

# FOUR WAYS TO DEVELOP SCHOOL READINESS

## HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PRESCHOOLER FOR A POSITIVE TRANSITION TO PRIMARY 1.

**R**ather than focus on whether your preschooler will be able to cope academically or catch up with his peers in primary school, parents should focus on the social, emotional and environmental aspects of transition, according to Dr Jacqueline Chung, Academic Director and Senior Principal of St. James' Church Kindergarten and Little Seeds Preschool. "Look into how children manage their time, how they communicate with people, how they navigate social spaces and how they adjust to new processes," says Dr Chung.



### 1 ENCOURAGE VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Young children often find that crying or reacting negatively is the most effective and quickest way to express their emotions. To help them express themselves more effectively, guide them in communicating to the teacher in a respectful manner. Instil in them the value of being active learners who take responsibility for their actions and are able to explain why certain things happen. "Let them know that while they may be upset, crying will not solve the problem. Listen to your child to assess if his explanation is valid. Find out how to support instead of scolding him, which may instil fear," counsels Dr Chung.

### 2 TEACH SELF-REGULATION

One major adjustment is children's freedom of movement and expression. Children in preschool are accustomed to moving around freely, and sharing their thoughts and feelings with their peers and teachers in the classroom. In primary school, however, they are expected to sit still and be quiet in the classroom. "Remind your child that while he should still continue to speak up and share his thoughts in primary school, he also has to remember that the class group is much bigger than the one he is in now, so he should not get too upset if the teacher has no time to listen to everything he has to say," advises Dr Chung.



### 3 ADDRESS FEARS OF THE UNKNOWN

Children worry about the unknown which may give rise to apprehension and fear. They ask questions such as 'where do I..', 'what do I..' and 'how do I..'. "If you are able to anticipate and answer these questions, it can help them become mentally and emotionally more ready, and these concerns will be less of a challenge," says Dr Chung.



### 4 NURTURE SELF-CONFIDENCE IN SOCIAL SETTINGS

When preschoolers enter Primary 1, they enter a whole new social space where there are many people with different roles and functions. "They need to understand who these people are, what their roles are, and how to interact with them accordingly," says Dr Chung. Encourage them to observe and ask questions to identify the people they see in school. Role-playing also helps familiarise children with likely scenarios, like buying food in the tuckshop, and providing them with strategies for transition.



Adapted from the article 'Preparing Preschoolers For Transition' which first appeared in SingTeach ([singteach.nie.edu.sg/](http://singteach.nie.edu.sg/)), National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.