

## Skip links and keyboard navigation

- [Skip to content](#)
- [Skip to navigation](#)
- [Skip to footer](#)
- [Use tab and cursor keys to move around the page \(more information\)](#)



Queensland Government

[HOME](#) » [MY CHILD'S EDUCATION](#) » CREATE A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

# Create a smooth transition to high school

Transition to high school



Moving from primary to secondary school is a time of great change in your child's life. They are already experiencing many changes in their physical, emotional, and brain development, so the transition to high school is another big change for them to manage. It's at times like these that they need you by their side. Here's some tips to help you in supporting your child through this challenging time.

## Reassure them that nerves are normal

Starting high school brings many new and unfamiliar experiences at school. At high school, your child will have many different teachers and new subjects, and they will need to get to know a new group of classmates. Manage their expectations by reassuring them that it's normal for there to be some ups and downs. Help

<https://www.sparktheirfuture.qld.edu.au/positive-transition-to-high-school>

them maintain routines so they can keep things in perspective and encourage them to eat well and get plenty of sleep.

## Build their resilience

Change can be hard but it can also build resilience, an essential life skill for your child's future. Resilience is the ability to bounce back and adapt to difficult circumstances, and even thrive, despite challenges life might throw at you. The presence of trusted adults in a child's life can help build their resilience. Research has found that young people who have mentor-like relationships with trusted adults are more likely to complete the tasks they start, remain calm in the face of challenges, show interest in learning new things, and engage in activities at school. You can also build your child's resilience through positive goal setting and celebrating wins. Such positivity promotes optimistic thinking and can give a child a greater sense of meaning and direction in life.

## Help them make friends

Moving to high school involves meeting new people and making new friends. Reassure your child that it's normal to feel nervous about this. Remind your child that they already know how to make friends and that many kids will feel just as nervous as they do. Find out if there are children from your child's primary school who are going to the same high school and connect with their parents. Ask if your child's high school has a buddy system where older kids look out for new students and encourage your child to get involved.

## Encourage positivity

Being positive can help your child feel better and learn better. Be positive about the transition to high school and help your child to see high school as an exciting adventure that will open up many new opportunities for them. Your child is more likely to look forward to starting high school if you are positive about it.

## Listen and connect

The early days of high school can be overwhelming. Try and be around as much as possible during the early weeks of secondary school while your child settles in. If your child wants to talk, try and listen more than you speak and give them the space they need to discuss how they are feeling. With your guidance, encourage them to think of solutions to problems they might be facing as this will help them assert their independence and build their confidence.

# Expand their interests

Help your child find out about the extracurricular activities offered at high school. Encourage them to expand their interests and talents and to meet new friends by trying out new things or joining clubs. Think about what your child is interested in and enjoys doing and nurture that spark through seeking out activities at school that will help them grow their spark.

# Make a fresh start

Even if your child had a rocky end to primary school, remind them that starting high school can be a fresh start. The team at your child's primary school can help you work with the guidance officer or other staff at your child's secondary school so they can make sure there is extra support in place from your child's first day at high school.

# Stay involved: it's not over yet

Don't step back from schooling when your child starts high school as they will need you more than ever, especially if they've struggled at primary school. There's help available if they've fallen behind so talk to your child's primary school about connecting with their high school to seek extra support. There may even be things your child can do over the summer holidays to catch up before school starts. Remember: when parents and schools work together, children are far more likely to enjoy going to school and achieve success in their learning. And if you work closely with your child's school and things still aren't working out, please contact your Department of Education local regional office to seek help.

Download this tip sheet



### 12 tips to help your child be ready for high school

- 1. Be positive**  
It will help your child feel better and more settled.
- 2. Reassure them**  
Reassure your child and let them talk about it.
- 3. Get to know the school**  
Research activities and facilities on campus.
- 4. Practise getting to and from school**  
Walk out public transport routes and pick it up and drop-off times.
- 5. Organise stuff**  
Get books, stationery, supplies, a school bag and uniform.
- 6. Understand the school routine**  
Get through the timetable and make copies.
- 7. Create a study space**  
Set up a workspace with some form of desk chair.
- 8. Help them make friends**  
Find out their school's buddy system your child can join.
- 9. Build their resilience**  
Help children cope with change in their lives.
- 10. Discuss safety issues**  
Make plans to manage different situations.
- 11. Connect with the school**  
Use school social media channels to stay up to date.
- 12. Make a fresh start**  
No matter how hard things have been at primary school, high school can be a fresh start, and the school house system will provide extra support.

[qld.gov.au/sparktheirfuture](http://qld.gov.au/sparktheirfuture)



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