



STARTING SCHOOL AT MODBURY SCHOOL P-6

**INFORMATION FOR
RECEPTION FAMILIES**

1 | STARTING SCHOOL

Starting school is a significant milestone for reception students. By establishing consistent and predictable routines, we create a safe and supportive environment where children know what to expect, helping them feel secure as they transition into school life. These strategies help to support reception students as they embark on their educational adventure.

2 | MORNING ROUTINES TO HELP WITH ANXIETY

Establishing morning routines at home plays a vital role in reducing anxiety for children as they prepare for their day at school.

When mornings follow a predictable pattern, children feel more secure and prepared for the day ahead. Calm morning routines help create an atmosphere of reassurance, allowing children to transition to school with greater confidence.

This approach not only supports emotional wellbeing but also sets a positive tone for learning and engagement throughout the day.

3 | GOODBYE PLAN

A 'goodbye plan' is a helpful strategy to support children during morning farewells at school. By establishing a simple, consistent routine for saying goodbye, families can ease transitions and reduce anxiety. This small but meaningful ritual encourages independence and fosters a positive attitude towards school routines.

4 | QUICK TIPS FOR DROP OFF

Creating predictable and calm school drop-off routines helps children to feel secure, while acknowledging and validating their feelings offers them comfort.

Predictable school drop-off routines encourage independence and support emotional regulation, whereas long, drawn out goodbyes can often dysregulate and increase anxiety for children.

Remaining calm, and reminding children that parents will return later builds trust and reassurance, helping everyone start the day with confidence.

5 | AFTERNOON TRANSITIONS

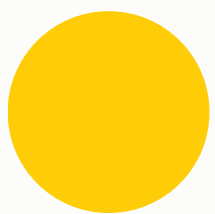
Often at the end of the day children are tired from a big day of learning, and interacting with their peers. Children can benefit from having a consistent end of day transition plan, which uses positive wellbeing strategies to support them as they process their thoughts and feelings from the day.

6 | SETTING THEM UP FOR SUCCESS

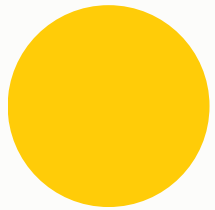
School readiness is about preparing children for a positive start to their school journey, both socially and academically. Encouraging independence with everyday tasks, fostering a positive attitude towards learning, and practising social skills, such as turn taking, and winning and losing can help children feel prepared, resilient, and ready to embrace new experiences as they begin school.



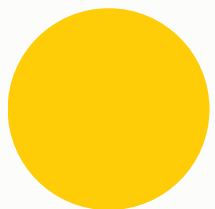
Morning Routines that Help with Back-to-school Anxiety



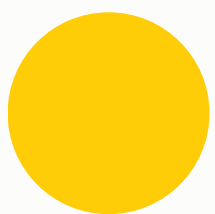
Start the night before- Lay out clothes, pack the bag, prep lunches. This avoids a frantic rush in the morning.



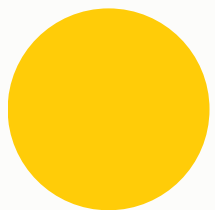
Gentle wake-up- Use soft light, calming music, or a gentle nudge. Avoid starting the day with shouting or stress.



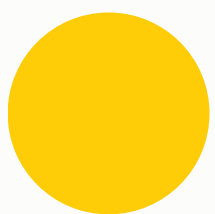
Calm connection time- Even just 5 minutes of snuggles, quiet chat, or shared breakfast can ground a child before the day ahead.



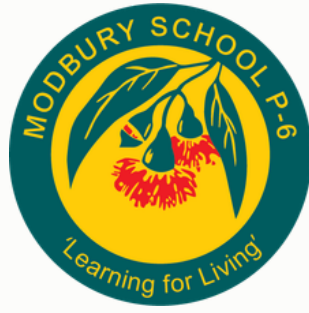
Visual routine aids- A simple checklist or picture schedule helps children feel in control and less overwhelmed.



Build in calm tools- try deep breaths, stretching, or a grounding game. These quick activities reduce morning jitters.



Positive send-off - Offer a goodbye ritual: a hug, a special phrase, or a token to hold. These rituals help children feel secure.



The Goodbye Plan

Helping morning drop-offs

What is a Goodbye Plan?

A goodbye plan is a predictable calm way for a child to separate in the morning. It helps children know what will happen, reducing anxiety and emotional overload when arriving at school.

Why Goodbyes Can Feel Hard

Goodbyes activate the attachment system. For some children, especially those experiencing separation anxiety, the presence of a parent can intensify big feelings- not because the parent is doing anything wrong, but because attachment makes the separation feel more real.

What Makes A Goodbye Plan Work

Short, consistent goodbyes help the nervous system settle more quickly. When separation feels hard, staying longer can sometimes increase distress rather than reduce it. This isn't because children need less comfort- it's because their bodies are finding it hard to let go while the attachment figure is still there.

How To Support Big Feelings

You can acknowledge feelings without extending the goodbye. Calm confidence, gentle validation, and a clear plan help children. Tears can happen alongside a safe goodbye- they don't mean the plan is not working.

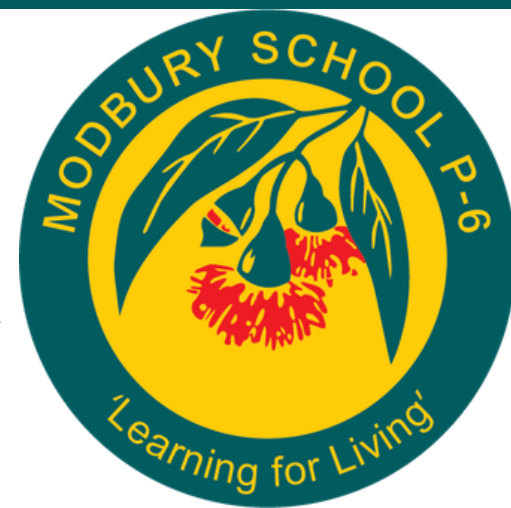
What Does A Simple Goodbye Plan Sound Like?

"We walk to the line together. We have one hug. I tell you I love you and that I'll be back after school. You go in with your teacher. I'll be thinking of you"

What Children Need Most

Children need to feel believed, supported, and confident in your return. A clear goodbye plan sends a powerful message: "You are safe. You can cope. And I will always come back".

5 Quick Tips For Morning Drop-Off



Predictable

Use the same words, the same steps, and the same routine each morning. Predictability helps the nervous system feel safe.

Calm

Your calm is the anchor. A regulated adult helps a dysregulated child settle faster, even if the tears continue after you leave.

Validate

Name the feeling without fixing it. "I can see this feels hard" lands better than reassurance or rushing. Feeling understood reduces anxiety more than being persuaded.

Short

Long, drawn-out exits often increase distress. A confident, warm goodbye builds trust that separation is survivable.

Return

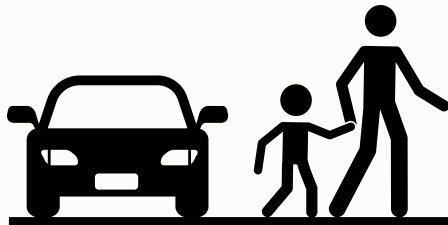
Remind them you will return. Be clear and concrete about when you'll be back. Certainty supports a child's sense of safety in the space in between.



AFTERNOON TRANSITIONS

As children start school, they are learning the rhythms and routines of school life, school expectations, and new academic concepts. Here are a few effective strategies to support your child at the end of the school day as they transition from school to home.

Consistent pick up



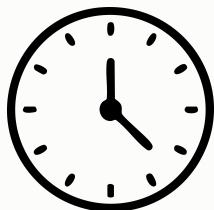
Arriving on time and using the same pick-up routine each day provides predictability and reassurance, helping your child feel secure. If you are running late, or a change needs to be made—please let the office know, and we can tell your child,

Positive greetings



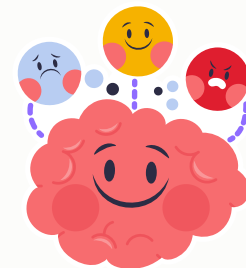
Greet your child with enthusiasm and warmth, at the end of school. A big smile and a hug helps to make them feel valued and welcome after their day.

Allow time to unwind



Give your child some quiet time as they transition from school to home. Asking questions straight away can overwhelm them instead, let them relax and process their day

Expect big emotions



Children often hold their feelings inside when they are at school. When they get home they may be tired, cranky, or emotional. They may even have emotional ‘meltdowns’. This is often just them unwinding in their safe space.

Asking questions



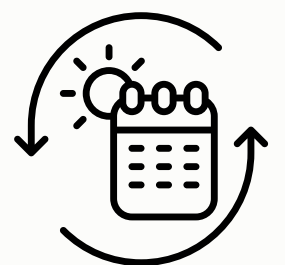
Instead of asking “How was your day?” which can often lead to a one-word answer, try asking open-ended questions, such as “What was something that made you smile today?” to give them an opportunity to share their day.

Celebrate small successes



Highlight positive moments or achievements from their day, no matter how small. This reinforces confidence and helps your child focus on the positive aspects of their school experience

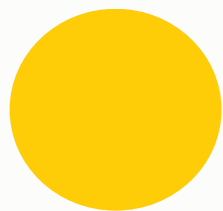
After school routine



Create a predictable routine for after-school, such as having a snack, changing clothes, or engaging in a quiet activity. This helps your child transition from school to home, providing a sense of stability and calm at the end of the day.

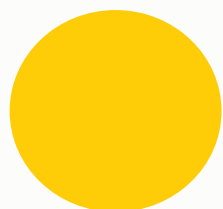


Setting Them Up For Success



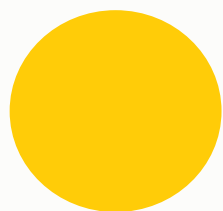
Practice Independence:

Help them manage their belongings. Ensure they can independently open their school bag and lunch box, and can put their jumper on and off. You can refer to our 'Is your child ready for school?' handout for ideas.



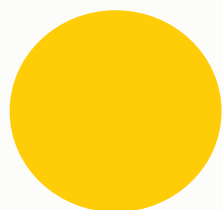
Visit our school:

During the holidays walk or drive past the school, and play on the playground. This will help the physical environment become familiar and welcoming.



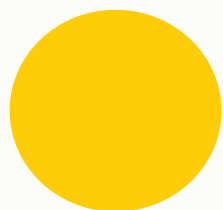
Adjust Sleep Schedules:

In the weeks leading up to starting school, gradually shift sleep schedules to match the school routine. This will help them to feel well rested during their first weeks.



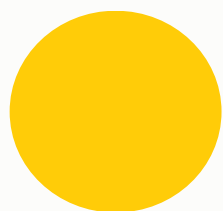
Label All Belongings:

Avoid items becoming lost by ensuring the child's name is on everything they will bring to school. When hats, jumpers, containers and drink bottles have labels, they can be quickly returned to the child.



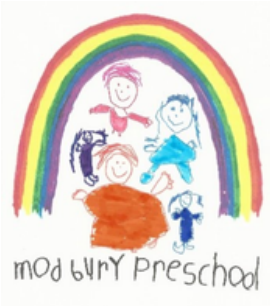
Read About Starting School:

There are many great children's books about starting school. Reading these books will help normalise the experience and give them an opportunity to ask questions about school.



Goodie Bags:

Your child will bring home a goodie bag on their last transition visit which contains some fine and gross motor activity ideas to try with them. There is also a social story all about Modbury School which you can read with them.



Is Your Child Ready for School?



If your child can do all these things by themselves with no help they are ready. If they are still learning spend the next few months supporting them to do these tasks by themselves so they can be school ready.

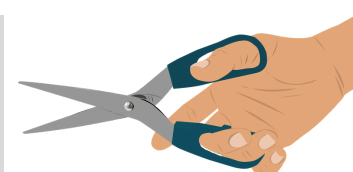
Put their shoes and socks on



Hold a pencil in their finger tips



Use scissors and cut a piece of paper



Pack their bag, put lunchbox and drink bottle in it



Take their jumper off and put it on



Recognise their name

NAME :

Write their name



Close their lunch box



Go to the toilet and wipe themselves.



Wipe their own nose



Wash their hands



Remember children develop at different rates. These are skills that will help support a positive transition to school.