



our foundation. your success

*St Paul's College Primary School aims,
within a nurturing environment, to provide a solid Christian,
academic and sporting foundation that will encourage each
child to strive for excellence of body, mind and spirit.*

Requirements for Grade R

This guide may be of assistance in preparing the foundations required for Grade R.



The most valuable learning opportunities are those created by parents within the home.

Caregivers, teachers, therapists, tutors, technology or aftercare cannot fully prepare a child or close the gap when a parent fails to spend time reading, playing games, conversing, cooking, gardening or doing household duties with their child.

Children who have not had this opportunity do not fare as well in the assessments.

Everyday experiences are excellent opportunities to develop skills, for example:

1. When you take your child with you to the shops, they can:

- ★ be introduced to reading and writing as you write and follow a shopping list.
- ★ practise their listening and memory skills and extend their vocabulary by helping you to collect a list of items.
- ★ learn about numbers, counting and money when helping you to pay for items.
- ★ learn about their local environment on the way to and from the shops, etc.

2. Build independence and responsibility:

- ★ help with tasks at home (gardening, cleaning, tidying up, baking, cooking, etc.)

3. Encourage creativity:

- ★ drawing, colouring, painting
- ★ cutting and pasting materials together
- ★ building models with recycled items or construction toys like Lego
- ★ explore sounds made by homemade instruments (rice in a yoghurt tub, sugar in a tin, etc.)
- ★ creating rhythms, listening to and moving to music

4. Help your child understand what numbers, shapes and mathematical concepts mean:

- ★ count steps, stairs, colours of cars, shapes in the garden, etc.
- ★ look for numerals on cars, signs, at the shops, etc.
- ★ speak about time e.g. "What did we eat yesterday?"
- ★ fetch e.g. 3 spoons, 3 forks and 3 knives.
- ★ sing counting songs and number rhymes
- ★ talk about the shape and size of objects, e.g. big car, little car, round ball, square table, long rope
- ★ ask questions such as, "Can you pass me the empty box?", or "Where is the largest cat?"
- ★ play board games

Limited use of IT

There are many more activities than those suggested above that you can do with your child to develop emotional security, independence, visual and auditory skills, a rounded language, numerical and linguistic foundations.

The following aspects are what children need to have mastered for entry to Grade R.

Independence

Children experience a sense of achievement when they can accomplish things by themselves. This helps them integrate into the class routines.

Examples of areas to encourage independence are:

- spending short periods of time away from parents
- dress and undress independently
- button or zip their jackets
- use the toilet correctly
- blow their nose and place their tissues in the bin
- wash and dry their hands
- open and close their own lunch boxes and water bottles
- clean spills they make
- carry their own school bag to and from class
- pack away their toys neatly
- place their dishes in the sink
- put their dirty clothes in the laundry basket
- able to play independently
- use their imagination
- lead a game without fighting

Emotional/Social Skills

Interacting appropriately and sharing are skills that will help your child make friends.

These are indicators that your child is developing in this area:

- makes friends easily
- can greet friends and adults
- participates easily in groups
- respects others and their possessions
- take turns and shares
- willing to join in with other children
- expresses emotions in a socially acceptable way
- uses phrases such as: "It's your turn."; "Let's share."; "Yes, please."; "No, thank you."; "May I please have...?"
- observes boundaries and can self-regulate
- owns up and is developing honesty
- shows kindness and concern for others
- listens to others without interrupting
- enjoys group and imaginary games with peers (e.g. hide and go seek, house).
- manages minor conflicts without adult intervention
- can calm themselves after an upset moment

Listening and Attention Skills

Listening and concentration helps to focus on important information and engagement in a task for long enough to repeatedly practice it.

For a successful year in Grade R, your child needs to be able to do the following:

- able to focus attention and ignore sound and visual distractions
- able to concentrate for 15 minutes
- looks at you when you speak
- listen to an instruction once and follow it
- enjoys listening to stories, songs and rhymes
- can remember and repeat words or short phrases
- asks and answers simple questions
- can identify the position of sounds
- has an interest in reading books
- can repeat what you have told them

- can sing children's songs
- says nursery rhymes and poems
- can copy and clap a rhythm
- can listen to and retell a story
- able to answer questions after listening to a story

Communication and Language

A command of English is required at St Paul's. Your child is ready for Grade R if they:

- know the day and month of their birthday
- know their name and surname, plus the names of their family members
- are understood by people with whom they do not associate with regularly
- articulate most sounds correctly
- ask for the meaning of words
- understand stories and can tell you about them
- learn new words and try to use them correctly
- understand words that describe objects, e.g. soft, loud, furry, hard, fast, etc.
- describe objects and events with some detail
- can follow 3 part instructions e.g. "Fetch your lunch box, put it next to the sink and take your shoes to the front door."
- use past, present and future with an understanding of time, e.g. "Yesterday we went to Gran."; "Today I spoke to my friend."; "Tomorrow we are going to paint at school."
- use more detailed sentences e.g. "We went to run on the field at break, but we had to go back to class because Tandi fell and hurt her arm."
- communicate easily with familiar adults and with other children
- take turns in conversations
- can remain on topic
- ask questions to find out using words like "How?" and "Why?"
- plan how to build things in their play e.g. a Lego model, a house from boxes, etc.
- enjoy creative and free play with other children

Gross Motor Skills

Movement, or physical activity, is thus an essential factor in intellectual growth, which depends upon the impressions received from outside. Through movement we come in contact with external reality, and it is through these contacts that we eventually acquire even abstract ideas.

~ Dr. Maria Montessori, "The Secret of Childhood"

These skills will ensure that your child has the planning skills, coordination and stamina required for Grade R:

- balance
- jump on and off
- hop on both the left and right leg
- gallop
- skip
- kick, throw and catch a ball
- sit without slouching
- climb
- push and pull
- hang

Fine Motor Skills



We prefer that children have the correct pencil grip, posture and fine motor skills before writing. The writing of letters and numbers are the last fine motor skills to be acquired and children need to learn how to form them correctly from the onset. Incorrect patterning starts when they begin to draw circles as tots. The letters and numerals impacted are "0, a, d, g, q, s, c, f, 8, 9" as all of them begin like a "c". Please do not let your child write numerals or letters if you do not teach them the correct formation. It is difficult to correct bad habits.

To prevent frustration and tiredness, your child needs to:

- have the correct pencil grip
- thread and lace
- cut out on a line
- use glue and paste
- trace around shapes, pictures, etc.
- colour in between the lines
- draw shapes ●▲■
- build at least a 15 piece puzzle
- fold a sheet of paper in half
- to do dot-to-dot activities (1-10)
- copy patterns
- do construction games
- write at least 1 or 2 letters of their name correctly
- write a few numbers correctly

Mathematical Development

Pre-number concepts form the basis of a sound foundation in Mathematics.

Your child should be able to:

- recognise shapes
- distinguish size
- know colours
- understand and use the Maths vocabulary of position, direction, quantity, size, etc.
- sort according to different criteria
- recognise patterns
- identify differences and similarities
- count small groups of objects
- count to 13
- count backwards from 5
- recognise numbers
- sing number rhymes or songs

Other Considerations

- If you expose your child to the sounds of letters, then the sound that the letters make should be taught and not ABC, rather "a" for Annie Apple (the Letterland programme is used at St Paul's College).
- Children should experience everything physically first and should not use workbooks initially. If the perceptual skills are intact, children will make greater progress than those who skip them to learn numbers, letters, writing and reading.

What should you do if your child experiences any difficulty in the above areas?

- Children who do not cope as well as others usually have an area of development that requires professional or supplementary support.
- The earlier a delay is diagnosed, the better.
- Speak to your child's teacher if you are concerned and ask for a referral to a Mind Move specialist, speech therapist, audiologist, optometrist, dietician, occupational therapist, play therapist, educational psychologist, or any other developmental support professional.
- Our school is best equipped to support children with mild to moderate delays. Optimal

progress is made together with parental input and a multi-disciplinary team.

- It is not in the best interests of children with significant developmental delays to attend St Paul's, as the school does not have all the systems in place for optimal assistance.

Play

"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn." - O. Fred Donaldson

- Limit screen time to a maximum of 1 hour a day.
- Encourage unstructured indoor and outdoor play where your child can imagine and learn.

The following is an excerpt from: <https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2019/06/06/play-quotes/>

How to Give Children the Gift of Play

Rather than overscheduling today's children, here are 5 tips to help give children the gift of play:

1. Make play a priority. Sometimes we have to say no to certain outings, events or activities. Family life is challenging enough but downtime, where kids can just be kids, is a necessity for children.
2. Allow for independence. If your children are old enough, leave them alone. Don't hover. This will help you and them. They will argue and settle it without you ever even hearing it all! They will fail and succeed and you will only hear about the success stories.
3. Provide some lead in activities. Sometimes, children need a little guidance and direction so you can set the stage. For example, print off some pages from the [Doctor and Hospital pretend play packet](#) and leave them on the table with a clipboard and a pen. The kids can then continue to play from there to create an imaginative world.
4. Make yourself busy but with nothing too exciting. If you are busy completing a task, most likely the kids will occupy themselves with play. If you are busy watching videos on your phone, most likely the kids will surround you (Murphy's Law). Choose wisely.
5. Schedule it! I know that may sound ridiculous to some parents but since there are 6 kids in our house and 2 adults with insane schedules if we didn't set aside time for play my kids would lose out.

In summary, fast-paced lifestyles, filled with technology, have deprived children from the valuable experiences of listening optimally, creativity and opportunities for discussion. In short, the modern approach is not necessarily better. We think that it is time to go back to basics like sandpits, water play, play dough, climbing, rhymes, acting, games, baking, household chores, songs, listening to stories and just generally slowing down.

We do hope that this information is useful and eases some of your concerns.