



**HUKERENUI SCHOOL
TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAMME**



Aim:

To provide opportunities for all students to develop the learning readiness skills needed to support abstract higher order learning.

These opportunities will be provided through some examples of the following programmes:

Perceptual Motor Programme

Using PMP equipment to develop

- Gross motor control (Big muscles)
- Spatial Awareness (Linked to vocabulary development programme)
- Eye tracking (Left to right strengthening muscles for reading readiness)
- Laterality (Left and right, midline development)

Sensory fine motor control (Small muscles)

Activities for

- Forming shapes/patterns with sensory materials (clay, sand, pipe cleaners, etc.) to develop fine motor control in fingers
- Developing directionality with sensory materials before pencil control is expected. (Chalk, water and paintbrushes, sand, etc.)
- Cutting out on the line
- Tearing and sticking paper (Strengthening muscles for pencil grip)

Auditory discrimination

- Activities to discriminate between sounds
- Sequencing of sounds
- Rhyming

Visual Discrimination

- Identifying the difference in pictures/shapes/ patterns
- Identifying the difference in letters relating them to the sound they make
- Identifying some sight words for early reading
- Identifying and discriminating between numbers and values

Sequencing

- Learning to use sounds in sequence to build 3 letter words
- Learning to sequence a story in the correct order

Directionality

- Katie the Caterpillar writing programme to apply knowledge of directionality. Left, right, above, below, etc.

IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING READINESS SKILLS TO SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Study of Barbara Bran – Developer of Magic Caterpillar’s Building Blocks to Literacy

Over her career in education Barbara specialised in working with students with learning difficulties. Her interest in the reasons for learning problems turned her focus to students in their prior-to-school and first years of school. It was this practical experience that led to the development of The Magic Caterpillar’s Building Blocks to Literacy, a framework of foundation skills that underpin successful literacy acquisition.

Aim of the Study

In working with thousands of students of all ages over the years, it has become apparent to me that, despite the wealth of information about “readiness for school” and the importance of foundational skills, **too often children are rushed into readers, phonics programmes, ‘story’ writing and formal handwriting from the day they enter school** (and often in the pre-school years) before they have developed underpinning skills and understandings. **Students who begin school without foundational skills and who are not taught them explicitly, tend to get left behind. (Stanovich 1986)**

It is also my experience that students in intervention programmes later in their schooling, are often given ‘more of the same’ and continue to have difficulties over the long term because they are still lacking the underpinning skills and understandings.

There is also debate over whether ‘readiness for school’ is the same as ‘ready for learning.’ In a study of beliefs and expectations of teachers and parents as children start school, Dockett & Perry (2002) found that among parents and teachers in both early childhood centres and those teaching the first year of school, there was acceptance of the belief that children can be ready to learn but not ready for school and also that children can be ready for school but not ready to learn.

To add to the discussion about ‘readiness’, I suggest that there is another important aspect that needs to be examined, and it is this aspect upon which the framework of The Magic Caterpillar’s Building Blocks to Literacy is based: readiness to assimilate and integrate the skills and understandings that underpin literacy acquisition.

These include:

- the ability to listen to and identify sounds of spoken language (phonological and phonemic awareness)
- the ability to identify likeness and differences in visual information
- control of large body movements to allow easy movement in the classroom and the ability to sit still;
- visual-motor integration including the control of hand and finger muscles to allow handwriting to develop basic understandings of concepts about print.

Tunmer, Chapman and Prochnow (2006) refer to some of these skills as ‘Literate Cultural Capital.’

“Whether these skills and understandings are taught at prior-to-school learning centres or in the first years of school is open to debate. I do not intend in this paper to argue at what specific age or grade level these skills should be developed, but will argue that without them, the acquisition of the complexities of reading, writing and handwriting will be much more difficult, irrespective of age or grade level. Adult literacy students have been found to lack the same skills and understandings, (Brann 1987), indicating that lack of foundational skills continues to impact on people’s lives well beyond the first years of school. “



TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAMME STATEMENT



To support our young learners to achieve their learning goals by the end of 1 year, we believe that starting with this special programme as a group at the beginning of a term will help develop:

- Building confidence to participate and contribute easily, being part of a group and not a single new entrant
- Building Emotional Safety as they are nurtured and develop friendships within their special group; as well as having the luxury of being introduced and becoming part of the bigger group class group in this manner
- Minimise any gaps forming in their learning as the group will be starting and ending with a learning programme and not start as a single new entrant at any time during a term.
- Acquiring the perceptive knowledge and motor skills required to be automatic for learning. Automaticity of many tasks is needed to be successful with the more abstract cognitive tasks required during the following term.
- Social skills: Learning how to behave in a group, towards each other, their teacher and as part of a bigger class.
- Self-management skills: Develop enough skills to be able to work independently and confidently.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to assess and adjust learning programmes to be specific where needed for students very early on. The ability to unpack the development at this level is often the key to the help some students may need.
- Concepts of print and directionality.
- Early numeracy skills to understand value vs number/rote counting.

Hukerenui School is providing this service as a choice to parents who are interested to support the development of learning readiness and automaticity of their children.

All children will be given the opportunity to participate in this programme whenever they start school to develop a sound foundation for learning although starting together at the start of a term and going through the programme together gives a great opportunity of covering all the aspects together.

The school supports a culture of inclusiveness and invites parents to participate as much as they can with their children attending this programme.

We are always appreciative of parent helpers during our Perceptual Motor Programme sessions.

This transition is the most important part of preparing our students so that they are ready to learn and ready for school. With the development of the above mentioned skills and knowledge, students are integrated into the formal learning programme with the rest of the class and have a better understanding of what is expected of them as a learner.

We would love to show you around so please feel free to come in and see us!