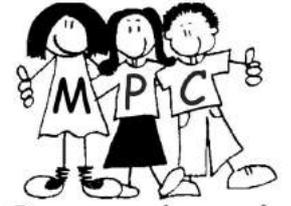




Mitcham



Preschool  
Centre

## Mitcham Pre School Centre Newsletter

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Term 1  
Newsletter 2

### Starting preschool

What a fabulous week at kindy we had for our first week of the year. 79 children commenced preschool on the first 2 days, making it a very busy time for everyone. This year, we experienced extreme heat and humidity, in our first week, which was hard to deal with at times. However, the children settled really well when considering it was their first day in a new place, they didn't know routines and were only vaguely familiar with the staff. Some children did know each other from child care or friendships outside the centre but there were many children, who didn't know anyone. What a fabulous effort in coping. There were a few children who did feel teary when their parents left, but they settled well with the support of the staff. Children are amazing..... they are more resilient than sometimes we give them credit for!!!

When starting preschool, there are so many adjustments, new routines and rules to learn, people to get to know. You can equate starting preschool & school with starting a new job. It can be very overwhelming. For example your child is

- Learning the teachers names

- Learning the children's names
- Following new routines (when is it mat time, when do we eat snack, when is lunch time, when can you play outside, when you do you pack your bag to go home etc, etc)
- Learning that we play inside until we have had large group time / small story groups.
- Sitting & listening when on the mat (understanding when they are allowed to talk on the mat and when they need to listen to adults)
- Making choices about what they play with
- Making connections with other children
- Sharing, turn taking and working cooperatively.
- Working in a group at mat time
- Learning where they put their drink bottle, lunch box each morning.
- Learning when do they eat their snack & when do they have their lunch (this has been confusing for some children as they want what is in the lunch box during the morning!! Lucky lunch boxes are put away in the crates )
- Learning that they can get a drink from their water bottles at any time—not just when an adult suggests it.
- Learning lots of new rules such as walking inside, up the steps and down the slippery dip, hats on outside etc
- Understanding about being a good friend eg friends are kind & caring. Friends do not hurt each other
- Learning about our behavior strategy program—"A & B choices" Going to the toilet independently
- Remembering to wash their hands before eating snack & lunch.
- Helping pack up
- Learning new songs and games

(cont over)



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## Starting preschool (cont)

- Learning to get help from an adult at kindy
- Having to pack their bag at the end of the day and put it on the verandah.

These are just a few snippets of the things that happen everyday at preschool that involves learning and understanding. No wonder they are exhausted at the end of the day!!

You should be very proud of your child/ children. They have been amazing!!

Over the next couple of weeks the children may continue to be very tired as they continue to adapt to their new environment. They will eventually become more resilient and adapt to full days and the many

## Friendship lists

A friendship list form was attached to the front of the first newsletter (placed in your child's name pocket).

Forms are to be returned by this **Monday February 10th**. Forms are placed in the wooden box, located in the alcove near the kitchen.

The friendship list will be distributed soon.

## This week at kindy

This week, we continue to assist children in settling into routines, as well as learn the rules of kindy. Once the children are settled, we will commence our focus of learning.

To support our learning this week we will have inside

- Home corner with Asian adjuncts (Chinese New Year) (dramatic play)
- Number stamping (Numeracy)
- Matching objects to numbered plates (numeracy)
- Playdough with rollers & cutters (sensory)
- Mark making table—drawing & writing (fine motor / literacy)
- Tree house & small people (dramatic play)
- Fairy small world play (dramatic play)
- Dome with pillows, animals & books (literacy, sensory)
- Sensory / calm area—range of objects to explore (sensory)
- Tracking toys (tracking skills)

Outside we will have

- Number hunts with 2 entry levels (1-5) & (1-10) - numeracy skills

- Box construction (problem solving)
- Cutting table—making paper soup (fine motor)
- Trampoline (gross motor)
- Hammock (sensory)
- Black tray with sand & dinosaurs (sensory)
- Construction set (problem solving)
- Farm yard & animals (dramatic play)
- Digging patch with diggers (sensory)
- Train track on table (social skills)
- Office dramatic play under shed (dramatic play / communication)
- Sandpit with bucket, spades (sensory / gross motor skills)
- Water trough with jugs, funnels & cylinders (numeracy)

In our small groups this week we will

- Continue to Focus on rules
- Take our name cards to support skills in recognising & writing our name independently (literacy / fine motor)
- Draw a picture of self / write our name

Our numeracy focus is number recognition through number stamping, activity numeracy table and number hunt.

It is a busy week at kindy.

## Information to the APP

Over the next week a lot of information will be sent the APP / email including

- term 1 curriculum plan
- term 1 overview
- term 1 calendar—information about each event will be available closer to the date. Please keep the calendar handy
- Information on the Annual General Meeting.

Hard copies of these notes will also be placed in your pockets.

I will also be updating the policies etc on the APP.

## Catch ups

The first week of preschool was very busy supporting 38/39 children in each group to settle in to routines. It meant that at the beginning of the day and at the time of dismissing children, there were very limited opportunities to talk with parents about how their child is going. The staff's priority is to manage the children eg help them with their morning routines, separate successfully from their parents and then settle into the morning mat time routine. At the end of the day, we needed to support the children on the mat as we farewell each child individually.

As the children become more familiar and comfortable at preschool, it will "free staff up" to have those conversations with parents. I imagine this will happen over this coming week.

If at anytime you have concerns (or want to share information with us or "check in" with how your child is going), and we seem really busy, you are most welcome to phone and speak with me or send me an email. I will always respond at the end of the day and schedule a time to chat with you.

Later in the term, (after week 6) Maddie, Suzi or myself will schedule a time with each parent, for a parent / educator conversation. More information will be in the next newsletter.

## A message from Maddie

Hi! My name is Maddie and I have been teaching for 5 years. I am passionate about building strong relationships with children and families as that is the key to a positive and enriching educational experience. I have been teaching up in Port Augusta for the 5 years but am originally from Willunga, so very excited to be back with family and friends (and good beaches). I live with my partner Josh and two dogs, Jess and Diego. I am very close with my family and have twin nephews named Zach and Lucas who have just started school! When I'm not teaching I spend my time travelling the world, with family and friends and at any beach down South! I look forward to teaching and learning with you and your children this year.

## Child & Youth Health Checks

Each term we have 4 year old health checks run by the Child and Youth Health nurse. Term 1 health checks will be held on

**Monday February 24th** at the preschool in our Numeracy room.

- There are 6 places for gold group children & 6 for blue group children.
- children must be 4 years old
- an adult must be present for the screening (Preschool staff cannot take the children)

The purpose of the health checks is to primarily check children's eye sight & hearing and some developmental areas (eg fine motor) prior to starting school.

If you would like to book a time for a health check, please come and see me. It will be a case of first in will have first option, but there will be other dates in the following 3 terms. Alternatively, an appointment can be made through your local CYHS clinic.

## A message from Suzi

Hello kindy friends, my name is Suzi and I am very excited to be starting work as a new teacher at Mitcham Preschool this year.

I have been an Early Childhood and Primary Teacher for nearly ten years, but have just returned to teaching after taking four years out to complete a Masters degree and have my two children. My husband and I are from the UK, but we fell in love with Adelaide when we came to visit my sister-in-law who lives here. We moved here nearly five years ago and we've recently become true Aussie Citizens, which we're very proud of!

My husband and I are both teachers and so when we're not talking programming and classes, we spend most of our time raising our two children, Sienna, who is three and Sebastian, who is one. We particularly enjoy family beach visits, bike rides and exploring all Adelaide's fantastic playgrounds! In the rare times to myself, I enjoy escaping at the gym and reading a good novel, however, we've just bought a house and so now my spare time is spent planning and shopping to make the place our own.

I'm looking forward to getting to know you all and sharing your learning over the course of the year and I know we're all going to have lots of fun.

Suzi Westman

## Children's work folders

There are many ways that we collect information / data about your child's progress at preschool. These include photos, collecting work examples, writing learning stories. We have a system of storing this work, which is accessible to both children and families. In the main room (in our quiet corner), we have set up a folder for each child. Your child's folder is clearly labeled and a photo has been placed in the front of the folder. Folders are stored on our shelving in gold or blue group. Work examples in the folders will include information about the intended learning outcomes for the activity, which are based on our curriculum "The Early Years Learning Framework" and / or the "Preschool literacy & numeracy indicators"

Parents can look through the folder with their child. The best time to do this will be at the beginning and / or end of the day. We have organized the room with chairs for you to sit in, browse and discuss the work in the folder. Obviously, it is early in the year, so there are limited work examples in the folders.

However, as we move through the term (& year), the folders will evolve. Feel free to come and see your child's folder, even at this early stage. We will talk with the children this week, about their folders.

*This week at preschool the children will draw a picture of themselves for their folder. This will be their first piece of work in their folder. It is amazing to see just how much their skills develop over the year. So at the end of this week, come and have a look with your child.*

## AGM

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**INFORMATION WILL BE OUT THIS WEEK.**

Please keep the date free.

**Monday February 17th,**  
**7pm for a 7.30pm start.**

## Photo board

I have set up the photo board of each child's photo, in the passageway.

The photos are a great way for your child to recognise their friends & peers. It can also help you to work out who your child plays with and make connections with other parents.

Enjoy the photos!

## Term 1 Fees

Term 1 fees notice will be placed in your child's name pocket this week. (located in the passageway)

Fees for term 1 are \$220.00 which includes fundraising & excursion levies) Fees are due for payment by

**Friday February 21st**

If you have any queries about the fees please do not hesitate to speak with me. All conversations will be in strictest confidence.

Fees can be paid by cash or direct debit to the pre-school account

BSB 105-084

Account no: 32323 1040

## Hot cross buns

It is hot cross bun season but we class hot cross buns as "sometimes food" due to their sugar content, especially the chocolate chip ones. Therefore we **DO NOT** have hot cross buns in our nutrition policy. Hot cross buns are great for after preschool / weekend treats but please do not send them to kindy for snack or lunch. Many thanks for your support.

## Drinking at preschool

We had a hot start to the term, last week with some cooler weather due this week. In any weather, but especially when it is warm / hot, we give the children lots of reminders during the day, to drink water. We stop and have regular drink breaks eg before / after mat times, before & during / after lunch. Even though we remind children constantly to drink, some will just have a sip at a time. We remind them to have long drinks out of their water bottles. During the day, staff will check water bottles and remind children individually. We also fill up the empty / part full water bottles many times during the day. If your child comes home with a full bottle of water, it is because the bottle has been filled. Not because they haven't had a drink!!

We take many measures to ensure your child has water and they drink regularly.

Can you also remind your child to drink lots of water at kindy..... Not just a sip but a big drink. Many thanks for your support.

## Eating at preschool

In the first week, we noticed some children were anxious about sitting and eating snack. Some children ate all their snack whilst others may have only had a small portion of their food. Rather than place undue pressure & anxiety on your child around eating snack, we were flexible with how much they ate. Once comfortable and familiar with children, adults & routines they will eat all or most of their snack.

With lunch time, we make sure that the children eat all their food that you provide or at least the greatest majority of it. We eat in small groups in different areas of the centre, supervised by a staff member. Children have relaxation, wash their hands, have their lunch, put on sunscreen, then play with the resources in that room until everyone has finished. If they have been unsure about eating snack, at least we know they have eaten all of their lunch. Most children have not wanted afternoon snack.

It takes time for some children to sit and eat with others, to understand and follow routines and to feel comfortable in a new environment. Once settled in, you will find they will eat all the food provided (unless lunch boxes are over loaded)

If you have any concerns at any time, about your child eating at kindy, please don't hesitate to let one of the staff know.

As part of our sustainability focus, which includes the learning within our curriculum, the policies and centre practices, we aim to reduce the preschools contribution to landfill. As a result, we send home any plastic, foil, yoghurt containers, cheese wrappers etc that children bring as part of their snack or lunch. This way, we ensure that we are limiting how much rubbish we send to land fill.

During the term, when children are more familiar with routines at lunch time, they will often rinse out their shop bought yoghurt containers before putting them back in their lunchbox.

## Snacks and lunches

Can I just remind you about snacks and lunch.

**SNACKS STAY IN YOUR CHILD'S BAG** so they can access them during the day.

**LUNCHES GO IN THE SPECIAL BOXES ON THE VERANDAH.** Once everyone has arrived, these boxes are stored inside. Lunches are kept separate to ensure that children do not eat their lunch during the day.

Some families have kept snacks in lunch boxes which does distress children, when looking for snacks in their bags.

Thank you for your support.

## Applying sunscreen

At preschool, we encourage children to develop independence in a number of ways, including applying their own sunscreen after lunch. Children access the sunscreen under the supervision of educators and then rub the sunscreen into face / arms / legs.

We noticed last week, that many children were unsure how to apply sunscreen placing it close to their eyes and mouth. It would be great if they could practice at home so they can feel more confident when applying sunscreen at preschool.

We will assist children who are feeling unsure with the view that they will become independent in applying their own sunscreen.

Developing independence skills helps children to feel confident and develop positive self-esteem which is so important in life.

**Sunscreen is applied at preschool after lunch.**

**If you haven't had a chance to apply sunscreen before leaving home in the morning, we have plenty available for you to use.**

## A & B choice behavior strategy

At our preschool we use a behaviour strategy program called "A & B Choices". It is a behaviour program whereby we talk about

**A choices being good choices** (choosing to share, work cooperatively, listen to friends, teachers, parents, include friends in play, take turns, care for our friends, complete a task etc)

**B choices being not good choices.**

(hurting friends, not listening to friends, teachers, parents, unable to share or work cooperatively, breaking something that a friend has worked on, not following rules or routines, yelling, being unfriendly eg saying your not my friend etc)

We have now, just commencing to introduce the program to the children and it will be used on an ongoing basis.

If a child is making a "B" choice, (eg throwing sand ) we would say

"You are making a "B" choice when you throw sand. You need to make an "A" choice, what could you do?"

It helps them differentiate between good and not good choices and generally in most cases, helps them to change their choice / behaviour. If they continue to make a "B" choice such as throwing sand, they are then redirected to another area of play.

*Please note, we never refer to "B" choices as "bad" choices as we don't want to give children the message they are bad. They are simply making a "B" choice—a not good choice.*

We have found the "A & B choices" program, a really effective way of children learning about behaviours—and the choices they can make. I have never found using strategies such as time out / sitting on a naughty chair / standing in a naughty corner etc very ineffective. Children in these situations, generally do not learn about behaviour and will keep on misbehaving (making B choices).

In situations where children continue to make "B choices" rather than have time out, we would use an approach of "sitting, resting, thinking time" to get themselves back in control. It may be sitting on the bench outside, sitting on the mat or couch inside just for a few minutes. But it is never on a time out chair or in a designated room or in a naughty corner. Once they have rested we may then say "You look like you are ready to make an A Choice". Children will then get on with playing & learning in a positive frame of mind. Last year, we found there were times during the year that we didn't need to make reference to the A & B choices (things were running smoothly in terms of behaviour and getting along). Then there would be times children needed prompts and reminders about the choices they were making.

Children may take the "A & B Choices" home and make reference to it. You may even wish to use the concepts at home. Don't hesitate to speak with one of the staff if you want more information about the program.

## Afternoon pick ups

There are many families this year who wish to pick up their child earlier from preschool, as they have children to also collect from the local primary schools. It is a tight time line getting from our preschool to Westbourne Park and Colonel Light Gardens Primary schools by 3.10pm. Mitcham Primary School is a 3.10pm pick up, but it isn't as far.

With parents / carers coming in earlier to collect their child, it can be disruptive to the children's learning. Children are "coming and going" from the mat (last group of the day). So to minimise the disruption, we are asking parents / carers to collect their child between 2.40pm and 2.50pm. This time works well as the children will usually have packed their bags and sitting back on the mat. We start the last group time at approximately 2.40pm (if all is going well!!!). If parents can collect children during that 10 minute window, it means that the whole mat time isn't disrupted.

If you do not need to get to school, or don't have an appointment, it would be great for children to remain until 3pm, so they have the benefit of the entire learning program.

For those families collecting children early, enter through the bathroom. If you wait by the double doors into the main room, we will see you and dismiss your child to you. Thankyou.

## Regular attendance at preschool

Regular attendance at preschool is so important for a number of reasons.

- Children benefit from the maximum education opportunities by attending preschool for their entitled 15 hours each week
- There is continuity of learning
- Continuity of friendships—more time to form friendships
- They access all programs, experiences and activities. They don't miss out on valuable learning opportunities
- Good practices in attendance are established whilst at preschool, in readiness for school

Of course when children are unwell or a family holiday is scheduled this impacts on your child's attendance at preschool. Children do need to be at home when sick to rest and recover & not spread infections to other children and adults. Family holidays are important and there are times when they do need to be scheduled during term time. Sometimes children just need a rest day especially if you have had a busy weekend or they are "juggling" child care and preschool. However it is important for your child to attend regularly, even on the half days. This will ensure that your child accesses all their entitled hours and benefits from all the learning opportunities available to them. If you need any further information about attendance at preschool, please don't hesitate to speak with one of the staff

## Weeks 2 & 3

Weeks 2 & 3 of each term are our data collection weeks. That means we submit our attendances for weeks 2 & 3, to DECD. Staffing is based on our enrolments. Not only does regular attendance support children in their learning & development, it ensures that we maintain high levels of staffing, which benefits your child.

## Attending Mondays

Mondays are important days in the week at preschool. On Mondays, we commence the learning program for the week, with the children. For example, we find out what is happening in the week, learn new creative activities etc. We also have our funtastics (motor coordination) program on Mondays spread throughout each term (excluding term 1). So it is an important day to attend even though it is a half day. So please make sure that your child attends regularly on a Monday (unless unwell) so they don't miss important learning opportunities. If you have any questions about attending Monday please don't hesitate to speak with me.

## Finally

This has been a long newsletter with lots of information. I hope you have made it to the end.

Thank you as always for your  
continued support.

It is always  
appreciated.

Chris, Maddie, Suzie, Lyn, Robyn, Karen