

WELCOME TO

Stirling East Kindergarten



Parent Information Book

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Stirling East Kindergarten
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:
Welcome!

A very warm welcome is extended to you and your family from the staff and Governing Council of Stirling East Kindergarten. We hope you will see the preschool as an extension of your home as we work in partnership with you to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for your child. Our aim is to provide quality education that utilises the individual strengths and interests of your child.

Preschool is a place for learning, sharing, and friendship. Parents can share in their child's education, so please call in at any time and join in a session or part of a session.

The staff team are:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Director: | Catriona Catt |
| Teacher: | Heather Barrett |
| Early Childhood Worker: | Vonny Mahlburg |

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Stirling East Kindergarten provides a safe, caring environment that is vibrant, flexible and responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. Preschool educators work in partnership with families, recognising and valuing their place as children's first educators. We respect each child as a capable learner with unique skills, prior knowledge and experiences. Educators recognise that all children are numerate and literate, and demonstrate learning in their own unique way.

At Stirling East Kindergarten, we believe that quality early childhood practice enables children to engage in learning at various levels and at their own pace. We provide a quality inclusive teaching and learning environment in line with the *National Quality Framework* and based on the Principles, Practices and Outcomes of the *Early Years Learning Framework*. Our aim is to achieve this in a sustainable way that considers both people and planet. Educators' model and foster life-long learning practices, along with an appreciation and respect for nature.

We implement a challenging and enriching emergent play-based curriculum that provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. When children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings.

Educators are committed to the ongoing development of our natural outdoor play environment in partnership with children, parents, and the local community. Our belief is that play spaces in a natural environment invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking, exploration, discovery and a deeper connection with nature. What we explore as children in the natural environment is carried within us throughout life. Children's interactions with nature are thought to be crucial to their mental and physical well-being. (Ruben 1998). What we explore as children in the natural environment is carried within us throughout life. (Every Child 2004) Stirling East Kindergarten aims to assist children in building an environmental conscience and sense of responsibility for nature through play in and with the natural world. We believe children learn best when there are strong links between their home, preschool and community. We strive to build these connections and understandings through good communication, sharing and a cycle of continual review and improvement.

SESSION TIMES

Preschool

Full days : 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

Children are entitled to attend up to 15 hours of kindergarten. We do our best to accommodate parents' preferences for days, taking into account the needs of the child, family and vacancies at the centre. Children attend 2 full days from term 1 to late in term 3 when children start attending an additional day giving each child 3 full days per week. Over the preschool year your child can attend up to 600 hours of preschool.

We believe in the importance of positive transitions for your child and the benefit of children feeling secure in knowing the adults who are responsible for their care and well being. Therefore we ask that you **sign your child in and out** of the kindergarten and that you bring them to an Educator to do a 'handover' of care. Should you arrange for somebody other than yourself to collect your child, it is imperative that both your child and an educator are informed.



Parent contributions: \$250 per term

Parent contributions are set by the governing council and reviewed annually. Each family will receive one invoice for the whole year and payments can be made in 4 instalments at the beginning of each term. Parent contributions and fundraising money contribute to a major part of the preschool income, supplementing the funding provided by the Department for Education. The parent contributions add significantly to the running costs of the centre including: educational equipment, painting and craft resources; upgrading and maintenance of equipment and grounds; daily cleaning and utilities (e.g. water and telephone). The term contribution covers one incursion or excursion.

Payments may be placed in the payments box or made through online direct debit. If you are experiencing financial difficulties please speak with our director for confidential arrangements.

Playgroup: Fridays: 9:00 am to 10.30 am
 Cost: \$6.00 per family
 Please bring: A piece of fruit to share

Playgroup provides wonderful opportunities for children and parents to meet other families from our community in a friendly environment to chat, play and learn. Start your morning with a complimentary tea or coffee, we have shared fruit time at about 10:00 am, then a couple of songs and story before saying farewell at 10:30 am. All families are welcome to attend.

Starting preschool

In 2020 we are starting preschool at 8.30 am. This is a new start time and we hope it meets the needs of your family's morning routine. Please note children must not be dropped off before this time.

On arrival all children must be signed in on the Daily Sign In Sheet located on the desk inside the main door. All children must be signed out at the end of their day by the adult collecting them.

Settling into preschool

Settling will vary according to each child. Please be patient during this big step in the life of your child. We want to work in partnership with you to ensure the best outcome for your child so that they become comfortable and develop a sense of belonging to the preschool environment.

When children start preschool for the first time or transfer from another preschool, be prepared for them to be a little apprehensive or anxious. Some children take longer than others to settle, and however much your child may be looking forward to going to preschool, it is a new experience and a very big step in their lives:

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Perhaps - the learning environment is different

- there are new children and adults to get to know
- there are new play materials to try out
- there are new routines to learn
- there is a need to share toys and adults with other children.

Try not to worry. Your child may begin happily but have anxious moments a few days later. This is normal too.

The first big separation from a parent or caregiver is a major step in your child's life. Learning to deal with changes such as this is something all children have to learn. In the preschool setting staff are committed to making the change as smooth as possible for the child and to help them with this new learning.

Give lots of hugs and cuddles before and after preschool to show your child your love and be prepared to stay at preschool to help him or her settle in. This will help your child to take the change in his or her stride. Be reliable and on time when you pick up your child - this can be an anxious time if other parents come and you are not there. We believe your child is special and we will do all that we can to build confidence and self-esteem.

Never leave without telling your child you are going as your child needs to know that he or she can trust you. If you feel that you and your child are having separation difficulties please consult staff.

If you do leave your child and they are distressed please telephone the preschool approximately 20 minutes later and talk with one of the teachers who can let you know how your child has settled. In circumstances where a child does not settle a teacher will call you to discuss the situation and together you will make a decision on what to do next.



The Preschool Curriculum

Young Children Learn best through Play

Play is critical for children's learning, growth and development.

Play experiences develop pathways in the brain, build complex language and social skills, develop imagination and enable children to develop high level thinking skills.

Brain development starts early

'The research tells us that the brains of all children appear to thrive best in a nurturing, consistent and social environment, characterized by interventions which both secure the child yet enable him or her to explore and play safely.' Shonkoff and Phillips, 2001: Smith 2001

Brain research identifies that:

- the highest rate of brain development occurs in the early years of a child's life
- children's early life experiences shape the way their brains develop, in the short term and throughout their life
- the young brain is very 'plastic', it is continually responding and reacting to everything that the child experiences
- secure relationships and rich life experiences encourage the child to explore and learn. This continues the brain building process.
- children's early brain development is the foundation for all learning and development that follows.

"Recognizing the early years are a period of unique opportunity and vulnerability means that the environments of early childhood should be designed so they facilitate, rather than blunt, the remarkable intrinsic push toward growth that is characteristic of every child..." The Future of Children

The preschool curriculum is designed to

- Connect with children's prior experiences and understandings
- Broaden children's knowledge and skills across the curriculum
- Expose children to a wide range of learning experiences
- Engage children's imagination and curiosity
- Actively encourage independent learning and more complex play
- Support children to deepen their interests and take ownership of their learning
- Reflect and respect children's cultural backgrounds
- Extend children's thinking and problem solving skills
- Develop children's language skills in talking, listening, viewing, drawing and writing
- Support children's overall development and well being
- Assist children to successfully transition to school

We deliver a play based program that responds to the strengths and interests of each child, drawing on their prior knowledge and family experiences. Our curriculum documents include The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) and The Preschool indicators of Numeracy and Literacy in line with the National Quality Standards (NQS) and Department for Education (DfE) directives.

Learning outcomes are:

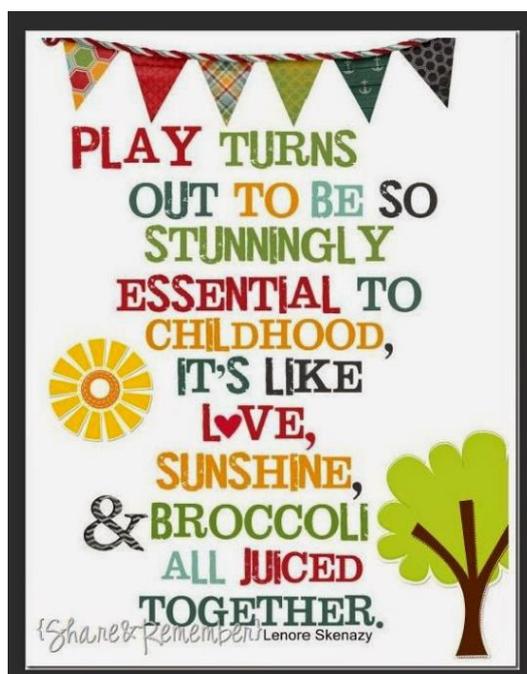
- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

Teachers plan to facilitate children's learning by

Working in partnership with families and other professionals, educators will:

- Respect and build on children's ideas and interests
- Ask open ended questions, providing feedback and supporting children to test their ideas
- Encourage children to explore and take risks in their learning
- Providing stimulating learning experiences, indoors and outdoors
- Listen, observe, record, plan and respond to children's ongoing learning needs
- Be a co-player, modelling play, supporting children to enter and exit play situations
- Teach by modelling, demonstrating and explaining.

Research confirms that the higher the qualifications of staff, the better the outcomes for children. DfE preschools employ qualified early childhood teachers and Certificate III trained educators.



All they do at preschool is play!

Do you see play as fun and not related to learning OR do you see children's play as learning? DfE preschools value learning through play. Our programs provide children with extended periods of time to engage in a broad range of play based learning opportunities for individual children and for small and large groups of children.

Teachers are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their planning and teaching for learning through play. They support children to

develop a broad range of understandings and skills as they build onto children's current ideas and interests. They use information from parents and children (including observations of children at play) to facilitate each child's ongoing learning.

When children are absorbed in their play they are learning to focus their attention and persist with challenging tasks. They are also learning to seek out new information, to find things out for themselves. Children are learning to be self-motivated learners who love to learn. Learning through play lays the foundation for children's later academic and social success.

Play Is Learning

Rich and varied play experiences strongly boost all aspects of children's learning and development.

They teach children about:-

- Their own and others identities
- Skilful ways of interacting
- Fairness and the rights of all
- Their environment
- How to be positive and healthy
- Language, literacy and numeracy
- New technologies



Partnerships with parents- Parent involvement is invaluable!!

As educators we respect that you are your child's first educators and experts regarding their development. We believe that positive partnerships with you and your family will enhance learning outcomes for your child. Please tell us of significant events at home that may impact on your child during their time at preschool and feel free to ask for privacy if matters are confidential.

You are always welcome to stay, or drop in to the preschool anytime during the day. If you have time, stay with your child and share an activity for a few minutes when you arrive. You may like to observe, help out, or simply enjoy being here. We are available to listen to your concerns or queries and have conversations about your child's learning, so please feel free to approach us.

Please let us know if you have any hobbies or interests you would like to share with the children (examples include: playing a musical instrument, cooking, craft, science, your occupation e.g. police officer, photography and gardening).

A day at preschool

Parents/Carers sign-in their child on arrival

- 8:30 Children arrive - inside and outside supported free play.
- 9:00 Morning group time which can include - greeting/acknowledgement of country/sharing of cultures, circle time - songs, verse and movement stories, games and small group work.
- 9:30 Fruit/healthy snack.
Children are able to eat when hungry throughout the day.
- 9.50 Supported interactions, exploration and investigation with access to both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- 11:30 Tidy up and set up for lunch.
- 11:45 Middle group time - stories, music/dance, inquiry activities.
- 12:00 Re-apply sunscreen (Terms 1 and 4 and when UV rating is 3 and above).
Lunch time
- 12:30 Relaxation/quiet activities
- 12:45 Supported interactions, exploration and investigation with access to both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- 2:30 Pack up time.
- 2:45 Grouptime, reflection on learning - songs, stories and group games.
- 3:00 Farewell children, opportunity for parents to share in their child's discoveries through 'Today's Learning' table/area.

Parents/Carers sign-out their child before leaving.

These times are approximate and vary from time to time according to the children's needs and interests. This schedule ensures long periods of uninterrupted play supported by educators who extend children's learning.

What your child needs to bring each day

- A bag that they can easily manage (named with a tag)
- A broad brimmed or legionnaire hat every day. (named please)
- a named water bottle

- A piece of fruit or nutritious snack for morning and afternoon - cheese and crackers, dried fruit, carrot, celery are appropriate. We encourage children's ownership over healthy food choices, please do not send lollies, chocolate treats, sweet biscuits or chips. Snacks are kept in the bags for ease of access by your child.
- Children require a healthy lunch in a separate lunch box. Please see the lunch box ideas sheet. We do not reheat foods. If you pack yoghurts please put in an ice pack to keep it cold as lunches are not refrigerated. Lunch boxes go on the trolley near the front door or in the locker room before being transferred to the kitchen.
- Stirling East Kindergarten is an *Allergy Aware* site and we will inform you of any foods to avoid that may impact the health of our children.
- We understand that some children will benefit from a special toy or comforter that they may wish to access during the day, especially at relaxation time. Please discourage your child from bringing other toys from home to preschool as they can easily be lost or broken. We will tell you when we are requesting children to bring special items relating to the program such a teddy bear for a teddy bear picnic day.
- Please pack two complete changes of clothes in case of messy/water play or the occasional toileting accident. (named please)

Healthy eating at preschool

Snack and lunch time

Children are encouraged to bring along foods that are low in sugar, fat and salt. Please ensure your child brings at least two healthy fruit or vegetable snacks to preschool each day. Snacks need to be left in children's bags so they can access them when they are hungry. There is a table set up for children to sit at while eating their snack which staff monitor.

Lunch time is held at the same time each day which is 12.00 noon to 12.20pm. Children need to have a substantial amount of healthy food packed in their lunch boxes for lunch time.

As a critical part of the social environment that shapes children's eating behaviour our site will ensure that a healthy lifestyle is learned, practised and supported through the curriculum and the environment.

We are a NUT AWARE preschool

Due to the increasing incidence of severe allergies to nuts in children, the preschool is a NUT AWARE ZONE. This means we ask that no nuts of any kind are to be brought to preschool, to ensure the health and well being of all children. Please do

not send any foods containing nuts, including peanut butter, nutella, or other nut based products.

Occasionally, children with different severe allergies may be attending preschool. If the allergy is life threatening, similar procedures to those described above will be implemented, to ensure the child is kept safe. All families will be informed if this situation arises.

Food safety and hygiene

Children are encouraged to:

- Sit down while eating
- Wash hands before and after eating
- Helping to clean up after eating
- Look after their own lunchboxes by packing them away when they have finished eating
- Make appropriate decisions about when and what they eat.

Governing Council

The Governing Council, together with the Director, has responsibility for

- setting future goals for the centre,
- the financial management of the preschool budget
- managing WHS practices
- developing site policies and practices
- managing centre maintenance
- upholding DfE policies and guidelines.

Membership on the Governing Council provides an opportunity to get to know other parents and to work with them towards common goals. You may like to help in this way. All parents are invited to the Annual General Meeting in February and are encouraged to join the council.

Behaviour management

Behaviour is seen as an expression of feelings or an attempt to meet underlying needs. We need to be aware of what the child is trying to communicate, validate the child's feelings, and deal with the underlying problem as well as guiding the child towards more appropriate ways of communicating needs and interacting pro socially with others. Staff will teach, reinforce and model positive behaviours rather than imposing consequences for undesirable behaviours.

Staff will model appropriate styles of interaction and appropriate responses to conflict resolution. Each child's level of development, needs and cultural context will be considered and expectations will be matched to these. Learning how to manage

feelings occurs in the context of positive relationships and time spent affirming each child, and is the basis of our behaviour policy.

All children have the right to feel:

| | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Valued | Happy | Confident |
| Safe | Special | Welcomed |
| Secure | Respected | Supported |
| Unique | Accepted | Trusted |

At Stirling East Kindergarten we believe:

The preschool staff believe that behaviour management involves teaching children how to deal positively with problems and how to make positive choices. This philosophy guides our behaviour management policy, and includes components of positive recognition, clear and consistent expectations and guidelines, and fair and relevant consequences.

We believe that everyone has the right to feel safe all of the time and we actively teach this to the children through our child protection curriculum.

We ignore behaviour if it is not dangerous and only seeking attention.

Children learn best when they experience success and have positive self-esteem.

We believe that behaviour changes more quickly when handled in a positive way.

We accept that children feel angry, frustrated and upset at times and need help to express feeling appropriately.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and their own safety.

Staff and parents need to share responsibility, being consistent at all times, creating a safe, secure environment for children and modelling appropriate behaviours.

The behaviours we encourage are:

Respecting and caring for each other and our environment

Sharing

Participating in activities

Taking turns

Being friendly

Being co-operative

Listening

Being polite

Helping

Moving safely

Using appropriate social language

Ways we maximise positive behaviours include:

Verbally acknowledging positive behaviours.

Reinforcing acceptable behaviours regularly at group time and informally.

Talking through behavioural problems with a child to support a more positive action.

Ensuring the learning environment is safe and well supervised.

Communication with parents is clear and concise.

Staff are consistent in implementing rules and consequences.

Staff discuss issues in order to develop positive strategies to support a child.

Strategies we use for inappropriate behaviour:

- Talk with the child, validate feelings, talk about how the other child feels. Suggest solutions or help child to suggest solutions- protective behaviours.
- If unacceptable behaviour continues, quietly remove child to another activity.
- Time in with staff member if necessary- not time out.
- Children with ongoing behaviour problems will have a special plan tailored specifically for them in consultation with the parents. May be referred for specialised help.

The behaviours which are not acceptable or appropriate are:

Verbally or physically hurting others eg:

Growling

Hitting

Spitting

Pinching

Punching

Swearing

Name-calling

Pushing

Throwing things

Bullying

Kicking

Disrespecting others and their belongings

Damaging preschool property

Ways we minimise challenging behaviours include:

Providing positive role models by staff.

Telling the child if it is inappropriate behaviour.

Encourage positive behaviours stating the behaviour expected i.e. the desired outcome.

Talking through the problem with the child providing other options and appropriate behaviour for future situations.

Offer choices and redirect the child's play.

Provide the child with some quiet thinking time in an appropriate supervised area.

With children we:

Encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and their own safety.

Informing (warning) children about dangerous situations and / or practices.

Support children in learning about the consequences of their own behaviour.



Promote problem solving, listening and being aware of the rights of others.
Encourage children to seek staff when needing help of reassurance.

Consulting and informing parents

Parents will be given information on enrolment about the sites Behaviour Code that will be written and verbal.

Parents will have the opportunity to seek more information and ask questions about the code.

Parents will be given the opportunity to speak to staff about their own child and any concerns they may have.

Parents will be informed if their child has specific behaviour needs, which may lead to an Individual Behaviour Plan being negotiated with parents and the child.

Confidentiality will be observed in all discussions with families and in exchange of information with other agencies.

Transition programs are carefully planned and monitored with staff from the new setting and families for children with challenging behaviours.

How Parents can help support the Site Behaviour Management Policy

Inform staff in changes to their child's routine, which may affect their behaviour.

Inform staff of positive and effective strategies that they use at home.

Being consistent with the rules and acceptable behaviours at home and other places.

Discussing child's behaviour at the centre and effective strategies used by staff.

Support the child's regular attendance.

Provide information to departmental personnel that will assist them to understand their child's needs and support their learning.

Providing assessment reports from other agencies.

Preschool policies

A complete folder of all preschool policies is available for parents to read in the centre. Copies of any policies can be emailed to you on request.

Bushfire and emergency information

Stirling East Kindergarten is a Category 1 High Risk Bushfire Kindergarten.

We are closed on '**Catastrophic Days.**' Please read the Bushfire Policy and be prepared. We practice emergency drills with the children in a relaxed manner.

Assessment and reporting

We ask all parents to complete a questionnaire at the start of the year which provides us with information about your child which we build upon. Teachers share an individual learning plan with parents for their child after the child

has attended preschool for one term. This enables us to collaboratively set some goals for the child to achieve the best possible outcomes during their preschool year.

Each child has a learning journal that provides a snap-shot of your child's learning outcomes during their time at preschool. This evidence is sourced through learning stories, art work, photos, stories from home, celebrations and other artefacts related to your child's year at preschool. We encourage parents, carers and extended family to share your child's journal with them from time to time and we will send this journal home for holiday periods to add to if you would like to. Your child will be presented with their book to take home and keep at the end of the year.

Teachers report on children's progress to parents in a range of ways: through newsletters, informal chats with parents and formal interviews. A Statement of Learning is given to the parents when the child leaves preschool and a copy is set to the child's nominated school.

Collecting children

Please collect children promptly at the end of their day at 3.00 pm as children tend to get upset when parents are late. If someone else is collecting your child, please write the details on the **Daily Sign In Sheet**. When you collect your child at the end of the day you must sign them out. All children must be signed out by the person collecting them.

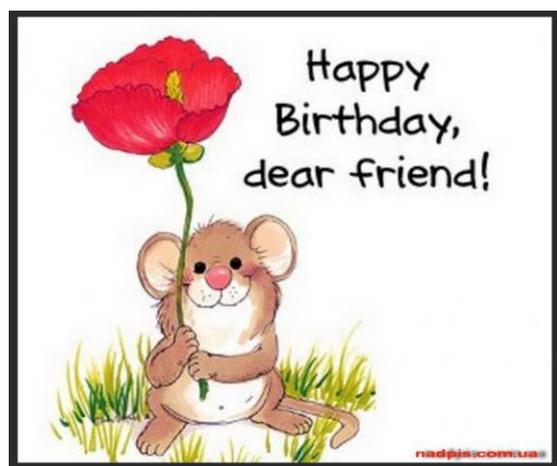
Parking

As with most other schools and preschools, parking can be difficult. There is limited off street parking on Snows Road. Please do not park on yellow lines on Snows Road as the council do issue parking fines frequently in this area. If we notice you arrive for pickup within the last 10 mins of the day and children's learning is not interrupted we will say an early 'Goodbye' to your child so that another parking space is made available.

Birthdays

We celebrate your child's birthday with a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" and fresh popcorn made on the day.

There is no need to send along additional treats for the children to share as there are several reasons why some children are not able to join in - the most alarming is that some children are highly allergic to certain foods. We also have Nutrition Guidelines based on Government Policies which are quite specific about the food and drink that can be distributed at preschool.



Communication

Please read the notice board regularly. You will receive newsletters fortnightly via email. If you are unable to print attachments hard copies will be available at the preschool. Please contact teachers if you have any information or concerns you would like to discuss. This can be done in person, by telephone or email. Open lines of communication leads to better learning outcomes for children who are at the centre of everything we do.

Stirling East Kindergarten logo clothing

We have a range of good quality children's tops available at a reasonable cost, all with the preschool logo on them.

T-shirt \$15.00, Hoodie \$35.00 and broad brimmed hats \$15.00

Fundraising

From time to time we do have fundraising events. You will receive details about these in due course.

Lost property

All items of clothing that are likely to be removed at preschool need to be named PLEASE!!! Please check the lost property box regularly located in the locker room.

Toys

Please do not bring toys from home to preschool. If a child has something special to show, bring it and show us at the beginning of a day and then take it home with you. It is distressing for children and parents to have toys lost or broken.

Sick children

Please call us if your child is sick and unable to attend preschool. If your child vomits in the morning before preschool or during the previous night, please keep him or her home for the day even if he or she wants to come. This is not a decision for children to make. When children are sick they need to be with their parents, and it is unfair to other families to send a sick child to preschool. We have neither the staff nor the facilities to give sick children the attention they need.

Known Conditions and Medications

It is now a requirement that children attending preschool requiring medication to be administered by staff must have a form completed and signed. All medication must be prescribed by a GP and be given to the staff to be safely stored away from children. Staff will only accept medication for non-contagious conditions and when the child is otherwise well.

Any child who may require hospitalisation due to a known illness or condition must have a **Health Care Plan** to ensure everyone's responsibilities are clearly defined. Please see the director if you have any further queries.

First Aid

At times children have accidents at preschool. Educators have an up-to-date first aid certificate and take great care when assisting your child. When an incident occurs during the day educators will place a first aid note into your parent pocket and speak with the parent or carer who collects your child. You will be notified by phone at the time of a more serious incident.

Immunisations

During an outbreak of some illnesses within our preschool community (specifically those preventable by immunisations) children who do not have up-to-date immunisations may be excluded from preschool for the duration of the outbreak in the interests of their own health and wellbeing.

Current information and immunisations are available from your doctor, local council, or Child & Youth Services (Ph: 8391 3922).

Contact details

Please always let us know if your contact details change in case we need to contact you urgently.

CAFHS health screenings

Every child has the opportunity to have a 4 year old health screening prior to commencing school. These screenings are conducted by nurses from the Child and Family Health Service. We will invite you when your child's check-up is due.

Special needs services

DfE provides access to a team of specialists in speech pathology, social work, psychology and special education, who are available to meet the needs of children or families who might be experiencing difficulties in specific areas. These services are free of charge through the department. If you have concerns about your child's development in any of these areas please see staff.

Early literacy and numeracy kits

These kits are available for parents to borrow to share with their children. Staff and parents have made them to enable parents and children to discover a love of language, literacy and numeracy. A lot of effort and expense has gone into making the kits so please take care of them and supervise their use so that pieces do not get lost. If something is missing please report it to one of the staff.

Kids Stuff

Playdough

2 cups of flour

1 cup salt

food colouring

2 tablespoons cream of tartar

2 tablespoons cooking oil

2 cups boiling water

Mix dry ingredients, add oil to water, mix then stir into dry ingredients. Knead well.

Gloop

Corn flour

Water

Food Colouring

Mix corn flour and cold water until smooth. Add food colouring.

Your notes