



Gawler and District College B-12
Children's Centre
for Early Childhood
Development and Parenting



Information Booklet For Preschool Families 2017



Vision Statement



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for Early Childhood
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Our Philosophy

C.H.I.L.D.R.E.N.
**AND FAMILIES ARE AT THE CENTRE
OF EVERYTHING WE DO**

Care	Caring for, and nurturing children, families, staff, volunteers, and community.
Honesty	Developing and maintaining trusting relationships.
Integrity	Doing the right thing even when no one is looking.
Learning	Supporting and maximizing everyone's potential.
Diversity	Valuing and respecting diversity, individuality and embracing differences.
Respect	Recognising the worth of individuals.
Equity	Striving for quality programs that provide equitable opportunities and outcomes.
Nutrition	Encouraging and promoting healthy eating.

Children's Centre's Focus

- Providing high quality early learning and care;
- Supporting parents in their critical role of promoting their child's learning, health, social and emotional wellbeing and life opportunities;
- Supporting the child within their family and community context;
- Inclusive of children with different abilities & different economic, cultural and linguistic circumstances;
- Prevention and early intervention; and
- Teamwork – building a team of professionals and volunteers, working together to promote success and opportunities for children, families and communities.

Along with preschool sessions, the Children's Centre offers lots of opportunities for you to be involved in programs such as playgroups, morning teas and parenting workshops, as well as access to health and child development specialists for your child.

What your child needs to bring to Preschool:

Food

Please pack a snack and lunch separately in NAMED containers. Snack stays in their bag and lunch needs to be placed on the kitchen bench for staff to put in the fridge.

- **Please Do Not** send food such as chips, chocolate, lollies or similar items as the Centre encourages healthy eating habits.
- **Please Do Not** send popcorn as it has been identified as a choking hazard for young children.
- **Please Do Not send nuts or products containing nuts.** Some children can be highly sensitive to these products. We are a 'Nut Aware' centre.
- Children will need a **NAMED** container or plastic zip-lock bag containing fruit, vegetables, cheese etc. for **snack time**.
- A healthy sandwich/wrap/roll or similar for **lunch**.

Drink

- Children will need to bring their own drink bottle. Please only send water in your child's drink bottle.
- We also provide good quality drinking water from a refrigerated filtered water system. It is always available to the children, who often enjoy accessing it themselves.

Clothes

- Comfortable, practical, sun-safe clothing - no singlet/tank-tops/dresses with shoe-string straps (**all named please**).
- Comfortable, practical footwear suitable for active play (**all named please**). Thongs are not appropriate footwear for preschool.
- Clothes that your child can manage themselves - in case they have to go to the toilet in a hurry.
- Spare clothes including extra underwear and socks (**all named please**); in case they have a toileting accident or get wet from playing in water etc.

Be Sun-safe

- Apply sunscreen before your child comes to preschool
- Remember to bring your child's hat - **No hat, no outdoor play**. The Centre will supply each child with a named sun-safe hat when they start preschool.

Current Gawler & District College B-12 Children's Centre Staff

Director: Christine Townsend

Community Development Coordinator: Kim Wright

Family Services Coordinator: Jayne Rayment

Administration:

- Helen Schild (Finance)
- Tina Alchin (Reception)

Please refer to the photo display on the windows as you enter the preschool for our current list of:

- **Red Group Teachers**
- **Blue Group Teachers**
- **Early Childhood Workers**
- **Occasional Care Workers**
- **Allied Health Staff**

Playgroup

The Children's Centre offers various playgroups throughout the week. Please ask at the Reception Desk for more details if you are interested in attending any of the playgroups run at the Centre.

Occasional Care

This is a quality, local, short term care service for children. There is one session available for children under 2 years of age and 4 sessions for children over 2 years of age. Depending on the number of preschool enrolments, the sessions may be operated within the preschool or the Crèche room on the Community side of the centre. Children are able access **one** of the available sessions per week. The primary target group is the children of parent/s not in the workforce and not accessing other services. Occasional Care provides a break for parents at home to give them time to themselves and the opportunity to attend other commitments. When the service is running at full capacity there is a priority of access that needs to be followed. Children will be placed on a waiting list and notified when a place becomes available.

Full fee is \$5.00 per session or \$1.50 per session if you have a Health Care Card. Please send along healthy food for a snack, a hat and a spare change of clothes (including extra underwear and socks). If your child is in nappies, there are facilities for changing but spare nappies and wipes must be provided by you. All wet/soiled clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and put in your child's bag.

Preschool

Pre-school aged children are entitled to 15 hours of preschool per week for four terms before they start school, (from the beginning of each year).

Fees

Preschool fees are vital to the running of our centre as we are not fully funded by the Government. Not paying your fees means less paper, paint, new equipment, toys and educational resources for your child and other children to use at the centre. The Director and the Governing Council review the fee structure as part of our Budget Planning. Fees for 2017 are:

PRESCHOOL:

2 and a half days (15 hours) = **\$115.00** (Per Term)

Total fees for the full year = \$460.00

Preschool fees are to be paid in the first week of each term

OCCASIONAL CARE:

Per session = **\$5.00** or **\$1.50** (with a Health Care Card)

Fees are to be paid for each session even if your child is absent

Payment is to be made at the beginning of your child's session

You may also choose to pay for the whole term up-front.

We do not have facilities to provide change so please provide the correct amount when making cash payments. **Envelopes** for cash payments are provided at the Reception Desk (next to the Fee Box). Please place envelopes containing fees in the Fee Box or hand directly to staff at the reception desk. **Internet payment** details are on your invoice and **EFTPOS** is available at the Reception Desk. If you receive a Centerlink payment, you can also arrange to pay your fees using **Centrpay** – a free direct bill paying service. Application forms are available at the Reception Desk and also at Centerlink.

Attendance

Regular attendance at preschool is very important. Our programme is developmental and builds upon what happens each day so regular attendance will help to ensure that their learning, understanding and skills are developed. The preschool is currently funded on attendances not enrolments therefore many absences could impact the staffing allocated for the following term.

Please phone the Children's Centre if your child is or will be absent for any reason. Notification of absence as soon as possible would be appreciated as we are accountable for the service we offer and are required to keep statistics relating to children's attendance etc.

Communication with families

This is done in a variety of ways but **most importantly please chat to staff** particularly if you are unsure of anything or have any concerns. We also appreciate feedback on positive things that have happened too. We strive to sort out most issues with families however, in the event that you feel that this has not happened, our website has a link to the Grievance Policy and Procedures that need to be followed. Please keep all contact details along with those of your emergency contacts up to date.

- Your child has a **named pigeon hole near the entry door**. Please check this every day your child attends preschool. Newsletters and other written communication containing curriculum information, important dates, notification of meetings and other information relating to the preschool will be placed in your child's pigeon hole throughout the term.
- If you have requested to have your newsletter emailed to you, please look out for a 'hard copy' which will be displayed on the information window above the sign in/out sheets near the gate. Your newsletter will be emailed to the address you provided in your enrolment pack. **Please notify staff at the reception desk if your email address or any other contact details have changed.**
- Other information that may be of interest is displayed in the **Reception area** and can also be found on the Gawler & District College B-12 Children's Centre **Face Book Page** and **Website** (see back page for details).

Collection of Children

Please notify us of any change to your normal collection arrangements. At any time where someone other than the person who usually collects your child will be picking them up, please write the person's name in the space provided on the sign in sheets. If we haven't met this person before, we would appreciate if you would also tell us. We will not let children to go with others without your permission.

At the end of the session your child will be in a group situation and will be expected to stay with the group until one of the teachers have sighted the adult they are to go home with and said goodbye to them. If you do need your child to leave early, please phone the Children's Centre in advance to let us know so staff can assist your child to gather their belongings and be ready to leave. Please come into the Reception area and ask staff at the front desk to collect your child as this will be less disruptive to the other children's learning.

Lost Property

We greatly stress the importance of **NAMING EVERYTHING** your child brings to preschool. Clearly named items make it much easier for staff to identify and return! In your "Welcome Pack", you will find information about ordering name-labels for your child's belongings. Please ask at the reception desk if you have lost, misplaced or not received this information.

The Lost Property box is located near the sign-in/out sheets under the verandah and is often placed in the reception area for you to check through while you are waiting to drop off your child. Please check it regularly.

Health

Notify staff **immediately** of any contagious illnesses e.g. chicken pox, conjunctivitis, school sores, worms, head lice etc. Your child will not be able to return to the centre until he/she is completely cleared or treated (as is the case for head lice).

Illness

Children who are unwell must be kept home, especially if they have fresh colds or contagious illnesses. If children become unwell whilst at preschool, they will be cared for until a parent or emergency contact person can collect them.

Medical Records

It is very important that preschool staff are notified immediately of any changes in your child's medical history. In particular, we need to know of any medication your child has taken recently or is required to take, and of any allergies you are aware that your child may have.

If your child has **any** type of health condition which they need medication for, (such as Asthma, Anaphylaxis or any other illness or condition requiring antibiotics or medication to be administered during the time your child will be at preschool or Occasional Care), **you will need to provide a Health Plan from your child's doctor.**

If your child has been diagnosed with Asthma, we require a specific "Asthma care plan for schools". We have copies of this form available here. You will need to have this form completed by your doctor. **YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND PRESCHOOL or OCCASIONAL CARE UNTIL WE HAVE A FULLY COMPLETED COPY OF THEIR ACTION PLAN ALONG WITH ANY MEDICATION REQUIRED.**

For safety purposes, no medication is to be left in children's bags - all medication and Health Plans are to be kept in the First Aid cupboard in the kitchen. Your child's photo will be on the outside of the kitchen bench cupboard doors (inside the kitchen) for quick and easy reference by staff.

First Aid

All preschool staff are trained in First Aid. If an accident occurs, written notification will be given to you when you collect your child from preschool. The reporting staff member will sign this. You are asked to also sign the report to acknowledge that you have received the information.

Birthday Celebrations

For health reasons (such as children's allergies), Cultural/Religious reasons and as part of our Healthy Eating Policy we ask that you do not bring in food such as cakes, slices or lollies etc. for children's birthday's. A healthy alternative is to send a fruit platter for the children to share. Please see a staff member if you need further information or ideas.

Site Learning Plan

Staff and Governing Council develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in accordance with National Quality Standard (NQS) guidelines. There is always a copy for parents to access and the Director is happy to meet with families who would like to deepen their understanding of this and what it means for the site and their child.

Curriculum

In line with the National Quality Standards, staff program for children's learning and development using the 'Early Years Learning Framework 'Belonging, Being and Becoming' (EYLF or BBB). A copy of the EYLF and documentation of our programming are always on display for families to access. If you would like further information, please ask one of the educators about this documentation and what it means for your child.

Policies

The Department of Education and Children's Development is the service provider and as such, policies and procedures are provided to us from them. Please refer to the website (www.decd.sa.gov.au) for details about these. We also have some policies and procedures that staff and Governing Council develop that are specifically related to our site. These are located in the center's policy folder which is accessible to families and also on the Centre's website. Staff will be happy to chat to you about these and the DECD policies.

Special Services

Through DECD (Department of Education and Children's Development) and Allied Health we may be able to provide support for children with speech delays, developmental delays, behavioural needs, emotional support and support for the family.

Work Health & Safety

The centre is governed by the Work Health and Safety act. We require that any person working (voluntarily or otherwise) at the centre needs to work in a **safe and responsible manner**. ALL VISITORS remaining at the centre in excess of half an hour are required to have a DSCI Criminal History check, complete volunteer training, "SIGN IN" and wear a badge.

Governing Council

The Director consults with Governing Council who is responsible for the financial running and implementation of DECD policies as well as any centre development.

Being on the Council can be fun. Some areas of interest are fundraising, maintenance, playgroup and education. The Annual General Meeting is held in March each year to elect members and office bearers for the year.

Fundraising

Help is always needed with fundraising events. If you would like to help in any way please talk to the Community Development Co-ordinator. You do not have to be on the Governing Council to help with fundraising events.

Car parking

DECD do not provide car parking specifically for parents. As such, there is limited car parking space available at the Children's Centre so you may need to park on the street and walk into the Centre. There is a walkway across the car park from the pedestrian gate to the Children's Centre building. Please take extra care when driving across the walkway with your car - be aware that young children may come out from behind parked cars to walk across. Please be patient, take care and ensure your child's safety in the car park by watching them at all times.

Community Development Coordinator

Community Development Coordinators' knowledge and understanding of community strengths, needs and aspirations assists Children's Centres to provide and coordinate services that build on what already exists, are flexible and locally tailored, and engage families.

Community Development Coordinators:

- Connect families with services and supports that will best meet their needs
- Support families to increase their knowledge and skills about parenting and childhood development
- Support parents to develop personally and build their leadership skills
- Support families to link up with other families and be involved in community activities and programs
- Encourage families and staff to have a strong voice about the programs and services offered
- Help children and families access high quality learning, health and support services.

Community Development Coordinators work in partnership with other agencies to offer a range of programs and services including:

- *Playgroups* for parents and carers including, Aboriginal families, dads, step-parents, grandparents, foster carers, family day care educators, refugees and newly arrived families and children. Weekend sessions may also be offered
- *Parenting programs* including, child development, early literacy, song time, music and movement, baby massage, support groups and cooking
- *Community events* e.g., family fun days, community lunches, school holiday programs, cultural events, celebrations and barbeques
- *Personal development* to enhance literacy, career pathways, skill development, volunteering, TAFE and SACE studies.

Community Development Coordinators plan and coordinate family and community programs that enhance parenting and community capacity. Children's Centres have a Community Development Coordinator who works closely with the Family Services Coordinator (if appointed).

Day-to-day operational management of Community Development Coordinators is provided by the Centre Director. As members of the Children's Centre Leadership Team, Community Development Coordinators contribute their knowledge of community development, the local community and strategies to increase parents/caregivers active participation in the centre and in the broader community. They are responsible for convening and chairing a Parent Engagement Group to facilitate parent/carers and community voices in decision making processes within the centre.

Family Services Coordinator

Family Services Coordinators work alongside long day care, early childhood education and school staff, health workers and other services to help families develop and maintain safe, caring, connected and resilient relationships.

Family Services Coordinators support parents to access the assistance they need, when they need it, within their own community.

Family Services Coordinators:

- Provide individual and family counselling to help with personal issues, feelings and behaviours
- Connect families to the most appropriate services e.g., mental health, housing, drug and alcohol, domestic violence, provide follow up, advocacy and work in partnership with the family and other services
- Run parenting programs, such as the Circle of Security and Bringing up Great Kids, with a focus on parenting, relationships, social and emotional wellbeing and trauma
- Work with Families SA to assist children in out-of-home care to be either reunified with their parents or to facilitate positive connections with their parents and extended family.

In addition they:

- Build local networks and connect families with services and supports that will best meet their needs
- Work with families to increase their parenting capacity and early childhood development skills and knowledge, specifically in understanding the importance of relationships for children
- Encourage and support families to actively participate within their community
- Increase children and families' access to a range of interconnected, high quality learning, health and support services
- Contribute to building Children's Centres expertise in responding to children experiencing the effects of trauma, abuse and neglect.

Family Services Coordinators are involved in interagency partnerships and promote shared agency responses to vulnerable families. They also provide advice and expertise on the effects of trauma, abuse and neglect to help increase the capacity and expertise of Children's Centres in responding to vulnerable children. Please speak to a staff member if you require this service.

Allied Health Program

The Allied Health in Children's Centres program primarily provides speech pathology and occupational therapy (OT). These two disciplines have been identified as having key roles in providing early intervention services to promote optimal child development outcomes. These roles complement other staff employed in Children's Centres, including Community Development Coordinators and Family Services Coordinators.

The Allied Health staff share specialised knowledge that supports Children's Centre staff in identifying children at risk of developmental delay and support staff and parents in promoting children's optimal development. Speech pathologists assist with all aspects of communication including speech, language, literacy, signs, symbols and gestures and can also assist with issues around eating and drinking. Occupational therapists support children's optimal participation in and performance of daily activities. This may involve strengthening of play skills, fine and gross motor skills, concentration and self-regulation skills. This is achieved by providing adaptations to the environment, modification of tasks, opportunities to practice skills, educating and supporting significant others to support children in these tasks.

Allied Health workers aim to build the capacity of staff, parents/carers and the community of the centre by providing prevention and early intervention services such as:

- *Centre staff support*: one-to-one consultation and professional development sessions on topics such as sensory processing and strategies for assisting children with behavioural, emotional and sensory regulation, resource development, screening, assessments and programming assistance
- *Parenting programs and support* including, parenting groups, one-to-one consultation, strategies for assisting children with toileting, feeding, play, speech and language skills and provision of written information/brochures and assistance with referral pathways
- *Children's group programs*: e.g. Speech, Occupational Therapy (OT) and social skills groups
- *Centre events and support of community development programs* such as, supported playgroups and involvement in the family contact program.

Useful Websites

Useful Websites	
Department for Education and Child Development (DECD)	www.decd.sa.gov.au
G&DC B-12 Children's Centre Website	www.gawlercc.sa.edu.au
Great Start – Everyday learning for numeracy & literacy	www.greatstart.sa.edu.au
Kids Helpline	www.kidshelp.com.au
Parenting Playground	www.parentingplayground.org.au
Parenting SA	www.parenting.sa.gov.au
SA Directory of Community Services	www.sacommunity.org