

# Media release



## Children starting school? Here's a few tips from Kids Helpline

Starting at a new school is always a challenging time for kids. Whether they are leaving Mum and Dad for the first time or moving from primary school to high school it can be one of the most exciting, scary and frustrating times of their young lives.

**yourtown** Chief Executive Officer, Tracy Adams says Kids Helpline recommend parents show children love, acceptance, encouragement and support during this time of transition and change.

“These transitions are exciting opportunities for children to learn and grow, but we need to remember that such milestones can also cause anxiety,” Ms Adams said.

“Parents have a major role in helping children feel safe and secure as they move to their new education settings.

“Children will be confronted with new challenges and uncertainties, it's important that parents listen to their children's concerns and praise them for facing fears and trying new activities.”

Kids Helpline's suggestions for parents to support their primary age children during this time include:

1. Be enthusiastic about the upcoming change. If you are excited and confident, your child will be also.
2. Prepare yourself and your child ahead of time – talk with your child about starting school.
3. Plan the first day the night before to avoid the early morning rush and any unnecessary stress, ensuring a calm and confident start to school.
4. If possible, visit the new school with your child and on the first day walk the little ones all the way into the classroom.
5. Start daily routines that will add continuity to make sure your child feels comfortable, for example be familiar with the school uniform, rehearse the day and pack their favourite snacks and fruit for lunch. Don't forget a healthy and nutritious breakfast.
6. If your child has any special needs, discuss this in advance with the teacher, for example dietary or health requirements.
7. Put aside extra time, particularly on the first day, for chatting and commuting together.
8. After school, greet your child and spend time with them.

Ms Adams said that while the role that parents play in fostering positive wellbeing for their children is vital, how schools can help children adapt and thrive is also important.

“Schools can also do their part to help children transition to school and deal with challenges through the year by tapping in on programs like the free Kids Helpline@ School Wellbeing supported by Bupa,” she said.

“Mental Health and emotional wellbeing are some of the top reasons that children and young people contact Kids Helpline all year round.

“These challenges can significantly impact a child’s life, and if not addressed early can impact on all aspects of their lives including learning and education, and in the longer term, employment.

“Kids Helpline @ School Wellbeing aims to address concerns like these early on and help create resilient young people. An early intervention and prevention education program for primary school students, the program covers topics that include bullying, resilience, friendships and good mental health. Made possible thanks to the support of Bupa, it uses digital technology to link professional counsellors with students and their teachers in interactive education sessions,” concluded Ms Adams.

Kids Helpline provides support to young people aged 5–25. It is the only free, 24/7 counselling service to provide support to young people throughout childhood, adolescence and into early adulthood.

Kids Helpline cost \$12.79 million to operate in 2019. Total income from State and Federal Governments totalled \$2.64 million whilst **yourtown** self-funded the balance of \$10.15 million to operate Kids Helpline in 2019.

For more tips for parents and carers about supporting their children see [www.kidshelpline.com.au/parents](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/parents)

Primary schools can find out more about accessing the free Kids Helpline @ School Wellbeing program supported by Bupa at <https://kidshelpline.com.au/school/kids-helpline-school>

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