

What to consider when selecting a pre-school: We chat to Woodlands Pre-Schools Curriculum Coordinator



Finding a suitable preschool can be an emotionally draining experience, for all concerned. According to Woodland Pre-Schools Curriculum Coordinator Ina Lester-Smith there are some key factors to take into account.

If English is not your child's first language, look for a school that offers immersion-style teaching, she advises. "Children at a young age are like sponges. Their natural learning abilities, as well as enthusiasm and need to understand promises a rapid and successful learning of language." Adding to its immersion teaching offering, Woodland has also started its first Mandarin immersion classes in its Pokfulam Pre-School, due to the increase in demand for Mandarin Chinese.

Making sure that information regarding your child is clearly shared with the school should help avoid any hiccups along the

way. Woodland asks parents to fill in a booklet called 'All About Me', which provides teachers with simple but crucial information on the child's background, routine, favourite games and stories.

Continuing this strong communication between parents and teachers will go on to foster trust and understanding. Communications books, letters, e-newsletters and websites all serve to keep the channels clear, but nothing beats face-to-face meetings. Alongside the bi-annual Parent Teacher Conferences at Woodland Pre-Schools, parents are encouraged to be part of their child's life at school. "The teachers are always eager to invite parents in to celebrate their child's birthday, to come and read to the class, to help with guided reading, organise the library books' rotation, talk about relevant cultural events,

and share food related to a specific festival."

Preschool Transition Tips

- Visit the preschool with your child; let them get familiar with the new surroundings, the classroom, the playroom and most importantly introduce your child to the teachers
- Talk to your child about preschool, what they will do there, how much fun they will be having and who else will be there (maybe a friend or sibling is attending)
- Run your child through the daily schedule so that they are prepared for what to expect during the time spent in preschool
- Reassure your child that you will be there when school is finished to greet and spend the rest of the day with them
- Inform teachers of your child's favourite toy, game or song to help sooth anxiety