Fantastic Fingers®

Get Fit for School!

Get Fit for School **is a school readiness occupational therapy service that prepares Kindy & Prep students' bodies & minds for success at school.**

Fantastic Fingers® songs & movement-based play activities are used to accelerate foundational motor & early learning skills.

Hands-on early literacy & numeracy activities based on National Curriculum for Prep are incorporated into fun learning experiences.

Developed by Ingrid King, occupational therapist & school readiness consultant.

Get Fit for School Benefits

Develop important skills with four developmental programs

- ***Gross Motor*** **Level 1** core stability for good seated posture, upper body strength, ball skills & motor planning
- ***Fine Motor*** **Levels 1 & 2** stability & strength in writing hand & fingers, colouring & scissor skills, hand specialisation for optimal pencil grip & control during writing
- ***Early Writing*** **Levels 1 & 2** drawing basic shapes, pre-writing patterns, correctly printing name, numbers & lowercase letters (ability & age specific)
- ***Early Reading*** **Level 1** awareness of sounds e.g. rhyming, initial sounds, single letter sounds

All programs develop early numeracy & literacy skills, listening skills, oral language & self-confidence.

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Get Fit for School Services

Get Fit for School OT Evaluations & Checks

Parents of Kindy & Prep children book a *Get Fit for School* OT evaluation. I travel to you & spend 45 to 60 minutes with your child (age specific). We do a variety of fun developmental activities. During our appointment, I also analyse my findings & provide a written summary of your child's early reading, writing, fine & gross motor abilities. We discuss my recommendations & I provide information about helpful online resources.

Early Childhood Centres & Schools can book discounted *Get Fit for School* OT checks for their Kindy or Prep students. These focus on key fine & gross motor abilities needed for success at school. Term 1 checks are best for identifying Prep students who need more support. In Prep, the checks can be done in groups of four. Terms 2 & 3 are ideal for Kindy aged children.

Four Specific *Get Fit for School* Programs

Each level takes eight weeks for us to work on our goals. I work with each child (or small groups of children) once a week. This can be at home, kindy or school.

Parents are a key part of their child's success & are provided with specific fortnightly home programs. Many activities are from my *Fantastic Fingers®* resources. These activities are fun to do, user-friendly (come with online videos) & use no- to low-cost materials.

Is my child ready for school?

Many educators acknowledge that the Australian Curriculum for Prep is very crowded with little time for play-based learning. There is a lot more emphasis on acquiring reading, writing and numeracy skills. Not all children are ready for these academic challenges.

1 in 4 five year olds in Prep on the Sunshine Coast *are developmentally vulnerable or at risk* in their gross and/or fine motor skills, physical independence or readiness for the school day. Figures are similar for their social competence, emotional maturity and communication skills. These figures do not include those children with special needs (AEDC, 2015).

Key skills for your child to develop

According to international studies there are **four main predictors of later academic success.**

- ***Fine Motor Skills*** are the small coordinated movements of the hands & fingers seen when drawing, tracing, copying shapes, writing & manipulating objects & tools. Up to 60% of time in class is spent doing fine motor tasks. Children with strong & well coordinated hands & fingers tend to have better pencil control & more legible handwriting. This has a positive impact on their motivation, self-esteem & confidence at school.
- ***Attention Skills*** are necessary for children to be able to learn. They need to be able to pay attention, hold their focus on relevant stimuli & shift their attention flexibly. Recent studies show a link between good fine motor skills & attention.
- ***School-Entry Numeracy Skills*** include skills such as matching objects to a number & identifying the number of items in a group.
- ***School-Entry Language & Reading Skills*** include skills like alphabet knowledge & linking sounds to symbols (Frazeur Cross & Conn-Powers, 2011).

About Ingrid King

'I believe that early intervention is best. If you have any concerns, act on them. Don't wait for more problems to develop.'

I'm a qualified occupational therapist having graduated in 1995. Prior to working in Australia, I practised in South Africa, the US and NZ. I obtained my masters in 2008 with a focus on assisting children at risk and those with mild to moderate developmental delays.

I love living on the Sunshine Coast with my husband, a primary teacher and our two children. Together we educated our children at home from their preschool years up until they started Year 5.

I am passionate about school readiness and equipping children with foundation skills for success at school. This has led me to research and create songs, a video and a book. During this process I have been privileged to work alongside many wonderful teachers and educators. *Songs and Games for Fantastic Fingers®* was published in 2011 and revised in 2015. My *Fantastic Fingers®* resources are used in many different countries.

Get Fit for School is an exciting initiative that I developed to assist 4 to 6 year old children, their parents and teachers. I support kindys and schools applying for grants to fund *Get Fit for School* projects locally and elsewhere.

Get Fit for School Workshops

Parent Workshops

Twenty Terrific Activities to Prepare Your Child for Prep is an interactive, practical one hour workshop that enables parents to enrich their everyday routines with important play-based activities.

'Your workshop was very inspiring! I can see that you have a passion for early learning. I can't wait to try the activities with my child.'

Early Childhood Teachers' Workshops

Popcorn & Animals Make My Muscles Strong! is a 1.5 hour practical workshop where I explain why children aren't physically ready for school & how you can help.

'Amazing! Full of practical ideas that we can take away.'

Kindy & Prep Teachers' Workshops

Sing, Play, Learn with Fantastic Fingers® includes an **introductory workshop** covering key research, important motor development & free online Fantastic Fingers® songs & activities. Further workshops help participants to become confident to use the songs and activities to enrich their teaching programs.

'I have appreciated the structure that your resources provide. It is very suited to the Prep age group and the children enjoy it!'