

'Big school' explained - for kids and parents

By AGRON LATIFI

Seven Transition to School events will be held next month and in June to prepare families - children and parents - for "big school".

Three Big School Expos are slated to be held at the shopping centres in Warrawong, Shellharbour and Dapto.

Transition to School project officer Kath Smith said they would feature a stack of free entertainment for school starters, including giveaways, face painting, craft activities, music performances, visits from Matilda's Farmyard and Transition to School mascot Billy Backpack.

While children enjoyed the fun activities on offer, principals, school staff and a range of health professionals, including speech pathologists and nutritionists, would be on hand to speak to parents on the day.

"Through our partnerships with Westfield Warrawong, Stockland Shellharbour and Dapto Mall, we look forward to reaching out to families and helping more and more local children make a smooth start to school," Ms Smith said.

She added that a further four Big School Expos for Parents also would be held in Wollongong, Corrimal, Helensburgh and Woonona.



Transition to School mascot Billy Backpack (left) will be on hand at the seven Big School Expos to be held from Helensburgh to Shellharbour during the next two months.

These information evenings would provide another opportunity for parents to talk to teachers and principals from their local school, as well as get some helpful hints and tips from educators and health professionals.

Since 2005, the expos have informed parents and children of all the necessities to begin their transition.

"Starting school is a critical time for both children and parents and the expos are designed to make the transition a positive experience," Ms Smith said.

"Families have the chance to familiarise themselves with all their local schools, who will be attending the event, and gather

important information from transition to school experts."

Big School Expos will be held at:

- Westfield Warrawong on May 28 from 9.30am-5.30pm;
- Stockland Shellharbour on June 18 from 9.30am-5.30pm;
- Dapto Mall on June 25 from 9.30am-5.30pm.

Big School Expos for Parents will be held at:

- Wollongong Golf Club on May 19 from 6.30pm;
- Corrimal Leagues Club on June 2 from 6.30pm;
- Helensburgh Community Centre on June 11 from 6.30pm; and
- Woonona Bulli RSL on June 30 from 6.30pm.