



January 2022
Issue 62

all kids belong

Inclusion Support Services

Getting Ready for School

Message from Program Manager

I hope this newsletter finds you well and healthy. As we enter the new year we continue to face challenges and disruptions, but we also continue to plan prepare and hope for the best. It's hard to believe, but its already time to start thinking about the next school year!

School boards have already begun to circulate information about registration for children who are eligible to enter school in September 2022. Communication with the school is important for any child and family, and is even more important if your child has special learning needs. We encourage you to reach out to the school early and to keep in touch with them. If your child has been receiving All Kids Belong services, your Resource Consultant will be available to assist you in ensuring that your child's transition to school is as smooth as possible.

This issue of the AKB newsletter is full of information to help caregivers and children prepare for the next step in their journey. We hope that you'll find practical strategies, helpful resources and things to think about.

We continue to wish you all the best, and to look forward to a bright and healthy future together.

Your feedback, comments and questions are important to the All Kids Belong Program. Please feel free to contact me (Lee-Anne Cross) at any time at 519-434-8247 or at lcross@merrymount.on.ca

Provide All Kids Belong feedback at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AllKidsBelong>

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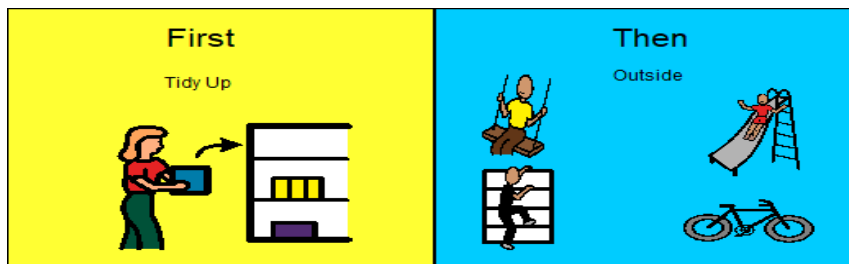
Special Points of Interest

- Using visuals to help with routines, consistency, and predictability
- How to dress and what to bring to foster independence
- Preparing for school : reading books, lunch containers, and visits

Transition to School

Getting ready for Kindergarten is exciting and also a time for change, and sometimes change is difficult. Here are some tips to help make the transition to school easier for children and parents.

- ◆ **Establish regular routines at home:** Children who have regular routines know what to expect and learn that one action stops before another starts. Children do best when routines are regular, predictable, and consistent. Use visual supports to help a child remember what comes next. This strategy can help with children who do not have strong receptive language skills.
- ◆ **Practice your morning and evening routines before the emotions of the first day of school set in:** Think about what your child is going to eat for breakfast. School requires a lot of energy to participate.
- ◆ **Think about your child's social readiness for large groups:** Are there any skills that you would like to practice over the next few months? Think about their ability to wait, take turns, and problem solve. Social readiness refers to your child's ability to listen and learn as well as their ability to interact with others in a structured setting like a classroom. Break the skill down into smaller steps and practice with your child.
- ◆ **Foster independence by encouraging and providing opportunities for your child to do things for themselves:** Small chores like cleaning up after dinner, helping putting laundry away, or tidying toys up before moving to another part of a routine are easy ways to build autonomy and provide children with responsibility and decision making skills. This also helps your child learn to follow directions. Use phrases like "first" and "then" or "next" when giving directions to support children with language delays or distraction concerns. Pair verbal requests with visual supports.



- ◆ **Practice fasteners on their clothing to help develop their independence skills:** Elastic waist bands are much easier to manage independently than buttons, zippers or clasps. When breaking down self-help skills consider what type of seating helps foster as much independence as possible. Not everyone can sit on the floor to get dressed.
- ◆ **Make sure all your child's belongings are labeled with their name:** This makes it easier to find lost belongings. Highlight the first letter of your child's name so they can focus on one letter if they are still working on name recognition. Attach a picture of your child to their backpack if they are not able to recognize their name.
- ◆ **Provide opportunities for your child to practice using their fine and gross motor skills:** Some examples are: running, climbing, drawing with crayons, markers, and pencils.
- ◆ **If your child is still working on their toileting skills, practice at home with a visual toilet strip:** (See routine strip below) The school often uses this strip to help the children follow the routine and increase their independence.



Transition to School

- ◆ **Complete a short version of an “All About Me Book” to let the teacher know what is important to you and your child:** What do they need to participate to the best of their ability in the different activities throughout the day?
- ◆ **Visit your school if you are able to:** During your school transition meeting inquire if a School Transition Booklet is available. This booklet provides pictures and captions of rooms, and staff in their learning environment. Looking at pictures and talking about what they might do in the gym or library can help reduce any anxiety your child might feel in a new environment.
- ◆ **Read stories about starting school and ask questions about what is happening in the pictures:** The library has many choices available. If the book belongs to you, tape actual pictures of your school rooms on the pages to foster recognition and make it individualized for your own child.
- ◆ **When choosing containers to send to school with your child be sure to choose containers that are easy to open and close:** Practice opening and closing a variety of containers at home to ensure your child is comfortable with these before going to school. Think about using one container with dividers if your child has difficulty with their motor skill development.



- ◆ **Ask the school about their daily schedule, and expectations around arrival and dismissal times:** Practice some of the routines at home.
- ◆ **Walk or drive to the school over the summer:** This will help your child become familiar with the route. This also gives you the opportunity for your child to visit school playground and talk about the school rules about the equipment.
- ◆ **If your child is taking the school bus in September:** Ride the city bus over the summer or visit the school bus open house if offered.
- ◆ **Call the school at the end of August and set up a time to visit the classroom before all the children arrive if your child needs extra exploration time:** This will help your child become familiar with their new environment.

**Some of the strategies may not be applicable to the current Public Health guidelines.
Please feel free to adapt them to your family's needs.*

Remember to allow time to adjust to this new transition for both you and your child.



Books About Going to School

- ◆ *The Night Before Kindergarten* by Natasha Wing
- ◆ *Monsters Love School* by Mike Austin
- ◆ *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate
- ◆ *When I Miss You* by Cornelia Maude Spelman
- ◆ *Maisy Goes to Preschool* by Lucy Cousins
- ◆ *Bye-Bye Time* by Elizabeth Verdick
- ◆ *Llama Llama Misses Mama* by Anna Dewdney
- ◆ *Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes* by James Dean
- ◆ *Wembley Worried* by Kevin Henkes

Transitioning to School Age Programs

Tips for families about how to make the transition to school age smooth:

- ◆ Try to visit the program
- ◆ Meet the staff
- ◆ Transition book
- ◆ Visit the school
- ◆ Play on the playground
- ◆ Talk with your child about the program and expectations in the program
- ◆ Look for more information on the website about the program (parent handbook)

Parent's Perspective:

[Welcome to Kindergarten Video](#)

How to Register for Kindergarten

Thames Valley District School Board

<https://www.tvdsb.ca/en/schools/how-to-register-.aspx#>

New Online Registration, School Locator, Overview of Full day Kindergarten, Information Videos

London District Catholic School Board

https://www.ldcsb.ca/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1076552&type=d&pREC_ID=1376924

Online Registration, School Locator, Information Booklet, FAQ's

**Please checkout the website for up-to-date information regarding registration*

Before and After School Care

London/Middlesex: <https://london.onehsn.com/>

St. Thomas/Elgin Before and after school: <https://onehsn.com/stthomas>

French First Language Public Board

<https://csviamonde.ca/>

French First Language Catholic Board

<https://monecolefrancaise.ca/fr/>

Before and After School Care French

<https://www.ccflondon.ca/fr/accueil/>

Antler River Elementary School

<https://antlerriverelementary.edublogs.org/>

Standing Stone School

<https://standingstone.edublogs.org/>

**Check out Antler River and Standing Stone Facebook pages to get updates on when and how to register for school*



The All Kids Belong Bulletin is published by Merrymount Children's Centre for child care programs, early learning programs and families throughout London/Middlesex & St Thomas/Elgin.

Send comments, suggestions, or submissions to:
Lee-Anne Cross, Program Manager, All Kids Belong
Telephone: 519-434-8247 Fax: 519-434-6851
Email: lcross@merrymount.on.ca