

Beyond the School Gate

For parents planning social opportunities outside the classroom.

Because real belonging starts after 3 p.m.

Challenges Behind Acceptance

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Introduction

Parents often think this is the wrong time of year to plan after-school activities. School is winding down. Children are moving into Year 6 next year, transitioning to high school, or celebrating surviving their first year.

But really — this is the perfect time.

- Kids going into Year 6 are on the edge of growing independence.
- Students transitioning to high school are about to take on more responsibilities — finding their rhythm early helps.
- Students entering Year 8 have survived the toughest year of school and are ready for new friendships, skills, and activities.

After 3 p.m. is where confidence grows and belonging begins.

3 Principles for Planning Social Opportunities

1. Start Small, Start Familiar

Begin with familiar people or places — a cousin, a neighbour, a trusted family friend. Children thrive when they feel safe and understood.

2. Follow Their Interests

Talk to teachers, therapists, and family members about your child's emerging interests — they often see things we miss. Therapists may recommend or adapt activities. But above all, don't ignore your child's voice.

3. Build Slowly, Not Perfectly

Add one new opportunity at a time. Look for joy, not perfection — progress happens in small moments.

After-3pm Planner

Use this simple guide to help choose after-school activities and social opportunities that support confidence and belonging.

Step 1: Identify What Brings Joy

Ask your child what they enjoy after school, who they feel comfortable with, and what new things they'd like to try.

Step 2: Explore Opportunities

Look at local activities in sports, arts, family time, community groups, and creative clubs.

Step 3: Reflect Together

After each new activity, talk about what felt good, what was tricky, and whether they want to try it again.

Activity Sheet — Page A: My Interests Inventory

1. What do I enjoy after school? (Tick or circle)

- Being with friends
- Being with family
- Trying new activities
- Relaxing at home
- Being outdoors
- Learning something new
- Creating things
- Moving my body

People I feel comfortable with:

Things I like doing:

- Art / craft
- Drama / performing
- Horse riding
- Sport
- Library events
- Gaming
- Music
- Cooking
- Going to the park
- Swimming

Something else I'd like to try:

Activity Sheet — Page B: My Weekly Belonging Map

Day	Friend Connection	Family Activity	My Choice	Try Something New
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Activity Sheet — Page C: Reflection & Wins

My proudest moment this month:

Something new I tried:

Someone who made me smile:

One thing I'd like to try next month:

Where real belonging begins

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