

[www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/parents/starting-school/](http://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/parents/starting-school/)

## Help the school understand your child's needs

### Why share information about your child with their school?

When your child starts school, it can be helpful for teachers and other school staff to understand as much as possible about their individual skills, strengths and interests.

You have the greatest understanding of your child, and sharing this knowledge will help:

- your child settle into a new learning environment
- your school to understand how they can build a positive relationship with you and your child
- your school to work with you to plan and implement support for your child's learning
- provide an opportunity to discuss any potential barriers to learning that your child might experience.

Establishing an open dialogue with your child's teachers early in your child's schooling will help everyone deliver the best outcomes.

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*Video: How to build a relationship with your child's teachers*

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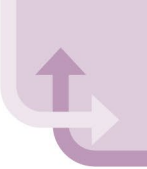
### What is a student profile?

A student profile is a short document that summarises your child's strengths, interests and preferences. It can be a valuable tool for the adults who will have contact with your child at school. The profile provides an opportunity for your family and your child to introduce yourselves, and explain your child's aspirations and passions. It also provides opportunities for you to address any assumptions people might make about your child and to have a say about how they could be supported at school.

[Student profiles](#) [PDF] can be presented in many different formats. Your child's preschool or kindergarten will have probably developed a transition statement as part of their required processes. Sometimes it is formal document referred to by a different name such as student needs profile, learner profile or one page summary.

You can decide who has access to the student profile. You may only want to share the information with your child's classroom teacher. However, it might also be beneficial for your child if other adults in the school know who they are and the kind of help they might like at school. This might include other teachers, members of the school leadership team, education assistants, support staff (for example, library staff, sick bay attendants), relief teachers and adults working in administration roles.

It is a good idea to review the information each year as your child's interests change and they begin to grow in independence. What works for them one year in one classroom might not be the same the following year. You might prefer to update the student profile at home with your child or in partnership with the school support team. Importantly, it is helpful to include your child's perspective. Where possible, involving them in the process of developing the student profile is beneficial for both your child and the adults working with them at school.



*There's still a really important need for the parent and the educator to come together to have that sort of shared understanding, to get to know the child, their strengths, their challenges, their needs ... having some shared discussion about what can we do to provide support for that little person to be happy and successful and to have that sense of belonging at school.*

— Professor Suzanne Carrington, Researcher, The Centre for Inclusive Education, Queensland University of Technology

## Create a student profile

You may want to create a personalised profile to introduce your child to their new school that reflects your child's point of view. It can include photographs or be illustrated with your child's artwork and be as colourful and as individual as your child.

You could use this [Student profile template](#) [PDF]. After you complete it, you can print it and share it with your child's teacher or school support team. It is very helpful to provide this information as early as possible so that the school can individualise support for your child to enable them to access and participate in school life.

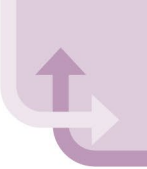
Sharing and discussing your student profile is a useful way to open a dialogue with your child's teachers.

*Having my parents be able to provide a lot of information about, 'Well, this is what Ashton is like at home and this is what they need. And well actually they're really good at these things. So, if they're not doing well in the classroom, something else must be going on.' As parents, you've got so much of this expert knowledge that you can share and be a resource for schools. Don't sell your own knowledge short, because in the early years only you really know the ins and outs of your child's day to day.*

— Ashton Bartz, autistic individual

The student profile document generally includes some key information about the child such as:

- skills and strengths
- interests and likes
- hopes and wishes
- how they like to play (for example, playing with others, being alone, 'chilling out' in a quiet area, being active outdoors)
- things that they don't like or that might trigger them
- what makes them feel excited, happy and cheerful, and how they might express these feelings
- what makes them feel grumpy, frustrated, anxious or angry, and how they might express these feelings
- how they like to learn and what helps them to learn best
- things that make it hard for them to learn (for example, communication difficulties, hypersensitivities)
- how they would like to be supported at school (including in the classroom and the wider school environment).



You may choose to include information, including diagnostic or clinical information, that you would like to be kept confidential. If so, please be clear on how you want this information handled or shared before you share it.