

Tips for Starting School in Victoria



VACCA
Connected by culture

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL
CHILD CARE AGENCY

Finding a school

1. To find a school close to you and to check if they will meet your child's needs go to the website:
Find a School: www.findmyschool.vic.gov.au
2. Your child's kinder or childcare centre can provide support in finding a school.
3. Organise a visit and tour of the school and consider the following:
 - What programs do they offer?
 - Does the school feel culturally safe and celebrate Aboriginal culture? Are there other Aboriginal children attending? Is there a KESO (Koorie Education Support Officer) working at the school?
 - If your child has additional needs do they provide for this?
 - Your child must turn 5 years of age before April 30th of the school year to start school.
4. Most schools offer an orientation day in early Nov/ December and a Prep/Foundation transition program. Contact the school to find out when this will happen. Your child's kinder will help with orientation and transition.

What you will need when enrolling your child at a school

1. Birth Certificate and Immunisation Certificate.
2. Health Care Card details if you need to claim the Child Care Benefit.
3. Enrolment form with all contact details/medical information/emergency contacts.
4. You will be asked to fill out a Health Questionnaire when your child starts school.

Preparing your child for starting school

Over the summer:

1. Practice the journey to and from school.
2. Have catch ups with friends and family who will have kids at the same school.
3. Encourage independence skills like dressing and packing and carrying a bag.
4. Check the start and finish times and where to drop off and collect your child.
5. Start using the name of their new teacher.
6. Establish predictable routines including dinner, bath time and bedtime.
7. Be positive and excited and yarn about any worries your child may have.

About school uniform

- At most schools children must wear school uniform, but check this with the school.
- The school will provide you with a uniform list.
- Put name labels on all uniforms.
- A school hat is compulsory at schools due to the Sun Smart Policy in terms 1 and 4.
- Talk to the school about accessing **States Schools Relief** if you need support buying the school uniform they will organise that for you.
- Check if your school has a second-hand uniform shop.

Things to take to school

In the school bag you should label everything with the child's name and class, including the uniform.

Please pack a bag (not too heavy);

- A change of underwear in case of accident.
- A hat for summer and a beanie for winter.
- A drink bottle of water.
- A healthy snack for play lunch/recess.
- A healthy lunch.
- Some children have allergic reactions so be cautious of what food you pack for your child, check the school policy.

Other supports

1. **Koorie Engagement Support Officers:** KESO's work across kindergartens and schools. They provide cultural support for you and your child. To contact a KESO in your area, please visit:
www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/marrungregional.aspx
2. **LOOKOUT Centre:** The Centre's Learning Advisors and Koorie Cultural Advisors provide support and guidance for children in out-of-home care. To contact the centre in your region please visit:
www.fcav.org.au/news/lookout-centres

If you require further information, please contact your nearest VACCA office.

See our website for a full list of our locations and contact details: www.vacca.org