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partnership



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development

BALLARA PARK KINDERGARTEN



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Information Book 2017

Welcome to Ballara Park Kindergarten. As a new parent there will be some information you may need to know. This booklet will answer many of your questions. Staff are always happy to assist with any further enquiries. We hope your time with us will be happy and valuable.

Staff members are:

Marilyn Clark M.Ed., B.Ed., Dip. T.(ECE)

Director

Marg Taylor Dip.T. (ECE)

Teacher

Peta Wheatcroft B.Ed(ECE)/B.A.

Teacher

Barbara Lamont Cert III Chns Services

Early Childhood Worker

Lyn Evans Cert III Chns Services

Early Childhood Worker

Ballara Park Kindergarten is a Department for Education and Child Development centre

Kindergarten

Children are entitled to attend kindergarten for 15 hours per week for the year before they go to primary school. We have one intake per year in January. To be eligible to start in January your child must turn four on or before April 30th. Children who turn four on or after May 1st start kindergarten in January of the following year.

At Ballara Park Kindergarten we only offer sessions on a full day basis, so all children can attend two days per week. This is to ensure we have consistent groups that enable children to develop ongoing social relationships. It also allows us to plan and implement an educational program that is relevant for each group. One group of children attends on Mondays and Wednesdays and the other attends on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Kindergarten sessions are held Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 8.30am and 4.00pm for 4 terms per year. The terms correspond with school terms.

Children are asked to bring two healthy snacks, a packed lunch and a drink bottle of water each day.

Pre Entry

Ballara Park Kindergarten is no longer able to offer separate pre-entry sessions for children prior to starting kindergarten. We encourage families to come to playgroup sessions to enable children to become familiar with the environment before starting kindergarten. Orientation visits are organised when possible and families will be notified about them in the term prior to starting.

Playgroup

Playgroup for parents and children is held between 9.15 am and 10.45 am on Fridays. Please feel free to come along or phone the kindergarten for further information. Cost is \$3.00 per family per session.

Staff

The director and teachers at Ballara Park Kindergarten are all fully qualified teachers, with specialised training in early childhood education. Our Early Childhood Workers are also qualified and ably assist the teachers in providing the educational program. We also have a preschool support worker who works with children with additional needs and assists with all the children's learning.

Attendance

Your child will benefit from regular attendance at kindergarten. We would appreciate it if you could let us know if your child is going to be away.

Please note that we are not able to offer care outside the session times. Children cannot be left before 8.30am and must be picked up by 4.00pm.

If your child is not being collected from kindergarten by someone known to us, please let us know. We require written authority from you if another person is to collect your child. Please use the communication diary on the kitchen bench to let us know if your child is coming late, leaving early or being picked up by someone other than the usual pick-up person.

In the very hot weather some schools close early. Our sessions remain the same, but if you do wish to collect children early, you are welcome to do so.

Precautions against the spreading of colds, virus infections and contagious diseases are very necessary at kindergarten. Please keep children at home who are running a temperature, who are or have been vomiting, who have diarrhoea, or who have obvious nasal discharge. Please notify staff if your child is suffering from an infectious disease.

Finance

DECD is the administrative body for kindergartens in South Australia and it pays staff salaries plus a small sum of money each term to help cover operating costs. However, this is not sufficient to cover all repairs and replacements, painting and building maintenance, maintenance of the grounds and fencing, cleaning costs, gas, electricity, telephone and water and the purchase, replacement and repair of equipment and materials used by the children during their kindergarten year.

The support of parents is necessary to meet the cost of new equipment and materials. A portion of this is obtained through the amenity fee paid each term and the balance by fundraising.

Kindergarten fees for 2017 are \$170.00 per term. We also often include the cost of the term's excursion (usually \$15.00 or less) with the termly invoice. Fees can be made in cash or by electronic bank transfer.

Toys and Belongings

We discourage children from bringing toys and belongings from home. However we sometimes ask children to bring something related to our curriculum topic and we will always send a note home or include information in our newsletter to explain our request to families.

Sun Smart Policy

Children are required to wear brimmed hats for outside play in Terms 1 and 4. During these terms we ask that sunscreen is applied before coming to kindergarten in the mornings and we reapply sunscreen at lunchtime. Please advise staff if your child needs to use a particular type of sunscreen. Hats with kindergarten logo are available for purchase if required.

Student-free Days

We have four student-free days over the year to enable staff to attend training and professional development. At least three of these days are held on a Tuesday or Thursday so that children who miss sessions on Mondays due to public holidays are not disadvantaged.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in Kindergarten sessions is actively encouraged. The parent – child – teacher relationship is of benefit to all. Please speak to staff if you would like to help during sessions or if you can offer support in other ways. Information about our current and planned educational program is always displayed and available and we love to have input from families to enrich our program. If you have things that would be of interest to children (artefacts, photos, unusual pets, etc) or can do things (talk about your job or a particular interest, play an instrument, etc) please let us know as we would love to have you contribute to our program. We also appreciate parent help when we go on excursions or do other special activities. Please note that all volunteers at the kindergarten (including Governing Council members) must have a current clearance letter from DCSI and must have undertaken a reporting abuse and neglect training session. Each family is requested to take a turn of doing the kindy washing (tea towels, smocks etc.) and to do a weekend clean up of the grounds and garden – this does not include mowing the lawn and all tools and equipment are provided.

The Governing Council

This Governing Council (Management Committee) is composed of interested parents. They, with the Director, are responsible for the management of funds and for the purchase, maintenance and safety of the grounds, buildings and equipment. They are also responsible for developing and/or overseeing Centre policies that comply with DECD and national regulations. An Annual General Meeting is held each year when the Chairperson and Director present reports on the previous year. All parents are notified and invited to attend. Office bearers are elected at this meeting or the one immediately following. All parents are invited to consider joining our Governing Council which meets once or twice a term at a mutually agreed time. New members are welcome at any time. Please inform the Director if you would like to join.

Special Services

Staff are able to refer children to the DECD Special Services Team which is comprised of special education advisors, speech pathologists, social workers and psychologists. This is in consultation with the Director and parents.

Dental

The School Dental Clinic at Marion is available for pre-school children if required. There is usually no cost involved for their services. Please ask staff for more information and contact details.

Medical

We encourage families to ensure their children undertake their four year old health and development check. All children are offered a free health/development screening by Child and Family Health Services prior to starting school. Screenings are conducted at the CaFHS office at Marion Shopping Centre. Families will be notified of these opportunities by notes in pockets.

Photographs

A professional photographer is engaged to take individual and group photographs of the children once a year. There is no obligation to purchase.

Parent Information

Each family has a named pocket for notices, newsletters etc. Please check your pocket regularly. Please check the notice board (white board) daily as well. Invoices for fees are put into pockets during the first two weeks of term. We also have a parent information shelf just inside the door where you will find community information as well.

Healthy Eating

While we actively encourage children to make healthy choices for lunch, we do not have a policy about what children can or cannot bring in their lunch boxes. However, when we have children with severe allergies, we will ask that certain foods or additives are not brought. Please do not send nuts or nut products at any time. We do suggest that children bring lunches that are nutritious and are in manageable containers that children can access independently.

Please send healthy food for morning and afternoon snacks – a piece of fruit or a savoury snack. Please do not send sweet biscuits, cake or sweets for snack times.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays by singing to children, blowing out candles on our (pretend) cake and giving special birthday stickers. Given our healthy eating policy and the rising incidence of food allergies, we discourage children from bringing birthday treats to share with other children unless negotiated with staff beforehand. Please advise us if your religious beliefs preclude your child from celebrating birthdays or other festivals.

Clothing

We ask that children bring a spare set of clothes in their bags each day. We also recommend that children wear comfortable, easily manageable clothing that is able to be washed. As we tend to do messy activities, often involving water, sand, mud and paint, 'best' clothes are not well suited.

Shoes also need to be practical and manageable, preferably with a non-slip sole for safety when running and climbing.

Infectious Diseases

Please notify staff if your child contracts any infectious disease and please note the following requirements of exclusion.

Measles (Morbilli)

Sufferers are excluded for not less than 7 days from the appearance of the rash or until a medical certificate of recovery is produced.

German Measles (Rubella)

Sufferers are excluded for not less than 7 days from the appearance of the rash or until a medical certificate of recovery has been obtained. Contacts need not be excluded.

Mumps (Epidemic or Infective Parotitis)

Sufferers are excluded for not less than 14 days or for at least one week after the complete subsidence of all glandular swelling, whichever is the longer period. Suspected sufferers are excluded for 2 days.

Chicken Pox (Varicella)

Sufferers are excluded for not less than 7 days or if the skin is not clear. Suspected sufferers are excluded for 3 days.

Impetigo (School Sores)

Sufferers are excluded until the sores have healed, or a certificate of treatment has been obtained.

Conjunctivitis (Ophthalmia)

Sufferers are excluded till eyes are clear, ie. redness and signs of infection (discharge) have gone.

Head Lice

Parents are encouraged to inspect their children's hair and report any case to the kindergarten. Appropriate treatment is essential before returning to kindergarten. Please note that head lice infestations often recur and may require more than one treatment.

Please see staff for information about other illnesses.

The kindergarten will advise families of any cases of infectious diseases or illnesses within the centre.

Policies

The centre's policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and endorsed by the Governing Council. A copy of each of our policies is kept in a folder in the parent information area. If you would like a copy of any of our policies, we will happily supply you with one.

Quality Assurance

This centre conforms to quality assurance measures applied by DECD and the National Quality Framework. We are assessed in seven quality areas on a three yearly basis by the regulatory authority. We are currently assessed at the highest level of 'exceeding National Standards'. We have an annual Quality Improvement Plan and this, along with our Annual Report, is available from the parent information area.

Donations

We are always grateful to receive donations of unused paper and cardboard for art and craft projects and packaging boxes for collage. Other items, like plastic bottle tops and lids, corks, softwood off-cuts for carpentry, small tiles and large appliance containers are also gratefully received. Please check with staff before placing items at activity tables.

CURRICULUM

Our educational program is based on the principles and practices of the national Early Years Learning Framework “Belonging, Being, Becoming”. A number of other frameworks and approaches also inform our work. Please see or ask for a copy of our booklet “About Our Educational Program” for further information, or talk to staff. We are more than happy to make relevant documents and information available to you.

The learning outcomes for the Early Years Framework are:

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy are integral to all activities and experiences we offer. Literacy and numeracy development in young children is best fostered through purposeful play activities rather than paper exercises and drills.

While we do provide some explicit instruction in both literacy and numeracy, we focus on providing activities that develop children's skills and knowledge in the areas of oral language, phonemic awareness, visual acuity, pattern awareness, number and space applications and physical development. Please see our “Literacy and Young Children” and “Numeracy and Young Children” booklets for further information.

Our learning program usually follows an inquiry based on children's questions, a project or a topic in which the children are interested. We encourage families to become involved in our program and contributions to the children's learning are always welcomed.

Information about our educational program is displayed in the library room. We also put information on the whiteboard on the verandah and we include updates in our newsletters.

We also put information about our daily activities on our Facebook page. Please do not hesitate to speak to staff at anytime about our educational program.

Assessment and Reporting:

During the year at kindergarten your child will be 'assessed' on entry and again during their last term. We look at development in the cognitive, social and physical areas. The findings of the initial assessment are discussed with parents during their first term of preschool. During their year at kindergarten, children's skills and knowledge are continually observed in a formative and informal manner. This informs our planning so that we can program according to children's needs. All the information we collect about your child's learning is recorded in their individual learning plan. You are welcome to look at this at any time on request to the teaching staff. In addition, you are invited to meet with the staff on a formal basis at a parent-teacher interview to discuss your child's progress.

At the end of your child's year parents receive a comprehensive statement of learning on what has been achieved. With your permission, this is passed on to your child's school.

We also gather a collection of work samples and digital photographs of your child's year that is given to your child when they leave for school. This portfolio also contains termly summaries of the learning that has taken place over your child's year at kindergarten.

Please note that all 'assessments' are done in a relaxed, fun manner during games and activities and are not at all uncomfortable or threatening for children. If you have any queries or concerns about your child's development or behaviour during the year or would like to share information about your child, please speak to staff at any time.

Daily Timetable

While we run a flexible program that is responsive to children's needs and optimises learning opportunities, a typical day would look like...

8.30am – Kindergarten session begins. Parents are encouraged to participate in an activity with children on arrival.

9.05 am – Mat time. This is a large group time where the kindergarten teachers involve the children in various activities that may include discussions about the current curriculum focus, songs and games, etc. We involve the children in planning the day's activities.

9.25 am – Outside/Inside Play. Activities are set up for children to explore, manipulate and experience so that they develop their learning of new skills, knowledge and ideas through their play. Children are encouraged and facilitated to participate in activities to support their individual needs.

Mid morning – Fruit time. This is a social development time and children are expected to sit as a group at this time. It is a time when communication often occurs between children who do not necessarily choose each other as play partners. On Mondays and Tuesdays children eat their own fruit and on Wednesdays and Thursday we share fruit.

Inside/Outside play continues.

During the morning we also have small group activities which more specifically support the development of skills and knowledge including literacy and numeracy skills and are grouped more according to abilities and needs. The small group time includes a shared story reading time.

12.15 pm Lunch time. Children eat their packed lunch at tables. This is preceded by and followed by a restful activity

1.30 pm Inside/Outside play

3.00pm Group activity time followed by snack time. Children eat their own snack.

3.30pm Pack up time. The children are encouraged to help with this as part of their social development.

3.45pm Group time. We usually end the day with a story, songs and a game.

3.55pm Farewell.