

This document is a parent's perspective from when her child started 'Big School' at Mt St Thomas Public School.

It gives an overview of both the emotions experienced when a child starts school and the positive impacts of a effective transition to school program.

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As a mother of a 5 year old daughter, it was with much trepidation that I sent my eldest of 3 children to school. The concept of new friends, routines and separation was undoubtedly as much concern to me as it was to my daughter. It has been however, a liberating and astonishingly positive experience for me as a parent and my daughter.

Mount St Thomas Public School's 'Transition to School' program was thorough and inclusive for both parents and children. Children and parents bonded with other parents and children over a period of weeks PRIOR to school commencing and proceeding the new school year. Parental involvement has not only been encouraged, it has been valued! School children are slowly introduced to processes which are daunting even for parents, thus giving them time to adapt and adjust. Family days, barbeques and fun nights have all ensured parents and children feel safe and assured that the school respects them and wants them to feel welcomed.

Year 5 school buddies are carefully selected so as to ensure a close bond between them and their 5 year old companions and the interaction between older and younger children is carefully monitored and managed to ensure a smooth transition to school.

I would greatly encourage more schools to embrace the comprehensive 'Transition to School' program adopted by Mount St Thomas Public School. Less tears, less stress and a lot less anxiety for parents and children alike!

*Kate Woolnough*

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