

# Billy helps kids prepare for trip to big school

By JODIE MINUS

BILLY Backpack caused a minors' moshpit at MacCabe Park when he performed his new single, Hey Billy Backpack!, to young fans at yesterday's School Starters Picnic.

"Hey Billy Backpack, I take you off to school, And I bring you back," sang the junior jivers.

The song is one aspect of a comprehensive Transition to School program run by Illawarra Children's Services to help preschoolers feel comfortable about the move to big school, said co-ordinator Kath Smith.

"It is very important to prepare children for school and we go to great lengths to make sure children know what is going to happen when they get to school, they feel comfortable about it and they hit the ground running so they are able to learn when they get to school," Ms Smith said.

"If children are familiar with what is going to happen, they have got a better chance of having a successful

start to school and they are more likely to have a more successful life and career, according to our research."

Ms Smith said children who weren't socially and emotionally prepared for school would not be able to cope with the challenges they faced in the classroom and playground.

"To prepare them for school, parents can talk to their children, and that is the most important thing," she said.

"We often don't talk to our children enough about what is going to happen - we expect that they know everything.

"But they can also listen to their children about what their fears and concerns are.

"And they should make sure they are independent, that they can dress themselves and go to the toilet by themselves and open their lunch, because it is those small things that can bring a child undone."

To listen to Billy Backpack's song, visit [www.transitiontoschool.com.au](http://www.transitiontoschool.com.au).



**Fun in the sun:** Dapto girls Maddison Dron (left), 4, and Kacey Smith, 5, join Billy Backpack in MacCabe Park.

Picture: GREG TOTMAN