St. Joseph’s Memorial Preschool

Parent Information Session

February 15th 2017

Welcome to our Preschool and welcome to our Parent Information Session.

We would like to share with you our special prayer that the children are learning at Preschool...

“We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Kaurna People of the Adelaide Plains. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, their beliefs and their relationship with the land. We acknowledge that these are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.”

(The hundred languages is actually a metaphor used to indicate the plethora of expressive means with which children represent and convey ... Loris Malaguzzi)

My Philosophy of Early Years Education and the way I work with your children as well as you as a family is as follows. This statement was written last year.

“l advocate that children have a right to believe in their own spirituality, to be allowed to speak their thoughts and to be listened to. I have faith that children are honest and truthful
in what they say and do. They display empathy for their fellow man, for all of God’s creatures and for our precious environment and they understand the needs of our world and what it means to encourage peace amongst all people.

Children have a right to play and discover within a safe and beautiful environment where they have time to question and challenge their thoughts and theories without fear or rejection. I know that children are incredibly capable and competent, making wise and informed choices from a very young age.

Children know a sense of justice and will protect and guard all knowledge and all beliefs along with a youthful and refreshing way of bringing about change in our society. Children are not bound by political correctness or protocols which could perhaps inhibit their freshness and honest ways of dealing with issues which relate to their childhood and to those who are dear to them.

Childhood is a unique and precious time in all of our lives. It must be protected for all children so that they may find joy in the everyday and have time to celebrate their discoveries. For those who have lost their childhood or have had it taken away from them we pray that they have opportunities to experience the freedom that children in our community cherish every day. Childhood should only come to an end when the child decides, which may never eventuate, for to live and love through the eyes of a child is to see a world of wonder, delight and hope.” Gail Mantel  July 2016

**Staffing for 2017:**

Gail Mantel: Coordinator and Teacher Mondays, part Tuesdays and all day Fridays with support all other days. Teaching French and introducing Kaurna.

Maree Raphael: Teacher Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Indonesian Teacher.

Marta D’Ortenzio: Educator every day, Italian teacher. Playgroup Coordinator.

Bryant Crowley: Educator teaching Monday and Tuesday afternoons then all day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Fundamental Movement Skills Program.

Oriana Radman: Japanese teacher, Mondays

**Hours of Service:**

We operate from Monday to Friday except for Public Holidays and school holidays. Our doors open at 8.30am and the preschool day starts at 8.55am with prayers. Our day finishes at 3pm. Children who require earlier drop-off or later pick-up are able to enrol in St. Joseph’s Memorial School Out-of-School -Hours Care which is available on the Bridge Street Campus, provided they are 4 years old. The forms and fee schedule can be obtained from the Front Office at Bridge Street, Kensington.
**Lunch at Preschool:**

We provide a healthy lunch for children every day. The menu is on-line for you to read.

On Mondays we have wraps, Tuesday is rice, on Wednesday we make sandwiches, possibly toasted, on Thursdays the children make the pasta sauce for our pasta lunch and on Fridays we have soups, pizzas, toasties, wraps, wedges and roast potatoes.

If your child wants to bring their own lunch please place it in the fridge. We ask that you keep cakes, biscuits and lollies/chocolates for home, as ‘sometimes’ foods.

**Fruit:**

Please provide 2 pieces of fruit, vegetables or cheese for our morning and afternoon fruit times. Please place any cheese in the Preschool fridge. Label all fruit and containers.

**Drinks:**

Water bottles are essential for the day at Preschool. We can refill when required. There is no need to buy expensive drink bottles, but please label to save confusion.

**Hats:**

We are a sun smart school and therefore we are required to ask children and staff to wear a broad brimmed or legionnaire hat to keep the sun off faces, necks and heads. Washable hats are a great idea and once again a label will help find the owner.

**Play clothes and shoes:**

To allow children a sense of freedom to explore and play it is so important that the children not worry about their clothes and have shoes that they can manage and that are safe for running, climbing and withstand mud, sand and water!

**Documentation:**

"If you have kept your pad and pencil as steady companions and recorded one or two children over a period of time, engaged in varied activities, alone and with others, by now you have a treasured collection".

"These observational records give authenticity to the conferences you hold with parents. In anticipation of a meeting with a parent, take records that document the child’s interests, friendships, and approach to learning."
"The records you make will lead you to improve your teaching through the process of examining your own behaviour as well as by sharing your records with others and by getting to know the children in your group as individuals and group members."

"You will be able to step aside from your own point of view to see children as they are. These records will also help you understand children whose culture is different from your own. Observing and recording helps all teachers refine their practice by getting close to the children they teach." Observing Children by Nancy Balaban in the Exchange GEU course.

**Observing Children**

**Portfolios:**

Every child has a portfolio which will grow alongside of your child while they are with us. When your child Graduates, the Portfolio is presented to them as a gift from us. You are welcome to take the Portfolio home to view and add to, comment on and enjoy. Please let us know so that we can give you a special bag to keep it safe. Many special pages and conversations appear in these folders over the year. All staff are allocated children to work with as their ‘Focus Children’ for the year.

**Reports:**

At the end of this year your child will receive a report on all aspects of their development which will include the child’s voice and your voice if you wish to comment. The report ‘grows’ over the year and is divided into the 4 terms. If there are any issues or questions throughout the year we will make a time to talk with you for clarification and more understanding.

**Photos:**

Photos are taken of groups and individuals for documentation, research by staff and for your child’s portfolio. These photos provide staff with important information about your child so that we can plan and understand your child as part of the group.

**Notes:**

We make notes continuously about activities and how children react and discover within the group. These notes help us to write the termly reports for each family to read about their child and are useful when we meet to discuss your child’s progress.

**Health and Safety:**

To be able to keep your child safe and well we need your support in bringing back all paperwork, whether it relates to Emergency Information, photographs or general information about your child’s likes and strengths. If any circumstances change regarding allergies, medical issues or family circumstances please keep us informed.
**Policies:**

We have all of the required policies in place to maintain a high level of care and education for your child. These policies are available to you.

**Languages at Preschool:**

‘Cultural Respect’ comes from a love of learning and a love of others....

At St. Joseph’s Memorial Preschool we know that our children are passionate about their family, their environment and their friends. Over many years we have been blessed with children and families from many different walks of life and many different culturally diverse backgrounds.

To see our children communicating and forming friendships with every child who enters our community is a truly inspiring sight. There are no barriers, no issues and no obstacles when children come together in a place where they feel safe, secure and respected.

Loris Malaguzzi speaks of the ‘Hundred languages of Children’ and a hundred, hundred more. The metaphor for the hundred languages is no more evident than in our beautiful centre where learning about ourselves is as important as learning about each other and discovering ways that we can live in harmony in a sometimes dangerous and violent world.

Just six languages are being taught at our Preschool, a very small selection of possibilities yet many more are spoken throughout our days together.

The staff introduce Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, French, English and Kurna. The children and staff immerse themselves in the cultural aspects of language, not simply in words. Children experience cooking, singing, dance, games and an appreciation of the life and life-styles that exist in other families. We look upon this as a peaceful offering to our friends to encourage and embrace all people. Everyone is welcome at our Preschool.

The children teach each other Chinese, Mandarin, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese and according to several students we also speak Australian..."we speak normal".

The capacity for children to learn another language is often underestimated. After a very short time, many children are able to count to 12 in French and they are able to pronounce their words correctly. During Italian time the group is fully immersed in their Italian culture. One child is also teaching her teachers some Italian songs in front of the group. I have heard that the new Reception Class is teaching Miss Nickie how to sing ‘Heads and shoulders’ the way that Marta has taught them! In Indonesian time children name and discuss colours and quantities. They love the stories of Indonesian culture. Many practice their skills when they holiday in Bali. The children learn that Japanese is more than origami, with a culture steeped in traditions and a correctness that requires huge respect. Many are familiar with Japanese foods and can replicate Sushi and Onigiri to share with the friends.

To not teach these languages and many more would be sad. There is a respect for everyone and their ways of doing, speaking and listening. If you ever have the opportunity to spend time in our Preschool you may well hear children speaking and singing other languages during their play time, providing joy for the educators who may well join in. You will always hear the children full of love and a joy for learning and for life.

“a hundred and a hundred more...”
We are implementing a Federal Government initiative called ELLA (Early Learning Languages Australia) whereby the children work with apps downloaded to our iPads to study Indonesian, which is the most common language taught in preschools in Australia. Maree teaches Indonesian to the children as well so the children are experiencing learning from their teacher as well as interacting with the Indonesian Language through technology. This program will be running for 2017.

**Science:**

Our Preschool has won a National Award to be able to call itself a ‘Littlie Scientists House’ This award was presented to us at the beginning of 2016. This was a wonderful celebration of the work that has been done by staff and to be presented with our plaque by Minister Christopher Pyne M.P. and Minister Simon Birmingham M.P. was such a thrill. This work continues in the daily program at Preschool. Topics for 2017 will be air, water, light, vision and our new topic of engineering. Staff continue to attend professional development in science to maintain focus.

**Celebrations:**

The Preschool has many special celebrations throughout the year. You are invited and very welcome to attend as many as you can. We are a small and dynamic community which is unique in its make-up. We celebrate Carnevale, Lent, Easter, Mother’s Day, birthdays, Father’s Day, Parenti Day, Book Week, Advent and Christmas. We have an Art Exhibition which showcases your child’s work. We also celebrate Harmony Day, Graduation, Mary MacKillop Day and Mission Day as well as our many Catholic Traditions throughout the year. We also introduce celebrations from other cultures which are relevant to our Preschool community, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali, along with many more events.

**Newsletter:**

Your weekly newsletter will keep you informed so please read it carefully. It is available on-line so you can let us know if you do not need a hard copy. The school has a fortnightly newsletter which will give you another perspective on our community. It is really important that you stay in touch with what is going on to help your children to belong. We ask too for help with the Washing Roster and we ask for donations of various goods from time to time.

**Expectations:**

We expect that all children are respectful to each other, to us and to you. They are required to use their manners. We expect that they will be kind to each other and remember the Preschool rules, which are social rules, of listening to others, waiting, taking turns, sharing, being safe, helping others, speaking with respect, walking inside and many more.

We expect that each child can manage their own personal needs, especially when they use the bathroom. Providing spare clothes will help children to feel more comfortable if a change is required.

It is appreciated and expected that parents are involved in the life of the Preschool, celebrating with us when you can. We certainly acknowledge that you are busy people and know that you will help
and be part of our community when you can. Remember that if everyone does a little bit then we all benefit.

**Sustainability:**

In the interests of our world, our environment and our Commitment to a better more sustainable society we teach the children to recycle, repair, re-use and reinvent all that is possible. Please support us all by showing an interest in recycling at home.

The Preschool staff shows total commitment to doing their best for the children at all times and to be the best role models possible. We work in partnership with you to help your child achieve their goals and reach their potential.

It is our privilege to work with you and your child at St. Joseph’s Memorial Preschool and we hope that excitement and surprises greet us all along the way.

Maybe the journey isn't so much about becoming anything. Maybe it's about unbecoming everything that isn't really you, so you can be who you were meant to be in the first place.

summersaldana.com
It's a Journey.. No one is ahead of you or behind you. You are not more "advanced" or less enlightened. You are exactly where you need to be. It's not a Contest.... It's LIFE. We are ALL teachers and we are ALL students.