

PIONEER ROAD LONG DAYCARE



TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Our Philosophy

At Pioneer Road Long Day Care Centre:

- At the core of our philosophy, we believe in the principles of Early Childhood Education outlined in the Belonging, Being and Becoming curriculum. We deeply respect each child as a unique individual and firmly believe in their innate ability to achieve success.
- We are dedicated advocates for every child's entitlement to a preschool experience that ignites curiosity, fosters a love for exploration and discovery, and instils a genuine passion for lifelong learning.
- Educators draw inspiration from children's boundless potential for learning, enjoyment, exploration, and play. Our programming and planning are built upon this foundation, prioritising the children's voices and ideas. We create a nurturing environment where children can grow and thrive. Our learning spaces are designed to be aesthetically pleasing and inviting, encouraging meaningful engagement with the curriculum.
- We strive to build strong partnerships with children, families, and the community, fostering trust and collaboration. By creating positive relationships with families, we support and nurture children to reach their maximum potential.
- Our curriculum values and accommodates the diverse needs and interests of all the children in our care. Our educators carefully plan and implement a program that encompasses the holistic development of each child. We prioritise incorporating the voices and ideas of the children into our daily practices.
- Our educators take pride in fostering a non-biased curriculum and creating an inclusive environment that embraces diversity. We recognise the value of multiple cultural perspectives and celebrate diversity with children and their families and the opportunities they bring. (EYLF V2.0, 2022).
- Our educators are dedicated to their profession, bringing their extensive knowledge, strong passion, and creative approaches to teaching. We collaborate as a cohesive team, respecting each other's unique strengths and ideas. Together, we design and create welcoming and inviting learning experiences that align with our belief in the importance of play-based learning.
- We honour and value our cultural heritage and all the families and children in our care. We foster a learning space that embraces diversity, individuality, and the appreciation of each person's distinctiveness, ensuring our centre is an optimal setting for children to flourish.
- We are committed to working towards a sustainable future, and our centre resources, materials, and play-based learning have a strong, sustainable focus. Children and educators care for our centre garden, which fosters connections to land and community and encourages respect for the environment and the importance of sustainable practices.

Our children's Voices: (family survey 2023)

We love PRLDC because we play with our friends and do so many fun activities.

We love the mud pit, outdoor play, indoor activities, our teachers and all our friends.

We love everything!

Reviewed October 2024

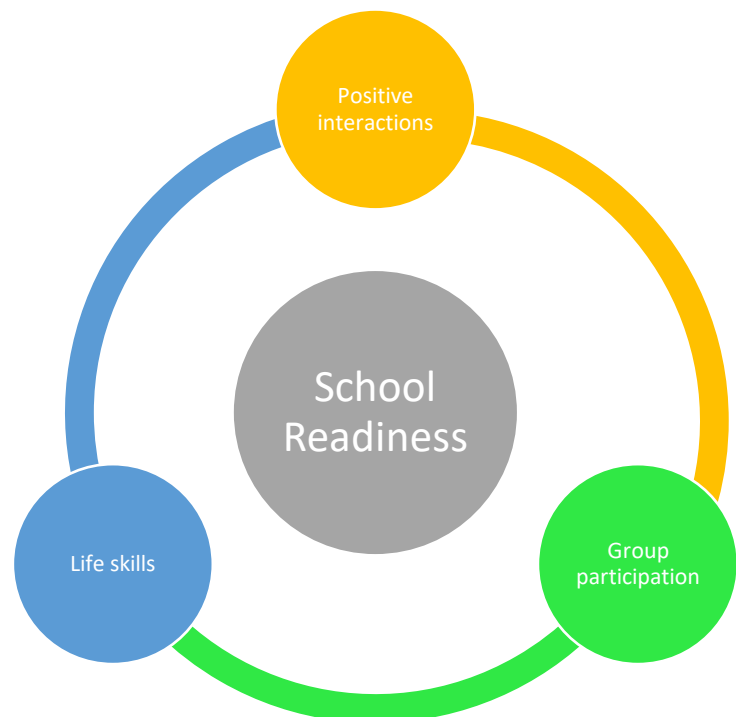
Next reviewed Oct 2025

How does this relate to school readiness?

We know children learn best through play and that play for children is not just a frivolous pastime [although we still have fun while doing it!] (Taylor & Boyer, 2020). We also acknowledge early childhood as a valuable stage of life, important in its own right, and not just a stepping stone to formal education. It is vital that children's capacity for joy, curiosity and love of learning today is not compromised by the preparation for tomorrow.

Our school readiness program is therefore embedded into our daily play-based curriculum, respecting children's right of "Being" alongside their "Becoming" (AGDE, 2022).

Children with a strong sense of themselves, with good self-esteem and confidence, do best in the transition to school and throughout life (Broström, 2013). Our play-based school readiness program therefore underpinned by fostering children's emotional and social maturity through three main areas of focus; group participation, life skills, and positive interactions. These areas support and drive children's development, ability to learn, and skill acquisition.



Positive Interactions

At PRLDC, we believe that positive educator-child, and child-child, interactions play an important role in children's lifelong learning.

Positive, respectful, trusting, and reciprocal interactions provide opportunities for deep connection and learning as children feel heard and seen (AGDE, 2022). This also allows educators to observe and build on children's interests and knowledge, planning experiences in preparation for school. Positive interactions further form a basis (or blueprint) that children can use in future interactions with new peers and adults, providing children with the confidence to enter new situations and learning environments.



Group participation

Group times are an integral part of the daily routine at Pioneer Road. They offer a valuable opportunity for children to come together as a learning community, practising essential skills such as;

- Listening
- Turn-taking
- Talking in front of a group
- Concentration and focus
- Being part of a shared project/experience

Educators use these planned times along with spontaneous group experiences to build on children's knowledge, introduce new concepts, and extend emerging interests in a play-based, engaging and hands-on way.

Group times are also an opportunity for children and educators to gather to share their thoughts and feelings, engage in active listening and be part of a community. Educators utilise yarning circles as a respectful and collaborative approach for sharing while also respecting the culture of our traditional custodians.



Life skills

The transition to school is often the biggest change in a child's early life and as such it is critical that children develop their self-help, emotional, and social skills to navigate through this routine change and beyond.

At PRLDC, we focus on nurturing children's independence and autonomy through our safe and secure environment. Educators use their knowledge of each child to provide experiences that can support the development of these skills. This can occur in both planned experiences and spontaneous key moments within the day.

We also utilise our environment to provide children with opportunities for self-regulation and to build communication and language skills. Whether it be within mindful moments, group learning experiences, or self-directed play, it is our hope that children begin to feel powerful and capable, supporting them to cope with the large-scale environment of school and the challenges that this change will naturally present.



Further aspects of our school readiness program

MUNCH AND MOVE

Munch and move is an NSW Health initiative that supports children to develop healthy lifestyle habits. It is also another way of teaching children fundamental skills as well as life skills that will help prepare them for big school. Through incorporating Munch and Move into our daily curriculum, we are helping children to;



- Develop essential and fundamental movement skills
- Participate in physical daily activity
- Learn about healthy food choices
- Learn about the importance of drinking water each day, especially after meals to encourage good oral health

For more information about Munch and Move, please visit: <https://healthykids.nsw.gov.au/>

EXCURSIONS AND VISITS

At PRLDC, we connect with local primary schools to provide opportunities for children to;

- Visit a big school
- Meet local kindy teachers
- See photos of their school

These connections along with group discussions, books, and planned learning experiences at PRLDC provide children with an opportunity to become familiar with big school which will alleviate some anxiety and concerns children have about this big life change!

THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

The Early Years Learning Framework [EYLF] is a statutory and nationally recognised curriculum framework for the early years (birth to six years). The EYLF guides and underpins all aspects of Pioneer Road’s daily routine, curriculum, planned learning experiences and transitions – including the transition to school!



Educators recognise that children learn and develop in many different ways, and use the information provided in the EYLF to make considered decisions and analysis of children’s learning.

More information about the EYLF and recommended developmental milestones can be found here:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf>

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/DevelopmentalMilestonesEYLFandNQS.pdf>

Play is at the heart of all we do!

Play can often be considered as time away from serious learning (Fleer, 2021). Here at Pioneer Road, play is the motor that drives the core of children's learning. Play is powerful and play is sacred. So what is in the power of play, and why do we use play for learning?

1. It's the business of children's learning! Play-based learning is a technical way of describing the way children, especially in the early years, explore and make sense of their world (Taylor & Boyer, 2020). Children who are encouraged to learn and grow this way, learn to use their brains in different ways to understand and solve problems. Through play-based learning, children develop an understanding of the social and physical conditions that define their world and the language and symbols that are used to describe it.

2. It helps children make sense of their world! It doesn't matter whether children play on their own, with another child, or independently, they are experiencing an intense period of learning using all their senses. It's nearly impossible for us, who are so used to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the world, to imagine what it must be like to be making sense of a world where nearly everything is unknown and untested.

3. It gives them the best start to life-long learning!

Children who have been given plenty of opportunities for play-based learning will have a great start in life (Broström, 2013). Among other things, it is believed they will develop self-confidence, a positive self-image, social and language skills, curiosity, persistence, and concentration.



Skills and concepts being delivered within our school readiness program

So, what does all of this mean?

In a practical sense, we integrate our service philosophy, our philosophy of play, our incorporation of Munch and Move and the guidance of the Early Learning Years Framework to form a holistic school readiness program. Following are some examples of practical ways in which we encourage your children to develop the skills and dispositions to prepare them for life at big school:

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY SKILLS

- Recognizing and learning to write our names.
- Following directions
- Understanding the function of books
- Understanding the function of text through a print rich environment.
- Encouraging questions, expression of ideas and curiosity
- Encouraging re-telling stories and sequencing events



NUMERACY SKILLS

- Recognizing numerals
- Counting (one to one correspondence)
- Understanding concepts including size, shape, quantity, weight, length

COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Encouraging concentration and extending attention span
- Encouraging task completion
- Problem solving experiences
- Understanding basic concepts including colours, size, shape, directions, sequence, characteristics, emotions, time, locations, positions etc.)



MOTOR SKILLS

- Building hand and finger strength
- Using writing tools, encouraging technique and building skill.
- Putting puzzle pieces together
- Cutting with scissors
- Participating in physical activity
- Munch and Move activities

Is my child ready for school?

Is your child ready to start school? It's the perennial question many parents agonise over. Age-wise your child may be able to start school in the next intake, but are they ready to embark on 13+ years of education?

In preschool car parks around the country, families are discussing whether they'll send their kids to school early, on time, or hold them back. For those parents whose child falls into a grey area because of when their birth date is, what year to send them to school can be one of the most difficult



decisions to make. Do you start your child at four and a half years, or do you wait until they're going on six? Will they be bored with another year shared between home and preschool or will they struggle if sent to school too early? Are they emotionally mature enough? Will they be able to keep up academically? (Kidspot, 2020).

At Pioneer Road Long Day Care, we are here to support you in making this decision. At any time, please feel welcome to talk to us and we can inform you of how your child is going within our learning environment. We can also put you in touch with services that can help you make an informed decision and we collaborate with local schools and services and other resources that will help guide you in making your decision.

One of the most important areas to consider when making this decision is your child's social and emotional readiness to handle a large-scale school environment. Remembering, as mentioned earlier, the transition to 'big school' is a move to a very different large-scale environment. Collaboration with teachers across the community, as well as research, tells us that one of the most important skills to consider for your child's successful transition to school is their social and emotional skills.

Here is a breakdown of some areas to consider when sending your child to school (Adapted from Kids-first.com):

Language Skills

Schools are very verbal environments, and your child will need to be able to follow instructions, understand what teachers say, and communicate what they know, want, and need to teachers and peers.

Social Maturity and Independence

There will be times when your child will have minimum adult supervision at school. This includes going to the toilet by themselves, dressing, and being able to follow a structured classroom routine. Your child will need to be able to deal with challenges like not always being the winner and complying with what a teacher asks of them, even if they do not want to.

Concentration and emotional maturity

At school, your child will need to be able to socialise, follow the rules of a game and play cooperatively with classmates. Children will need to be prepared for the more structured nature of a classroom environment and be able to focus on tasks, follow teacher directions, and transition from one activity to another.

Motor co-ordination and skills

With upwards of 20 children in a classroom, it's unlikely that your child's teacher will be able to provide the one-to-one help that your child is used to at home. Your child will need well-developed coordination to dress and undress, unwrap lunch, use tools including pencils and

scissors, and participate confidently in learning activities that require hand-eye and motor coordination

If you are still unsure, use this link to access a school-readiness checklist which may help you decide if your child is ready for school: <https://www.careforkids.com.au/blog/identifying-whether-your-child-is-ready-to-start-school>

Who can help?

There is an army of people ready to help you. Your family GP can be a great source of information and guide to services available to support your child and family. Your family doctor can put you in contact with speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists as well as many other community services. We also display a list of professionals in our foyer who you may wish to contact privately.

You can also speak to us at the Centre or the school you intend to send your child to for information and support. We can all support you and inform you of the people and services that can facilitate your child's transition to school.

Following are some helpful resources:

<http://www.transitiontoschool.com.au>

The Illawarra Transition to School Project helps children starting school to make a smooth transition by connecting parents, schools and services with current research and practical support. Their networks and community events focus on the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama areas and the transition to school for Aboriginal children.

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/inclusive-learning-support/primary-school/transitioning-to-primary-school-with-disability#Resources1>

The Department of Education has a lot of helpful information that parents and carers can access to support and prepare for your child's transition and first day at primary school. This includes resources and guides for both you as the parent/carer and the child.

References

Australian Government Department of Education [AGDE] (2022). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.0)*. Australian Government Department of Education for the Ministerial Council.

Broström, S. (2013). Play as the main road in children's transition to school. *Varied perspectives on play and learning: Theory and research on early years education*, 37-53.

Fleer, M. (2021). *Play in the Early Years* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kidspot (2020). Is your child ready to start school?

<https://www.kidspot.com.au/parenting/preschool/is-your-child-ready-to-start-school/news-story/e8012a59de9e80fb4074db65f35c89e3>

Taylor, M.E., & Boyer, W. (2020). Play-Based Learning: Evidence-Based Research to Improve Children's Learning Experiences in the Kindergarten Classroom. *Early Childhood Educ J* 48, 127–133. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-00989-7>