

Peter Rabbit Community Preschool

Nurturing young minds

Parent's Handbook

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1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to Peter Rabbit Community Preschool.

We are looking forward to a rewarding association with you and your child during a most important stage of their development.

Please read the following information carefully so you are aware of the practices and procedures of the preschool. Remember, staff members are always available to answer any questions or concerns you may have; so please feel free to ask us anything - no question is too big or too small!

1.2 A community preschool

As a community preschool, Peter Rabbit relies on and is run by the community of parents. The preschool is managed by a parent committee that is elected annually from and by the parent body. During the year there are social events for families to get together and some fundraising to assist purchasing additional equipment for the preschool. These events are great ways to meet other parents and help support the preschool for all the children who attend.

1.3 Teaching approach

By the age of three, children enter preschool with a wide array of interests, developing values, beliefs and a diverse range of experiences. Therefore, our teaching will consider each child's learning style, personality, temperament and developmental level.

By providing play-based programs with many experiences suited to specific interests and abilities, we encourage each child to reach their full potential.

1.4 Our staff

Nominated Supervisor &
Early Childhood Educator

Julie-ann James (Mon to Fri)
Bachelor of Teaching

Additional Needs Teacher &
Early Childhood Educator

Siobhann Wynn (Mon to Fri)
Bachelor of Teaching (EC)

Early Childhood Teacher

Linda Atwood (Mon & Tues)
Diploma of Teaching (EC)

Early Childhood Educator

Shelley Nicholson (Wed/Thurs/Fri)
Advanced Child Care Worker (Qualified)
Dip in Nursery Nursing, Montessori

Educator

Gemma Abeleda (Mon to Fri 11.30 to 2.30)
Child Care Worker Cert III

2 Philosophy statement, values and goals

2.1 Philosophy Statement

At Peter Rabbit Community Preschool children will be welcomed into aesthetically pleasing play spaces and offered rich learning experiences through a curriculum based on the Early Years Learning Framework where the children feel part of the preschool community by 'Belonging, Being and Becoming'. We will be sensitive to each family's individuality and work towards creating a community, where all who are part of it are respected and valued.

2.2 Philosophy

Here at Peter Rabbit Community Preschool we offer an environment where each child's well-being, independence and eagerness to experience new opportunities are fostered. We aim to give all children the tools for life-long learning. Through working in partnership with parents and caregivers we strive to develop confident children who experience caring, respectful relationships with peers and educators.

Our program is guided by the [Early Years Learning Framework](#). As Early Childhood Professionals we acknowledge the importance of time for children to explore and experiment, re-visit experiences and develop awareness of their individual abilities.

Children are encouraged to be part of the decision making process within the Preschool, being made aware of safety, hygiene, as well as caring for their self and others.

The natural world is highly valued for its potential for learning through found materials. In partnership with the children educators, create aesthetically pleasing play spaces which encourage children's inquisitiveness. As we discover together in this collaborative process, individual opportunities for challenge and extension will be enhanced.

We value the importance of providing a Preschool program that encompasses the knowledge, skills and resources of parents, families and educators and the broader community. We believe that family involvement is an integral part of the everyday running of our preschool. We welcome the sharing of family experiences, cultures and ideas within our learning environment to enrich the children's development, learning and understandings of the world around them. We encourage an environment where staff and parents work together to foster mutual respect and support of each other through open and regular communications.

2.3 Preschool values

At Peter Rabbit, we believe in providing a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where children, teachers and families are respected.

We value:

- high quality early childhood education delivered by qualified, experienced and caring teachers,
- children being active participants in the development of the curriculum,
- strong family ties playing a major role in a child's early education, and

- supporting children and families with additional needs.

2.4 Goals of the preschool

- To provide a warm and caring environment for children and parents.
- To gather information from parents about specific interests and abilities of their children to maintain a collaborative approach to planning to ensure individualised and effective programs are developed.
- To provide a play-based program based on the Early Years Learning Framework curriculum implemented by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, using observation as the key to successful planning for individuals and the group. We work towards five major 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 and
 - children are effective communicators.
- To provide children with opportunities for open-ended learning where they are encouraged to explore and experiment with materials, to solve problems and work out issues for themselves.
- To foster and promote relationships and interactions where children develop their self-awareness and self-confidence.
- To provide aesthetically pleasing and organised play spaces.
- To encourage the sharing of ideas and the development of respect of one another as we listen and learn together.
- To establish an environment with children in which they are able to learn limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour together.
- To establish an environment in which there are equitable opportunities for learning regardless of ethnicity, gender, ability, age or background.
- To offer appropriate images, resources and learning opportunities about the world to children so they develop respect and appreciation of diversity.
- To provide an environment which shows that children's play is a valued and meaningful learning tool and this will be reflected through the documentation of children's work.
- To regularly reflect upon our practices and continue to enjoy learning as adults to ensure teaching is in line with current knowledge and theory within the early childhood field.

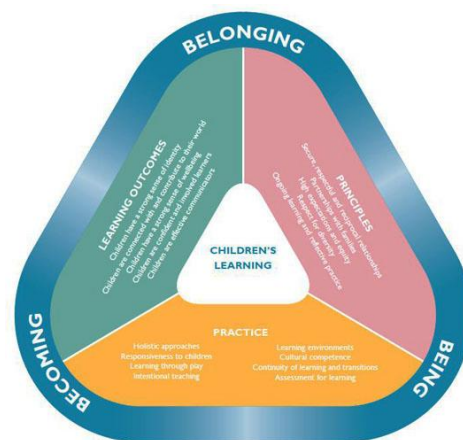
3 Preschool educational program

3.1 Early Years Learning Framework

The preschool educational program follows the Early Years Learning Framework implemented by the Australian Government Department of Education and Communities.

It has a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognises the 'importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

Fundamental to the Framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by **belonging**, **being** and **becoming**.



- **Belonging** acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging.
- **Being** recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances.
- **Becoming** reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society' (Early Years Learning Framework).

3.2 Other key considerations

- Opportunities for learning and exploring will be provided through aesthetically inviting and well-resourced learning environments and through structured and unstructured play, creative pursuits, active and passive play, and individual and group activities.
- Staff will interact with children to extend their incidental learning.
- Staff will plan and present a variety of appropriate language, music and drama experiences for children using a variety of teaching aids and resources based on the children interests.
- Observations will focus on the group as well as the individual and interactions between peers to form the basis of all programming.
- Programs will be flexible to the children's requirements each day.

4 Day to day

4.1 Age groups

The preschool caters for 40 children per week, in two groups of 20 children each:

- Monday/Tuesday - 3 to 4 year olds (two years before school),
- Wednesday/Thursday /Friday – 4 to 5 year olds (one year before school).

4.2 Hours

The children attend between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. during public school terms.

Extended time available 8.30 am to 9 am and 3 pm to 3.30 pm for an additional fee.

4.3 Signing in/out

It is imperative that this is filled in for your child each day when they attend preschool.

This is also where you can note down if someone other than you is collecting your child.

Please remember, this person must be authorised on your child's enrolment form.

4.4 Daily routine

Each day children will have the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of provisions and experiences in both the indoor and outdoor environments. They will be part of decision-making processes that shape our environments and the learning opportunities that come from these.

Materials from the natural world (sand, water, natural objects for collage, sorting, building, creating) where exploration and experimentation can be encouraged will have great value placed upon them as children can work creatively with them to extend problem-solving skills and challenge understandings.

Individual understandings and learning processes within peer groups will be carefully documented, where appropriate, and stories shared.

There are special times each day for group pursuits which may take place in small or large groups. Children will be encouraged to be part of musical and language based experiences and these will be orientated around group interests.

Children bring their own morning tea, lunch and a drink for lunch. Water is available to drink at all times.

The Monday/Tuesday group has a short rest period at the beginning of the preschool year. At the end of term one, a note regarding resting will be sent out asking if you still want your child to rest in the afternoon. The rest time is shortened as the year progresses and for children no longer resting, we will continue with projects and play from earlier in the day.

All times in our daily routine are flexible in response to the needs of the children.

4.5 Special events

The preschool also caters for special events on premises and information for these shows will be provided at the appropriate times.

5 What to bring

5.1 Labelling

Importantly, please label all clothing including shoes and socks plus bags, lunch boxes and lids with your child's name.

5.2 Bag/backpack

Children should be able to recognise and open their own bag/case. It is a good idea to check if your child can open/close it by themselves when purchasing it.

Please ensure it is large enough to hold all your child's belongings and is an appropriate size to fit into our small lockers.

5.3 Morning tea and lunch

Important: No nuts of any kind or peanut based products are to be brought to preschool.

Foods which require refrigeration must be placed in a separate labelled bag. Please specify if the food is for morning tea or lunch. Foods which must be refrigerated are cut fruit, yoghurt, cheese and sandwiches with meats etc.

Please provide **morning tea** for your child in a labelled, reusable bag or separate morning tea box. Morning tea should be healthy foods only and fresh fruit is preferred. Water is provided for the children at morning tea.

Children are asked to bring their **lunch** in a lunch box with a lid which they can open. Please put your child's name on both the base and the lid.

We encourage you to provide a healthy lunch for preschool, sandwiches with nutritious fillings or any other appropriate nutritious food. Celery, carrot or a salad are good additions to your child's lunch. **NO** sweet biscuits, cakes, lollies, nuts, roll ups, or chips please.

Please supply your child with a drink for lunch time.

Water is available to the children at all times whilst at the preschool.

5.4 Clothing

Please dress your child in clothes that they are comfortable in and will not restrict their movement. We also ask that children not be dressed in their best clothes as we cannot guarantee that all paints will wash out of clothing.

Footwear

Correct footwear is also essential. Please do not dress your child in shoes which could make movement and climbing dangerous, such as 'crocs' or 'thongs/flip flops'.

Sun protection

Always remember the power of the sun and dress children in clothes which will offer some sun protection. When outdoors, staff and children will wear sun safe clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. This includes wearing loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered

neckline, longer style skirts, shorts and trousers. Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing can be provided with spare clothing.

Please note: Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

Daily application of sunscreen 30+ to exposed areas is also highly recommended before children come to preschool. We have a supply of sunscreen for your use, if required, and sunscreen will be reapplied 20 minutes before going outdoors.

Hats

We are a 'SunSmart' Centre.

For protection against the sun, each child must wear a hat when playing outside. This must be provided every day regardless of the weather conditions. Staff and children are required to wear sun safe hats that protect their face, neck and ears.

A sun safe hat is one of the following

- legionnaire hat,
- bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5 cm (adults 6 cm),
- broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6 cm (adults 7.5 cm).

Please note that baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

Children without a sun safe hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, verandah or indoors) or can be provided with a spare hat.

Spare clothes

Occasionally mishaps do occur and it may be necessary for your child to change into a fresh set of clothes. Every day, please include a complete change of clothes that can stay in your child's bag, just in case.

Also remember to change this clothing according to the season.

5.5 Library bag

A labelled drawstring bag is to be sent on your child's first day of attendance each week. Bag measurements: 40cm x 40cm (minimum).

Please remember - No bag, no book!

5.6 Toys

Toys are to be left at home, please. Children become distressed if they are lost or broken and upset when they are not allowed to play with them. Peter Rabbit has many wonderful resources and we would prefer children to utilise these whilst with us.

5.7 Birthdays

Please check with a member of staff before providing any foods for the children to ensure food allergies are catered for.

The most appropriate way to celebrate at preschool is to bring a simple butter or chocolate cake or 20 cup cakes. If your child is unable to eat these, please pack an alternative.

6 Communication channels

6.1 Overview

Communication between staff and families is extremely important. Our staff are always available to talk to you about any concerns you may have. We also use a number of channels to communicate, as detailed here.

6.2 Wondering wall

At the front door you will also find our 'wondering wall' where we ask you to write your child's questions to be discussed at morning group time.

Parents are asked to write any ideas their children may have that they would like discussed at our morning group time onto this board in the foyer.

We use the 'wall' to provoke deeper thought and understanding through this discussion. Through this verbal sharing process we are also afforded opportunities to look at projects with those children most interested for further in-depth study.

Children need to be asked first before questions are added and need to be aware their question/s are going on the wall so they know we will be asking them about this 'idea' for discussion.

6.3 Information folder

Parents are asked to check this folder at least once a week. Each child has a section in this folder (all information will be behind their name). It will contain many important notes during the year such as notes, fundraising events, permission slips, receipts and information regarding upcoming events at preschool.

Parents may also use this folder to pass on information to other parents such as birthday invitations. Fee invoices are emailed to you.

6.4 Newsletters

Newsletters are issued on a regular basis and are an important source of information. Please read them carefully to be aware of upcoming events at preschool and keep them close at hand as weeks often tend to move very quickly. Newsletters are emailed to you.

6.5 Noticeboards and posters

These are located in the foyer and will display community notices, fundraising information and committee information. There is also a noticeboard outside in the children's play area which is used to display topical information.

Posters are often placed close to the front door of the preschool and outline matters of urgent attention as well as upcoming events.

6.6 Sharing your weekend news

Parents are invited to write down anything that you as a family has been doing that your child enjoyed or something they have shown an interest in e.g. helping in the garden, cooking etc. We will discuss this at preschool and build their learning experiences on their interests.

6.7 Medication book

The medication book is located in the top drawer of the cupboard at the front door.

The medication book must be fully completed if you wish your child to have medicine administered during the day. Please inform staff members if your child requires medicine and give the medication to a staff member.

Only prescribed medicine will be administered and any medication found in a bag and/or not entered into the medication book will not be administered.

If a child is taking antibiotics they need to be on the medication at least 24 hours before attending preschool.

6.8 Day book

The day book is designed to give you an idea of what has happened during your child's day and is a starting point for conversation. Photos and information regarding children's play and experiences will be provided daily as well as reminders for events.

Please take the time to read this every day. Be aware that photos of every child may not be in the day book every day, but should be present at least once each week.

6.9 Informal and formal complaints

Complain forms are located in the foyer in the top drawer of the cupboard. The forms are designed to allow parents to voice their opinions.

If you have a concern, please address it with a member of staff first. If, after addressing the concern with staff, you feel it has not been resolved, an informal complaint form can be filled out and placed in the box on the office door. This will be taken to a committee meeting for discussion.

Where a complaint is of a highly serious nature and you feel it needs to be addressed urgently, a formal complaint form needs to be completed and the preschool's Community Services Advisor notified. You can reach the Children's Services Adviser at Department of Education and Communities on 1800 619 113.

7 Parent involvement

7.1 Overview

As a community-based preschool we require your assistance in helping with domestic and maintenance work, supporting preschool functions and attendance at parent meetings.

7.2 Social fundraising

The Social/Fundraising Committee plays an integral role in the life of our preschool and events for raising funds as well as social purposes will continue to be organised and run through-out the year.

It is expected that families support events wherever they can as all dollars raised are utilised to purchase expensive items that our budgeted funds cannot accommodate.

7.3 Roster

Peter Rabbit requires each family to complete 4 jobs in total per year:

- **One maintenance job** over the year. The 'maintenance job list' is on the display in the main room for you to put your name on the list.
- **One working bee.** Working bees are held each term and a note will be on display for you to place your name next to a job.
- **One garden duty.** Garden duty requires blower vacuuming, weeding and watering one Saturday or Sunday afternoon once during the year.
- **One fundraising 'Bunnings BBQ'.** We have two Bunnings BBQs during the year and we ask that you help at one e.g. cooking sausages, serving or collecting the money.

We also ask you to help just once during the year with small jobs like washing the tea-towels, dress ups or equipment. This list is also on display in the main room for you to add your name.

Failure to complete the four jobs in the year results in the loss of your maintenance deposit (see page 16).

7.4 Parents' committee

The preschool is managed by a parent committee elected annually from and by the parent body.

The committee is responsible for sound fiscal management of the preschool and attends to matters relating to government funding, regulations and licensing, as well as ensuring all legal requirements pertaining to the running of the preschool are adhered to.

The committee, together with the director, makes decisions on how the preschool is run and what improvements and changes can be made to make it a better environment for the attending children.

8 Policies and procedures

8.1 Policies

All policies are kept at the preschool in our policy document located in the drawer of the cupboard at the front door.

The full set of policies are also available on a secured page in the Parent's Area of the website. To get the password for these secured pages, please [contact the centre Director](#) or the [parent's committee](#).

8.2 Collection and storage of personal information

The preschool is governed by the *Privacy Act (1998)*, and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Bill 2002 (NSW)*. As such we must carefully collect, store and maintain up to date records for your children.

If you have any questions, please speak with the Nominated Supervisor.

8.3 Emergency evacuation procedure

If there is an emergency at the preschool which would require the children to be removed from the premises, the staff will take them to the **Ascot Motor Inn at 18 Ingram Rd.**

Parents will be contacted from this location and asked to collect their child as soon as possible.

Each term we are required to carry out an 'emergency evacuation practice' and we assemble the children at the top of the car park, call the roll and then return to the area within Peter Rabbit.

If the danger was outside of the pre-school grounds we would keep the children inside.

During this time we follow all the required OH & S safety procedures and document the procedure.

8.4 Complaints procedure

If an issue arises, please discuss it with the staff or Director.

To formalise the complaint it must be written onto an informal complaints form and presented at a Committee meeting for discussion.

If you are unhappy with the outcome, you're are directed to complete a Formal Complaint form and contact our Children's Services Adviser at Department of Education and Communities on 1800 619 113

8.5 Immunisation/illness

All parents are asked to:

- Present proof of their child's immunisation documents on enrolment, and
- Keep their child at home if suffering from a heavy cold e.g. green runny nose or possible infectious disease or your child has been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours.

The nominated supervisor may:

- Send home any child who has symptoms of an infectious disease,
- Request a doctor's certificate on your child's return to preschool after an infectious disease,
- Send home any child who appears unwell and/or with a temperature.

Please do not send your child if they are unwell, have a temperature or coloured mucus as we do not want other children to then get sick.

8.6 Arriving/leaving

Children must be brought to and from preschool by an adult known to the staff. Children will NOT be permitted to leave with any person unknown to the staff unless prior arrangements have been made.

Written permission must be provided if the person is not nominated on your child's enrolment form and persons unknown to staff will be asked to show ID.

Children must be brought into the preschool (not left outside) and parents must sign their child in/out daily in the attendance book.

Please bring children as soon as possible after 9.00am so they can be part of all experiences, and pick them up by 3.00pm. **A late fee of \$5.00 per 5 minutes after 3.00pm applies.**

For insurance reasons the children are not allowed in outside of the normal operating hours. If you arrive early please wait until opening time.

8.7 Medication

Under no circumstances will medicine be administered to a child if it is not prescribed by a doctor, with your child's name on the container and written into the medication book.

It is essential to complete all information into the Medication Book and give the medication to a staff member so they can place it in the fridge and inform them of the time it needs to be administered and the dosage.

8.8 Absences

If your child is not able to attend pre-school please let the staff know. **Fees are still required and sick days cannot be made up.**

8.9 Excursions

We usually organise special presenters to come to Peter Rabbit instead of us leaving the premises.

Parents will be advised prior to all excursions and a permission note will be provided giving all necessary information.

Excursions will only take place if parents can voluntarily assist staff on the day, as we must take 1 adult for every 3-4 children. Siblings are permitted and their parent will be allocated only one other child.

9 Administration and fees

9.1 Government funding

Peter Rabbit is non-profit community based preschool organisation. It is partially funded by Community Services, now called Department of Education and Communities.

The NSW State Government provides a subsidy based on the enrolment of all children in the preschool. Therefore, every child's position is subsidised. Preschool fees are set to cover the cost of running the preschool, it is not for profit. We receive additional funding for the following groups of children:

- Those at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Those who may be economically disadvantaged
- Those with special needs
- Those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

9.2 Child care benefit

Peter Rabbit Community Preschool is a Registered Carer. The Family Assistance Office will administer the Work Test for families to assess how much assistance with fees you may be entitled to. If your family is in one of the following categories you are eligible to claim child care benefit (not child care rebate):

- Both parents working (including paid full-time, part-time or casual work, self-employment, paid leave, unpaid sick leave, paid or unpaid maternity leave or setting up a business),
- Activity looking for paid work (including being in receipt of New-start or Youth Allowance),
- Studying or training (including voluntary or unpaid work to improve your skills);
- A person with a disability,
- Caring for a child or adult with a disability, or
- Your partner is in gaol or living outside Australia.

9.3 Deposits

Non-refundable administration fee

A \$50.00 **non-refundable** fee is payable in advance to cover administration costs before commencing at the preschool. This amount also includes a compulsory Incorporation Fee of \$2.00 per family, and \$5.00 Personal Accident Insurance per child (to be paid annually).

Payment must be made within 14 days of receipt of acceptance letter. Failure to pay by the due date will forfeit your child's position.

In the second year at the preschool, this administration fee is \$30.00 and covers the same costs as above.

Security deposit

For new enrolments, a security deposit of \$100 is required upon acceptance of a position and is payable within 14 days of receipt of acceptance letter. This amount will be deducted from 4th term fees in the final year your child attends the preschool. Failure to pay by the due date will forfeit your child's position.

If your child leaves the preschool before term 4 of the final year, the security deposit will be refunded only if four weeks written notice has been given to the preschool. If a position has been accepted, but the child fails to start the year it's been enrolled into, the security deposit will be forfeited.

Currently enrolled children, returning to the preschool in the following year, will not be required to pay the one month securing deposit of \$100.

Maintenance deposit

A \$100 maintenance deposit will be charged annually with term one's fees. You are also asked to attend at a Working Bee, Garden Duty, assisting at one Bunnings BBQ and one job chosen from a list at preschool.

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to place your name next to a job you can do and to complete these as detailed on page 13.

9.4 Fees

Government funding influences fees and as such they are unpredictable and therefore subject to change at any time.

In addition to the attendance fees, each family will be charged a **\$40 equipment levy per term** to assist in the purchase of extra, non-budgeted items for the preschool.

Fees are due by the end of week one each term and will be issued during the second last week of the previous term. If you are experiencing financial difficulties please speak with the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer or Director to discuss suitable payment options.

Please be aware that failure to pay by the due date will result in a \$75 fine.

The preschool does not take responsibility for cash and will only accept payment of fees by postal note, personal or bank cheque or through internet banking of direct deposit. Details are on fee notices regarding all payment options.

Bank fees for dishonoured cheques are the responsibility of the drawer, not the preschool and will be added to your term fees.

9.5 Notice of withdrawal

Four term weeks' notice must be given and if you will be leaving in term four, notice for the **whole of the term** must be given or you will lose your security deposit.

Failure to provide the preschool with the appropriate notice will mean the entire term's fees must be paid.