

# Setting your child up for success: engaging in your child's learning and development in the early years

The journey map below provides an overview of the ways you can support your child to have the best possible start to life and learning.

## BIRTH – 2 YEARS

From the moment they are born, your child starts learning through relationships, play and exploration. Parents and carers are a child's first teacher and play an important role in supporting learning and development in the early years.

- Join a Maternal and Child Health (MACH) **New Parent Group** or attend an **Understanding Your Baby Information Session**.
- Help your child to make their first friends by joining an **ACT Playgroup**.
- Learn skills to boost your child's language development by attending a **'Giggle and Wiggle'** session at an ACT Library.
- Book and attend free **child health checks** and **immunisation appointments** to monitor your child's growth and development and share successes and challenges.
- Talk to your **Maternal and Child Health Nurse** or contact your **Child and Family Centre** about programs and support available to you.
- If you would like your child to attend an early childhood education and care (ECEC) service, arrange a visit and submit an application. Tips for selecting a service and other helpful information can be found [here](#).
- If you are worried about your child's communication, social, movement, gross or fine motor skills, you may like to attend one of the free **Child Development Service drop-in clinics**. They can see children up to 6 years old.



## 3 YEARS

- If your child turns three-years-old on or before 30 April, they may be eligible to access up to 300 hours of free, **Three-year-old preschool** through a participating ECEC service.
- Children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage may also be eligible to access two free days of quality early learning through the targeted **Three year-old initiative**.
- Visit the **Starting Blocks** website to learn about child developmental milestones and ways you can support your child's growth, learning and development.
- If attending an ECEC service, talk regularly with educators about your child - their strengths, interests and any concerns you have. The service can help support you and your child to learn and develop.
- From three years old your child may be eligible to participate in **early entry to preschool** or **Koori Preschool**. Enrolments are taken throughout the year.
- Continue to book and attend free **child health checks** and **immunisation appointments**. You can also book a free **dental check**.



During the first five years, your child's brain is developing at a rapid rate. Their experiences and interactions are creating millions of connections in their brains. The relationships your child develops now will build the foundations for their communication and social skills.

## 4 YEARS

There is overwhelming evidence suggesting that **quality early childhood education** helps children to have the best start to life. Play based learning focused on communication, language and relationships forms the basis of preschool programs in the ACT.

- Support your child to develop a love of books and reading by attending a **'Story Time'** session at an ACT Library.
- If your child turns four on or before 30 April, they can attend a Preschool program at a **public preschool**, Early Learning Centre or ECEC from the first day of Term 1 that year. **Enrolment** opens on the first day of Term 2, the year before commencement.
- The **Preschool Pathways** resources can assist you to support your child in their transition to preschool.
- Continue to book and attend free **child health checks** and **immunisation appointments**.
- All ECEC settings in the ACT implement the **Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)**, which emphasises play based learning. Play is an important aspect of early learning that helps children to develop imagination, social, communication, language and physical skills in a fun way.



## 5 – 6 YEARS

- If your child turns five on or before 30 April, they can attend Kindergarten on the first day of Term 1 that year. **Enrolment** in a public school opens on the first day of Term 2, the year before commencement.
- Your preschool and school will support you to engage in transition activities. You can read more about starting school on the **Education Directorate website**.



- **My First Day At Big School** is a story about settling down nerves as children contemplate big school. **We're Excited** is a great story about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids starting kindy.
- Get ideas for **packing a healthy lunchbox** to ensure your child has the energy to learn and play.
- At the beginning and end of Kindergarten, your child will participate in a BASE assessment to assess their literacy and numeracy skills. This testing assists teachers to plan targeted programs for all students. Your school will provide you with more information in Term 1.
- When your child is in Kindergarten they will participate in a **Kindergarten Health Check**. Your school will provide you with more information in Term 1.

Every child deserves high quality education and the life chances which flow from it. Schools in the ACT ensure your child has the best possible foundations for learning, school experience and opportunity to achieve excellent outcomes.

## KEY LINKS

Education Directorate - Early Childhood Information  
[www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood](http://www.education.act.gov.au/early-childhood)  
Education Directorate - Enrolment Information  
[www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/enrolling-in-a-public-school/enrolling-in-preschool](http://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/enrolling-in-a-public-school/enrolling-in-preschool)

ACT Health - Early Parenthood and Paediatric services  
[www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/services-and-clinics/early-parenthood-and-paediatric-services](http://www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/services-and-clinics/early-parenthood-and-paediatric-services)  
Child Development Services - Drop In Clinics  
[www.communityservices.act.gov.au/childdevelopmentservice/drop-in-clinics](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/childdevelopmentservice/drop-in-clinics)

ACT Playgroups  
[playgroupact.org.au](http://playgroupact.org.au)  
Libraries ACT  
[www.library.act.gov.au](http://www.library.act.gov.au)  
Starting Blocks  
[www.startingblocks.gov.au](http://www.startingblocks.gov.au)