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4-Year-Old

Information Booklet



2018

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Mission Statement

'Mansfield Kindergarten is a dynamic and progressive kindergarten whose mission is to provide a high quality educational program for children and families in accordance with its commitment to the rights of children and the principles of social justice.'

Early childhood is".....a period of momentous significance for all people growing up in (our) culture. By the time this period is over, children will have formed a conception of themselves as social beings, as thinkers, and as language users, and they will have reached certain important decisions about their own abilities and their own worth."

Donaldson,M.,Grieve,R and Pratt,C. Early Childhood Development and Education: Readings in psychology, Oxford:Basil Blackwell, 1983,p.1.

INTRODUCTION

Dear Family,

We are pleased to welcome you to the Mansfield Kindergarten.

We're sure you will enjoy your time with us as we believe the pre-school provides a stimulating and caring environment for your child to explore and to belong in.

The Teachers and Educators look forward to a successful 2018 and a year of delight and development.

The information in this booklet should answer most of your questions as well as outline our Kindergarten philosophy to give you some insight into our program.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Warm regards,

Nicola Beautyman
Director

Mansfield Kindergarten Philosophy

Mansfield Kindergarten is a community kindergarten where all children are provided a quality education within a safe, nurturing, stimulating and caring environment. The kindergarten is managed by the parents of children currently attending.

The pedagogy underlining the philosophy of our kindergarten is based on social constructivism. This theory asserts that people are active creators of knowledge, constructing understanding of their worlds through their experiences, social interactions and reflection with others.

Child

The focus of our education and programming is the child. We strive to empower children, by using their thoughts and ideas to develop the program. We encourage each child to reach their full potential in accordance with their individual ability. We encourage exploration and creativity and the importance of the process not the product. Our constructivist pedagogy means that educators at our kindergarten act as a guide and co-instructor. Children are encouraged to question and formulate ideas. Educators seek and value children's comments, points of view and ideas encouraging alternative perspectives, representations, opinions and conclusions. Active dialogue between children and educators involves listening, waiting and responding.

Our Environment

We value the contribution of children, parents, committee and staff in developing our program and facilities, and believe that the provision of quality education for children is a right. Our environment provides choice, accessible open ended resources and opportunities for experimentation, play and creativity.

Educators use real life, relevant experiences for building understandings with children. They are encouraging and respectful of children's work. They create an environment that is collaborative and social with opportunities for shared activity. Children have the opportunity to retreat, observe and play alone. Self regulation, self awareness and initiative are valued and fostered. Socially divisive behaviour is challenged respectfully.

Our Program

Our program supports the five learning outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development framework -

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicator

We have a strong focus on sustainable practices and encourage children to learn through interaction with their environment. Our indoor/outdoor program uses natural materials where children are encouraged to explore, create and invent. Our Earth Kinder program promotes ecological literacy through close contact with nature in all seasons.

Working with families to reflect and plan.

We endeavour to promote trust, respect and collaboration between educators and families. Educators listen and observe, valuing family and children's voice as they gather information and monitor children's construction of understanding. They thoughtfully follow up on children's interests, ideas, questions and comments and adapt plans in response to children's deepening or changing interests. Together this informs the development of meaningful goals and planning for the acquisition of valued skills, understandings and knowledge. Educators make assessments through authentic experiences and processes.

Educators

Each staff member brings personal qualities to the kindergarten environment such as empathy, respect, warmth and a passion for learning. All educators are committed to social constructivist pedagogy and therefore support children's active engagement in learning.

Staff have regular opportunities to share in decision-making and to obtain feedback.

Community

We endeavour to nurture relationships with community organizations, local schools and the broader community and welcome family and community involvement in our daily programs. We believe that as advocates for our profession, it is important to share our knowledge and experience and that we are a central link to information and support services within the wider community.

THE PROGRAM

Pre-School education is concerned with promoting optimal development of young children, through a rich variety of first-hand experiences. It is a wonderful age. The children are full of interest and intrigue and are ready for the challenge and enticement into further learning. The program is centered around the children, their interests and level of development

The program also includes excursions (such as the Earth Kinder, a bus tour of Mansfield, library visits) and other cultural and educational experiences that are delivered at the kindergarten (such as theatre companies, the Melbourne Museum Outreach Program, information sessions about dog safety, water conservation, nature exploration etc.)

We communicate the program to families through a regular newsletter and wall displays and notices near the sign-in book. We encourage your input to help us create the best possible program for your child.

As pre-school is the first step away from home, we endeavor to make this a very secure and happy time. Our program relies on your family involvement to make this transition easy.

TERM DATES FOR 2018:

Term 1: 30 January (teachers start) to 29 March *

Term 2: 16 April to 29 June

Term 3: 16 July to 21 September

Term 4: 8 October to 18 December

* The first day of Term 1 is a student-free day in all government schools and kindergartens to allow for appropriate planning to take place for the arrival of students.

The Kindergarten does not operate on public holidays.

Parents will be asked to attend the first Earth Kinder session in week 3, in order to be informed of safety and boundary expectations.

A timetable for the first 3 weeks will be sent to you early December.

SESSIONS:

Dependent on enrolment numbers the Kindergarten will offer two or three groups . Priority for placement in a kinder group will be given to children repeating the 4 year-old kindergarten year and then according to the date when the child turns 5.

Groups will consist of two 6 hour days and one 3 hour day (Earth Kinder)

REGISTRATION/INFORMATION SESSIONS.

Wednesday 31st January 2018 or
Thursday 1st February 2018

Registration day is an introductory child and parent session. It is a special time for you and your child to meet the teachers, other parents and their children in a small relaxed group. It is a time to question and discuss the workings of the year and to become familiar and comfortable with kindergarten.

To make this initial session (approximately 1 hour) as constructive and valuable as possible, could you please consider having your toddler(s) cared for by others and attend with just your kinder-aged child?

What to bring with you

- + Your child's Immunisation record,
- + Health Care Card and Ambulance Membership Number/s, if applicable,
- + Phone numbers for your doctor and emergency contacts

You may have completed these things on your enrolment forms already. Your HCC and Immunisation record will need to be photocopied as we need a copy here on file at the kindergarten.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Earth Kinder : Please refer to our Parent information booklet

What to wear to Kinder:

Clothes should be:

- Comfortable-to climb, run, jump and move in
- Manageable - can undo/or remove easily
- Wearable - children do get dirty at kindergarten!
- Shoes - which are well fitting and suited to running and climbing, thongs, crocs and slippery soled shoes can be dangerous and should not be worn to kinder.

Order forms for the kindergarten uniform are available at the office.

What to bring to Kinder:

- A bag suitable for carrying home all work and notices etc.
- A healthy snack and lunch (eg. plenty of fruit, carrot, celery, etc.)
- A water bottle
- **A suitable hat.** This is extremely important in **Terms 1 & 4** when there is the greatest chance of harmful exposure to UV radiation. You can order hats using the uniform order form available at the office.

We also urge you to apply 30+ sunscreen to your child before coming to kinder. If you wish staff to apply sunscreen during the day, in accordance with our Sun Protection Policy, you will need to fill in an authorization form at the beginning of the year.

The kindergarten supplies each child with smocks, art materials, educational materials and hygiene supplies.

What NOT to bring to Kinder:

- Toys from home. The kindergarten supplies educational toys and activities appropriate to the program.
- **Please do not bring any food containing nuts to kinder**

Birthdays:

WE LOVE BIRTHDAYS! And it's wonderful to share them with the children. We like to keep things fairly simple and emphasize the importance of sharing in their special day with others. If you wish to share this day with us at kinder, you could bring a cake or party cup cakes etc. and place your name on the helper's roster on the appropriate day.

Communication:

There are several ways of finding out information about what is happening at kinder during the year:

- A notice board is on display near the sign-in book. There is also a notice board on the outside of the building near the entrance and also in the entrance foyer. Please look at them as important information relating to meetings, session times, fundraising activities and the program outline is on display.
- Each child has a pigeon-hole in which notices, art work and other important documents are placed. Please check the pigeonholes at drop-off or pick-up each kinder day.
- The kindergarten website is : www.mansfieldkindergarten.com.au
- We have an SMS information system to alert you to any emergencies, last minute changes in the program and also to send you reminders about fundraising activities, working bees, excursions and other events at kinder.
- The teachers and the Committee produce at least one newsletter a term to keep you informed.
- The teachers hold regular parent-teacher interviews. You can also arrange a meeting with the teachers, assistants, or committee members at any time during the year.
- Over the years the kindergarten has accumulated books, pamphlets, newsletters and magazines dealing with a vast number of child-related issues. This resource is available for you to access. You are welcome to browse or borrow.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

At kinder we encourage parent participation in the child's educational journey at all times. We realise that parents and carers have many and varied commitments, so there are many ways in which you, and other people who are special to your child, can participate in the kindergarten program and activities during the year:

Curriculum:

Mansfield kindergarten acknowledges that children learn in the context of their families and that families are the primary influence on children's learning and development. With this in mind we ask that families contribute any thoughts or ideas to our curriculum and share their understanding of their child's particular needs and interests. We actively engage families and children in planning children's learning and development.

Parent Helper:

With adult encouragement children's play becomes more constructive. Therefore we encourage parent helpers to attend kindergarten sessions.

A roster is posted near the sign in book at the start of each term. Put your name on the roster if you think this is a way in which you could assist. You can choose between a morning or an afternoon session (approximately 3 hours) on the days your child attends kinder. Activities during your session could include helping with artwork and craft, wiping down tables, helping children with their snack or lunch, reading stories and of course, lots of playing!

Being a parent helper is a great way to see what happens at kinder, to interact with your child in a different setting and also talk to the teachers and assistants about your child's progress. Toddlers are most welcome to attend a session when you are helping. This is a very special time for your child. The children enjoy having parents, grandparents and other family members at kindergarten.

Excursions: From time to time the children are taken on excursions outside kinder. At these times, the more parents available to supervise the children, the better!

Committee of Management:

Mansfield Kindergarten is run by a Committee of Management. The Committee comprises volunteer parents who are responsible for the running of the kindergarten and is the decision making body. It consists of up to twelve (12) parents or other interested community people who are elected for a period of twelve (12) months. The Committee of Management meets approximately once a month within term time. The meetings are open to all parents and staff at the kindergarten.

The Committee is divided up into four (4) Executive members and up to eight (8) General members. The executive positions are President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. These are all voting members of the Committee. General committee positions with voting rights may include Fundraising Officer, Maintenance Officer, Grants Officer, Policies Officer, IT Officer, Newsletter Editor, OH&S officer. These positions are filled according to the needs of the kindergarten at the time.

Apart from the voting members of the Committee of Management, sub-committees may be formed. Sub-committees may include the social committee (help for the Fundraising Officer), the maintenance sub-committee (help for the Maintenance officer). Members of the sub-committees do not have voting rights nor do they have to attend committee meetings. Meetings will be called by the leaders of the sub-committees as required.

Maintenance:

Approximately once a term, the kindergarten holds a working bee. The teachers write a "to do list" of tasks (general tidying up, renewal of sand and tan-bark etc.) The working bees are usually held on Sunday mornings and the tasks may take 1-2 hours to complete. They are a great way to meet other parents and the whole family is welcome to attend.

You may find you are able to complete some maintenance tasks at home (eg. mending broken toys, fixing equipment). Please talk to your child's teacher or the Committee of Management maintenance officer if you can assist in this way.

If you have any special skills that would be useful to the kinder community (e.g. plumbing, carpentry, welding, sewing or typing) please mention this to your child's teacher or the Committee of Management maintenance officer

Fundraising:

Throughout the year, the Committee organizes fundraising and social activities. These events are aimed at raising money to purchase new equipment for the children or to improve kindergarten facilities. They are also a way of meeting other kinder parents in a social setting. Participation in fundraising and social activities is an important contribution to the kindergarten.

We hope that you, as a family, will join us throughout the year for all sorts of events, including those that may be held on the weekends or evenings.

Any help that parents can give to the kindergarten is much appreciated!!!

FUNDING:

Mansfield Kindergarten receives a subsidy from the Government per child per annum. Funding is provided for the four-year-old program only. The money is granted to the pre-school Committee of Management quarterly based on enrolments. These subsidies pay part of the salaries, requisites for the pre-school program, running costs and other essentials. The three-year-old program at the kindergarten is unfunded.

FEES:

Funding from the Government does not cover all the running costs of the kindergarten. Therefore, term fees are charged for each child. In addition, the kindergarten carries out many fundraising activities during the year.

Fees are payable at the beginning of each term.

In 2018 the fees are \$420 per term, per child, for the four-year-old program.

Fees are payable prior to the commencement of each term, as per our policy.

Fees can be paid by cash, cheque or EFT. The invoice you receive will give details of how payments can be made.

The Kindergarten is registered under the Commonwealth Government child care subsidy scheme and has its own provider number.

Health Care Card holders are not required to pay fees.

If payment of fees is difficult, we can organize a payment plan - please ask Kellie, the Office Administrator.

ARRIVAL AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN:

Arrival

Upon arrival, the children are delivered directly into the care of the kindergarten staff. The attendance book must be signed daily by the person bringing the child and also by the authorized person collecting the child.

Please sign actual time of arrival and departure.

If you wish to catch up with other parents, please do this on the porch as it gets quite congested at drop-off and pick-up times.

Departure

At home time, children are given into the care of their parent/guardian as that person arrives at the centre. Please make yourself known to staff upon arrival to collect your child to facilitate a quick and efficient handover. Please sign the attendance book as you leave.

Please ensure that the gate is always securely closed and the catch secured upon entering and leaving the premises. Also, please see that no unsupervised child leaves the premises through the gate whilst you are entering or leaving.

Authorised Persons

NO child will be given into the care of any person unless authorised by the parents or guardians. You will be requested to list any person who will be picking up your child from kinder. You will also be required to notify the teacher of any changes to this during the year- eg custody arrangements, additional persons authorized to collect your child etc.

In an emergency situation, you may phone to notify the teacher who will collect your child. It would then be appropriate for written authorisation to follow. If we have not met them or they are not on the list, they will need to show photo ID to staff.

'Late Pick-up'

Please be **Punctual** with regard to picking up your child after each session.

Staff must be paid for the supervision of your child after the session. If you are unavoidably detained, please telephone the kinder to inform us.

Consistent late collection of a child will result in a fee to the family concerned in order to cover the cost of retaining staff after hours.

The kindergarten has a Delivery and Collection of Children policy which follows the relevant laws and regulations and can be viewed when requested.

Attendance of Siblings:

Siblings of all ages are welcome at the kinder session, however, the sibling remains the sole responsibility of the parent whilst on the premises eg. helping during a session. Unfortunately due to DEECD regulations, siblings are not permitted to remain at the centre without the parent. Siblings are NOT able to attend Earth Kinder sessions.

Health and Attendance:

Regular attendance is important to a child's development and learning, social adjustment and the development of independence.

No child may attend kindergarten whilst suffering with:

- Skin infections of any sort
- Untreated head lice
- Infectious or contagious disease (see DEECD School Exclusion Table attached)

Notification of the presence of infectious diseases will be placed on the notice board.

If your child suffers **asthma**, please ensure that he/she is well enough to attend and bring any necessary medication to kinder. Staff cannot administer medication unless given the proper written authorization. We are happy to discuss this with you.

Any child suffering from asthma requires an asthma management plan from their G.P.

If your child has a severe cough, such as bronchitis, it is best that he/she does not attend kinder until he/she is well. Sometimes a child may not have definite symptoms but may be overtired or just feeling unwell. In these circumstances, -please use your own judgment. It is assumed that all children attending kinder are well enough to take part in all outdoor activities, as these form part of our daily program!

Please consider your child's health and that of the other children and staff as infection and viruses do tend to spread quickly at kindergarten!

Illness at Kindergarten

The kindergarten is equipped and the staff qualified to cope with basic first aid. Any illness or injury requiring further treatment will be referred to the parent/guardian immediately. Where contact cannot be made, the child's doctor will be consulted. If necessary, an ambulance will be called and the child's treatment will commence.

Facilities and Resources:

Child and Family Health Services

A range of staff are available to you and contact can be made through the preschool teacher or the Shire. These staff include physiotherapist, speech therapist, dietician, psychologist and occupational therapist.

Family Support Services

Councils provide information regarding child care, social workers, child protection and various children's services. Contact can be made directly with the council or with the teacher.

Dept of Education & Early Childhood Development.

A Kindergarten Adviser is employed by the Children's Services branch and is available to both parents and staff to discuss the needs of young children, their role is to give advice and guidance and to provide resource material and information to staff.

Early Learning Association Australia

This is the body that advises and advocates for parents and Committees of Management.

Emergencies

The kinder has a specific plan of action to be followed in the case of emergencies. The plan is on display at the kindergarten and it describes where we may evacuate to and who is responsible for the safety of the children.

In the case of an evacuation, a notice will be posted on the front of the kindergarten.

ONLY when children are in a declared 'safe area' will they be released into their parents care.

In the event of an extreme emergency, arrangements may be taken over by officials of the State Disaster Plan.

About the centre:

- The centre operates under the children's Services Regulations as set down by DEECD. Staff and parents must comply with these regulations if their child attends the centre.
- The kindergarten building is owned by the Mansfield Shire and staff are employed by the Mansfield Kindergarten Committee of Management.

Staff

There must be at least two staff members, the teacher and the educator, working at each kinder session.

The Teacher;

- Provides an educational program and caring environment, orders equipment, liaises with committee members and keeps parents informed about the kinder.
- Implements the regulations governing the operation of the kindergarten to ensure the well being of each child attending.
- Attends meetings with other kindergarten teachers and in-service meetings.

The Educator;

- Aids the teacher with the program during sessions.
- Maintains a clean and tidy environment for the children.

The Office Administrator;

- Processes invoices and carries out tasks to help with the day to day running of the kindergarten
- Is responsible for managing enrolments at the kindergarten

Policies

Mansfield Kindergarten has a program for the review of policies. These policies are available for parents to access at any time during the year.

**Welcome to the community at Mansfield Kindergarten Centre.
We are looking forward to a great year!!**