an important social and learning milestone in the life of your child. Commencing can lead to a mix of emotions for you and your child; emotions that can range from uncertainty to excitement. During this time you may be concerned about how your child will adapt to this new environment and whether any support is needed.

Transitioning your child into kindergarten and pre-school is often a period of parental change too as, for some, this is the first time they have entered coordinated care outside of the home. Your child now enters a world focused on story time, art and imagination, talking and listening, play time, exploration, developing social skills, and making new friends.

This Fact Sheet contains information to assist you when your child is entering the kindergarten and pre-school years, including: selecting a kindergarten or pre-school; enrolling your child; preparing your child for kindergarten and pre-school; and accessing support.

Choosing a kindergarten or pre-school

- In Australia kindergarten is not compulsory, whereas pre-school is compulsory preparation before children commence primary school in some states and territories.
- Parents can select from government, Catholic and independent providers and each type have different funding arrangements and costs.
- Before enrolling visit the kindergarten or pre-school, assess its grounds and facilities, and identify any assistance or accessibility needs your child might have.
- Ensure that information about the school's procedures and policies are available to you, particularly any that relate to disability support.

Enrolling your child in kindergarten or pre-school

- Arrange to meet with relevant staff to discuss your child's limb difference and any specific needs or support they require.
- Meeting staff early will give them time to organise the best plan for your child, investigate funding and make any accessibility modifications (if required).
- Ensure that the kindergarten or pre-school is aware of your child's abilities, is inclusive and respectful, able to provide your child with the appropriate level of support, and facilities are accessible (if required).

- Every state and territory has different funding and family-focused individualised planning arrangements - speak to staff and/or contact the relevant Government Education Department, Catholic School Association or Independent School Association in your area.
- When enrolling you generally need to provide information about your child, parent and carers, and relevant medical health and immunisation status.
- Discussing your child's limb difference can be emotional. Just remember that early childhood educators are professionals who care for their student and parent community and will want to support you as best as they can.
- You may want to bring your own support person to meetings for emotional or practical assistance.
- packing a change of clothes for your child and labelling all belongings
- building independence by establishing a 'goodbye ritual' which might see you stay for a short period initially and then reduced to a brief goodbye once your child feels secure and settled
- keeping staff informed of any changes in your child's life that might affect their experiences at kindergarten or pre-school.

Preparing your child for kindergarten and pre-school

Starting kindergarten and pre-school is a big milestone for your child, and you might want to start preparing before they commence.

Some preparation ideas include:

- talking to your child about what to expect and why kindergarten/pre-school is important
- talking to your child about any concerns they have about care and support (visiting the facility before starting can help to minimise any physical or emotional anxieties)
- supporting your child to manage dressing, which for some children with limb difference may require guidance from an occupational therapist
- reading to your child every day
- encouraging your child to become independent by giving them 'alone time'

Accessing support

The kindergarten and pre-school years can be a time of great excitement for your family. However, it may also be a time that leads to some concerns or questions along the way.

You may want to speak to a Limbs 4 Life team member who can assist you. You may also want to speak to another parent who has experienced what you are going through. If so, Limbs 4 Life can connect you to a trained Peer Support Volunteer who you can speak to. Visit our website or call us for more information and links to our online support.

www.limbs4kids.org.au | T: 1300 782 231 | E: kids@limbs4life.org.au

The Limbs 4 Kids program is an initiative of Limbs 4 Life, Australia's peak organisation for amputees and those living with limb difference. Limbs 4 Kids ensures that all Australian children and young people with limb difference, as well as all of those who care for them, receive access to information and support.