Unley Kindergarten
Information Booklet

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WELCOME TO UNLEY KINDERGARTEN

A service of the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD)

Philosophy statement: At Unley Kindergarten we are committed to providing a high quality, flexible educational program that is inclusive, equitable and accessible for all children. The Early Years Framework for Australia, “Belonging, Being & Becoming” is our guiding curriculum. We are inspired by Claire Warden’s philosophy which we implement, interwoven with other good early childhood education practices.

- We recognise that every child is unique and see each child as strong, capable, competent, creative, powerful and curious.

- We encourage children to share their experiences, ideas, theories and curiosities, and explore their ideas with other children.

- We value the children’s “voice”. The children know that they are valued as we listen to their individual needs, their interests, and their prior knowledge and let their voices guide our learning.

- We foster the whole child, their social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and provide opportunities to maximise their potential while they are at Kindergarten.

We believe that children learn best through play and having fun where they feel safe, secure to express themselves, take risks, challenge themselves, problem solve, explore and build resilience and persistence and optimism and independence.

- We strive to find ways for children to connect to their natural environment and learn about sustainable practices

- We have created a “homely” environment which fosters smoother transitions for children between home, Childcare and Kindergarten

- We value relationships with children, families, staff and the wider community and the world beyond

- We recognise parents as their child’s first educator and promote a nurturing, welcoming learning environment of trust and confidence where families feel comfortable to leave their children in our care

- We value children’s, parent, staff and community “voice” and strive to make connections and develop relationships and partnerships

- We value staff diversity and recognise that our staff members are dedicated and professional early childhood educators

- We work together to embed a culture of equity, collaboration, openness, honesty, innovation and cohesion with a shared workload towards common goals and vision

- We foster a culture of learning, respect and growth for parents of young children and ourselves, and for ongoing and lifelong learning
We believe that PLAY in an active environment is an essential part of learning for young Children and is a central component of our curriculum. The program allows for the children to have uninterrupted periods of play as well as planned learning groups—literacy, science, music, numeracy.

Our program provides opportunities for the children to:

- make worthwhile choices about their activities
- explore, experiment and make discoveries
- follow instructions
- follow set routines
- work individually and in groups or on projects.

In planning the activities for the children Educators use the Australian National Early Years learning framework

There are five learning outcomes:

- 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

The framework supports a model of curriculum decision making as an ongoing cycle.

STAFF
The staff are employed by DECD. There is a full time Director and Teacher.
If the need arises, extra support teachers and bilingual workers may be employed to work with children with special needs. Students from universities, TAFE colleges and secondary school and volunteers also work in the kindergarten from time to time.

SERVICES PROVIDED

1. **KINDERGARTEN** – fifteen hours a week will be provided for children in their eligible year prior to starting school. **Support Programs** for children with special needs are planned in consultation with staff parents and DECD Special Services. Please discuss with the staff any special needs that your child may have.

2. **LUNCH TIME CARE** can be arranged for kindergarten children. This is limited by our site capacity and staffing. The fee for lunch care is $7 for the lunch session and is to be paid in advance with the fees.

3. **LIBRARY**
   - For children
     Books for children to borrow are on display in a stand located in the hallway. If there is a specific theme or book that is not displayed please ask staff for assistance.
   - For parents
     A selection of books, pamphlets etc about the development and care of young children is available for parents to borrow.

When borrowing any books please write details in the borrowing book.

4. **PLAYGROUP**
   - Playgroup is available on a Wednesday morning at Saint Spyridon College

**SESSION DAYS AND TIMES**

**MORNING KINDERGARTEN:**
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8.30am to 11.30am.

**AFTERNOON KINDERGARTEN:**
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 12.15pm to 3.15pm

Children can access a combination of full and half day sessions where vacancies exist.
ATTENDANCE

- **ABSENCES** – Please keep your child at home if he/she is not well. Please notify the staff.
- **NAME BOARD** – On arrival at each kindergarten session the children need to place a tag next to their name on the attendance board provided. This procedure ensures that the children are marked present as soon as they arrive at kindergarten. It also gives them a regular opportunity to recognize their name in print.
- **SIGN IN SHEETS** – Please sign your child in and out on the sheets provided on the outside table.

Please NAME all clothes and possessions, especially shoes, socks, hats and bags. Please mark the bag so your child can easily identify it.

**TOYS FROM HOME** – It is difficult to keep track of toys and other precious belongings so please discourage your child from bringing them to kindergarten. Thank you.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS
Information is provided through regular newsletters, email, notes and web site. Please check the pocket marked with your child’s name. The pockets are located in the hallway.

**INFORMATION ON THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME**
INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEARNING PROGRAM is displayed on the notice board in the corridor and on the whiteboard outside. Parents together with their child can contribute to our program by jotting their ideas on the board in the corridor. These will assist staff when planning learning experiences.

Please feel free to discuss the program and your child’s progress with the staff. This can be done informally or, if you prefer, make an appointment.

PARENT HELP
We like to have parents helping in the kindergarten and will at times ask for help with such things as gardening, repairing equipment, preparing materials and working bees.

**LAUNDRY ROSTER** – each family is asked to help with the laundry (paint smocks, kitchen linen etc) A roster is on display in the kitchen.

**WE WELCOME PARENTS TO JOIN THE CHILDREN AT THEIR ACTIVITIES** - doing puzzles, reading stories, playing ball games etc. We especially appreciate parents helping with cooking activities. If you have a special interest or talent that you would like to share with the children; please let us know in advance so that we can incorporate your ideas into our program.

GOVERNING COUNCIL
The staff and elected parents manage the kindergarten jointly. The Council, elected each year, manages the kindergarten budget, fees and finances and promotes interest in the center throughout the community. It organizes information, social and fundraising functions, arranges for the purchase of equipment, maintains the building, grounds and equipment in a safe and hygienic condition and liaises with DECD and other community groups. Meetings are organized on a monthly basis and all parents are welcome to attend.

FEES
The kindergarten receives an operating grant from the state government but a charge is necessary to help with day-to-day expenses and for the purchase of resources and materials.

**FULL TIME KINDERGARTEN**; $160 per term
**LUNCH TIME CARE**; $7 per lunch session

PAYMENTS
Invoices for kindergarten sessions are given to each family at the beginning of every term. These should be returned with the correct money and placed in the fees box in the hallway or facilities are available for direct debit. Please see invoice for details. A receipt will be issued.
ALL OTHER MONIES e.g. for fund raising activities or excursions should be put in an envelope (with the details clearly marked) and placed in the fees box. Please pay the correct money.

HEALTH and SAFETY

- SUN SAFETY
  The children are asked to wear hats when playing outside during term 1 & term 4. We ask that you apply sunscreen to your child just prior to the kindergarten session.

- NUTRITION
  We encourage the children to eat nutritious foods and to drink water when they are thirsty. We ask that the children do not bring foods such as muesli bars, fruit bars, sweet biscuits, potato chips etc. We are a nut free zone. Please send snacks in re-usable containers. We have filtered water for the children to drink so please do not send any fruit juice or soft drinks.

- WATER PLAY
  Children are allowed to play with water at staff’s discretion. Water activities will generally be available during the warmer months. Please pack spare clothes if you feel your child might get wet during a session. We have spare clothing but we can run short at times.

- BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS
  We sing happy birthday to acknowledge this special day and all children receive a sticker.

PREVENTION of SPREAD OF INFECTION

- Please keep your child at home if unwell and notify the kindergarten immediately if your child is suffering from any communicable/notifiable disease. Confidentiality is assured

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS
  The kindergarten has policies and practices in place to help prevent cross infection of diseases including blood borne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B and C.

CHILDREN ARE TAUGHT:

- to be aware of others when sneezing and coughing
- to wash their hands before eating
- to wash their hands after using the toilet
- to wash their hands after handling animals
- to never touch someone else’s blood.

MEDICATIONS
  Staff are not able to give any medications to children unless written permission and a medical form is completed by parents. All medications should be handed to a staff member. An asthma care plan needs to be completed and ventolin supplied so that it can be kept at the centre.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION & INVACUATION PROCEDURES
  These are displayed in all rooms of the kindergarten. In case of an emergency the children will be taken to the village green next door.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN FROM THE KINDERGARTEN
  Children will only be released to people nominated on their enrolment form.

  If you do arrive early please stay with your child until the session commences. To avoid stressful times for your child, please ensure that you collect your child on time.

  The time before and after sessions is used by staff for preparation, administration, planning, parent interviews etc.

  Availability of policies and procedures of DECD are listed on the NQS policy pages of DECD.

  Please visit the following site –

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED

- A BAG, such as a drawstring bag or backpack which your child can easily open, in which to keep his/her belongings. Please make sure your child can identify the bag – we often have many which are identical.
• **A HAT**—we have a sun safe policy to protect the children from sunburn. We ask that the children wear a hat when playing outside. Please apply sunscreen to your child just prior to the kindergarten session.

• **A SNACK** to eat. This should be a piece of fruit or vegetable, a sandwich or cheese. At the kindergarten we encourage the eating of nutritious food so ask that the children do not bring foods such as muesli bars, fruit bars, sweet biscuits, potato chips etc. We have filtered water for the children to drink so please do not send any fruit or soft drinks.

• **A BOTTLE OF WATER** to access during the day and named.

• **A CHANGE OF CLOTHES**—at kindergarten we have lots of “messy” activities such as water play, water in the sand, clay and finger painting. Sometimes the children get wet and need to change their clothes.

**SCHOOL TRANSITION**

For those children who are to starting school we plan a program to allow the transition from kindergarten to school to be as smooth as possible. Special activities are planned for the children with a focus on areas such as social skills; concentration; listening skills; fine motor skills; understanding of spatial concepts; literacy skills such as name recognition, letter sounds and rhyming words; and understanding of number.

We have close links with the two local schools, Unley Primary and Parkside Primary, and meet with the staff to plan the transition program. Regular visits are made to Unley Primary School so that the children may become familiar with the playgrounds, toilets, libraries and classrooms and meet the teachers. A summary of your child’s progress will be made during the kindergarten year and will be prepared for you and for the staff at school.

**What if I do not agree with staff practices? We have a Grievance Procedure**

If you have any concerns about the Director, then please arrange a time to talk with the Director in the first instance. You can also contact our Regional Office (see a staff person for contact details)

If you have concerns about the Teacher, Early Childhood Worker or Volunteer:

**One:** See and inform the Kindergarten Director (Line Manage of staff) or

**Two:** Express your concerns in a letter to the Governing Council or

**Three:** Express your concerns in a letter to the Regional Director.

We hope that your child’s time at kindergarten will be happy and rewarding.

To achieve our vision, we also: seek to know our children, families and community & collaborate, communicate and build relationships, value and support our team’s diverse expertise, roles and responsibilities

The kindergarten promotes learning through play in balance with quality, responsive intentional teaching; learning through emergent and planned experiences through responding to children’s ideas and interests; a culture of resilience, optimism and persistence; an approach that challenges bias and embraces, celebrates and promotes diversity in children, families and community; a culture that reduces, reuses and recycles for a sustainable future; creates engaging learning environments’ and having fun

On enrolment a birth certificate must be sited by the Director.

We look forward to working with you and your child during their time at Kindergarten

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“Play is our brains favourite way of learning”
Dianne Eckerman

“Play is the highest form of research”
Albert Einstein