

PIED PIPER PRESCHOOL
WALLERAWANG



Family Handbook 2022



“A place for childhood to happen”

What's inside this Handbook?

Part 1. Welcome to Pied Piper Preschool

Part 2. Important Information

Part 3. Health and Safety

Part 4. Health Food and Drink

Part 5. What We Do – The Preschool Program

Preschool Contact Details

Address:

18 Pindari Place, Wallerawang, NSW, 2845

Postal Address:

P.O. Box 36, Wallerawang, NSW, 2845

Phone:

(02) 6355 7440

Email:

admin@piedpiperpreschool.com.au

director@piedpiperpreschool.com.au

Website:

www.piedpiperpreschool.com.au

Welcome to Pied Piper Preschool

Welcome! This handbook outlines the basics of how the preschool works and the responsibilities we each have as we work to make your child's time with us as valuable as possible. It summarises and explains many of the preschool's policies and procedures. Please take the time to read it and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask Brad or Cathy.

Pied Piper Preschool was established over 50 years ago and since then has provided quality early childhood education to generations of children in Wallerawang and the surrounding area. We have been in our current location since 1991 and currently we are licensed by the Department of Education to cater for 39 children a day between the ages of 2 and 5 years old. In 2021 we were rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standard for the high quality of care and education that we provide.

Acknowledgement of Country

“We know we are on Wiradjuri lands.”

“Belonging” is a strong theme in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) – our curriculum document. The children at Pied Piper belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community, as well as the preschool community.

Children in Australia experience living and learning both with and alongside others in a range of diverse communities and people. As citizens of Australia, it is important for our children to understand something of our country's cultural heritage, and the people that make up this land. It's about knowing where we belong and the people we are a part of in this diverse and wonderful place. It's also about acknowledging that we all have the right to belong in Australia.

Acknowledging the Aboriginal heritage of our nation and learning about the country and communities we belong to will help Pied Piper children develop attitudes of respect for others. Learning Outcome 2 of the EYLF encourages us to help our children to “be connected with and contribute to their world.” As a part of this, the children and educators at Pied Piper acknowledge the Wiradjuri people each day as a mark of respect, and educators use this simple statement as a stepping-stone to further learning about the First People of our nation.

Funding and Licensing

We are licensed and funded by the NSW Department of Education. We receive annual funding from the Department which funds our operations. This funding however does not cover the full cost of operating the preschool and we charge fees to make up the balance.

The Preschool is regulated by the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care. Copies of these documents are available in the preschool foyer if you are interested in looking at them.

The contact phone number for the Department of Education (Western Sydney Region) is 1800 619 113

Our Team

Director/ Early Childhood Teacher

Bradley Campbell

Administration Officer

Cathy Matthews

Early Childhood Teachers

Ashleigh Oldfield (Educational Leader)

Tiffany McCann

Educators

Megan Muldoon (Studying Diploma)

Tina Walker (Diploma)

Lauren Seton (Studying Diploma)

Monique Millmore (Studying Diploma)

Brooke Carter (Certificate III)

Hannah Pender (Certificate III)

Joshua Stait (Studying Bachelor of Education)

Lori Pearce (Studying Bachelor of Education)

- We also employ regular casual staff to replace educators when needed and additional educators to support our work with children with additional needs.
- All team members hold a valid and current Working with Children Check**
- All staff hold current First Aid qualifications and are also trained in responding to asthma and anaphylaxis.

Our Management Committee

Pied Piper is a community-based preschool – a non-profit organisation run by a volunteer Management Committee which is made up of parents of the children attending the centre. The Management Committee is made up of seven members who are elected at our Annual General Meeting each August.

When you enrol your child at the preschool you become a member of the preschool association. This entitles you to stand for election to the committee and to participate in the management of the preschool by voting at any general meetings.

In 2021/2022 the Preschool Management Committee is made up of:

President:	Danielle Byrnes
Vice President:	Erin Monds
Secretary:	Amanda Dykes
Treasurer:	Sophie Tinning
Committee Members:	Tina Smith, Elise Thomas and Cain Thomas

*This is subject to change with the 2021/22 AGM

Pied Piper Preschool ; "A Place for childhood to happen"

We believe that children are strong and capable.

They are thinkers, problem solvers and experimenters. We help them to experience this for themselves by providing challenging, engaging and meaningful learning experiences. We climb trees, we garden, we cook and we make things. We use real materials and real tools as much as possible. We ask why and we take the time to find out. Above all we support children to become confident and capable learners.

At Pied Piper Preschool we believe that children matter. We think that childhood should be a time of joy and wonder. A place that they will feel is their own. A place for childhood to happen. A place of curiosity, creativity and play. We believe in nurturing each child to explore and develop their own unique identity. We support them to develop friendships and a sense of belonging as they work, play and learn together by prioritising the children and our engagements with them.



We value our place in the local community and are grateful for the connections that we have with those around us. By reaching out beyond the preschool gate we support children to participate, contribute and advocate for issues that affect themselves, their community and the world around them.

Our Philosophy

What matters to us at Pied Piper Preschool?



We recognise that each child is part of a family and we celebrate and respect the diverse range of backgrounds that all of our children come from. We pride ourselves on forming warm and supportive and inclusive relationships with our families and we seek to work with parents and other family members in all that we do.



We are a passionate and dedicated team. We celebrate and value this important and unique time in the children's lives. We are honoured to be a part of this pivotal time and play a role in the foundation of a child's development and early education.

We encompass "Yindjamurra" in everything we do.

We acknowledge and respect the Wiradjuri peoples as the traditional custodians of the land our preschool resides on. We make every effort to embrace and advocate for Indigenous cultures in our Preschool.

We recognise the individual strengths of our team members to complement each other and provide high quality education and care. We are always seeking opportunities to enhance our skillset and to continue learning from each other.



2021

Important Information

Hours of Operation

We are open from 8:30 am to 4 pm each day*. You are welcome to drop your children off any time from 8:30am and pick them up any time before 4pm.

*NB: For two-year-olds attending our Wednesday Morning (2021)/Friday morning (2022) session hours are 9am – 12pm.

We operate according to NSW school term dates and are closed during school holidays. For 2022 our terms dates are:

- ❖ **First Term – Thursday 27th January 2022 – Friday 8th April 2022**
- ❖ **Second Term – Monday 25th April – Friday 1st July 2022**
- ❖ **Third Term – Monday 18th July – Friday 23rd September 2022**
- ❖ **Fourth Term – Monday 10th October – Friday 16th December 2022**

Signing In and Out

There is a sign-in/out sheet in each Playroom where you must sign your child in at the beginning of each day and out at the end of each day. It is a legal requirement.

We use the sign-in sheets for attendance, security and evacuation register reasons and take them with us in the event of an emergency, so it is important we have an accurate record of attendance. Please let any person you have authorised to drop off or pick up your child know that they must sign in or out whenever they drop off or pick up your child.

Access to your Child at Preschool

You have the right to visit or contact your child at any time while they are at Pied Piper Preschool unless there is a court or parenting order preventing this from happening.

If your Child is Away

Please let us know if your child will be away. Fees are still charged for any absences, but it is important that we are aware who is going to be in for the day.

Please try to attend as regularly as possible to maintain continuity and build confidence for your child.

However, if your child is ill, letting us know may assist us and other families if there are similar symptoms amongst other children. Also, we care about what is happening for your child and family, and like to let other children know if their friends are going to be away. ***It is best if you phone rather than email as we may not see the email until later in the day.***

Occasional Care

If you need care on a day on which your child does not normally attend we can offer occasional care if we have places available. Please speak to Brad or Cathy if you require an additional occasional place. You can request a place in advance, and we will let you know as soon as possible if (or when) a space becomes available for that day.

Preschool Fees

Start Strong Free Preschool Funding

The 2021-22 Budget includes funding for the Start Strong Free Preschool Program for community and mobile preschools. \$150 million has been allocated across 2022 for the new program. This program will replace the current COVID-19 Free Preschool Funding program from January 2022.

Pied Piper Preschool is primarily funded by the NSW Government to deliver preschool to children aged 3 and above. This is an opt-in funding program. That means that it is not compulsory, and providers who are eligible to receive funding will decide whether they choose to receive this funding.

What This Means:

Pied Piper Preschool is committed to meeting the needs of our community and will opt in to the Start Strong Free Preschool Funding on the assumption that the Preschool will remain financially viable.

Therefore, the following fees apply*

3-5-year-olds	\$0 per day (2-day enrolment)
2-year-olds	\$25 per morning session
3 rd day and additional bookings	\$40 per day
Enrolment Fee	\$55 per year

*Subject to NSW Government Funding

Note: Pied Piper Preschool reserves the right to change or increase the fees as necessary. The minimum 2-week notice period requirements must be met however, as much notice will be given of impending fee changes.

'Normal' Preschool Fee Structure

Please note that we have an age-related fee scale as we do not receive funding for 2-year-olds and we are funded differently for 3 & 4 year olds.

Enrolment fee (must be paid prior to commencement): \$55 per year
 Bond (must be paid in full before commencement): 2 weeks' fees

Daily Fees

4-year-olds:	\$20.00 per day for two-day enrolment
3-year-olds:	\$25.00 per day for two-day enrolment
Equity Fees for 3- & 4-year-olds:	\$10.00 per day for two-day enrolment (Equity fees apply to Aboriginal families, families who hold a low-income Health Care Card or children who have a diagnosed disability)
3/4-year-old and equity - 3rd day	\$40.00 per day
2-year-olds:	\$25 per session
Occasional Care	\$40.00 per day

Late fees

A late fee may be applied if you do not pick up your child/ren before 4pm without good reason. Please collect your children in enough time to leave the preschool by 4pm.

Payment of Fees

Fees can be paid by cash directly to Administration Assistant during office hours, but only when receipt can be issued immediately, OR by cheque, Direct Deposit or through Centrepay for Centrelink clients. We do not have EFTPOS or credit card facilities. Fees must be paid no later than the week in which they are due.

Payment/Transaction history can be found on the OWNA app.

Fee Increases

Pied Piper Preschool reserves the right to change or increase the fees as necessary. The minimum 2-week notice period requirements must be met however, as much notice will be given of impending fee changes.

Please refer to the Pied Piper Preschool Fees Policy for full details.

Priority of Access Guidelines

As a requirement of our funding, Pied Piper Preschool complies with the *Priority of Access Guidelines* set by the NSW State Government. These guidelines are intended to ensure all children have access to a preschool program before they attend school.

The current guidelines require us to give priority to:

- Children in their year before school (ie: will be 4 years old on or before 31st July)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Children from low-income Health Care Card holding families
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with disabilities
- Children who are at risk of harm

Complaints and Feedback

While we will try our best to meet your family's needs and do the best for your child, there may be times when things go wrong. We hope that you will feel confident enough to bring your complaint or constructive criticism to the Director or to the Management Committee so that we are able to review the issue and see if changes need to be made.

We would ask you to refrain from using Facebook or other social media to contact other parents or educators. Confidential, sensitive and honest communication will generally be the best way to sort through any difficult issues.

We also love to get your positive feedback. Our work can be tiring and challenging at times, and it can lift an educator enormously to hear that your child loves to come to preschool, had a particularly good day, enjoyed an experience planned by an educator or has learnt something new. We also love to hear if **you** are happy with the type of care, stimulation and nurturing we provide for your child.

Please refer to the Complaints and Feedback Policy on our website. It will guide you in the appropriate way to bring your issue to our attention.

Communicating with You

Our communication with you is important to us. There will be a number of ways that we will get information to you:

- ❖ Notes in your pigeonhole in the front foyer
- ❖ OWNA – An online program (and app) where you can see a range of information, photos of your children learning and communicate with the team.
- ❖ Email
- ❖ Phone calls
- ❖ Personal communication at drop-off or pick-up time

Getting Involved

Pied Piper Preschool aims to work closely with families to meet your child's and family's individual needs. In order to achieve this, we ask that you contribute to the community life of our preschool, **at the level at which you feel most comfortable**. This can be achieved in a variety of ways.

We encourage you to be involved with your child at Preschool if you have the time. You are very welcome to spend time at the Preschool – just let the educators know that you're planning to stay. Feel free to come in at any time of the day.

If you have any skill or talent that you think the children may enjoy, please mention it to the educators i.e. singing, playing an instrument, bathing a new baby, sewing, cooking, other handcrafts, storytelling, acting or an aspect of your occupation.

We also love to have parents who may like to help us with gardening with the children during outdoor play time.....this can be on a casual drop-in basis....the children are always willing helpers for weeding, planting, composting and any other everyday garden jobs.

You may like to share a cultural experience with us. Perhaps you can sing or speak in another language, or cook foods from your culture, or share a celebration with us, or an aspect of your culture.

We actively encourage parents to join us on excursions and special days. We'll let you know when these are happening.

Parental input into our daily program and feedback in your child's portfolio is an important area where we would appreciate your input. Just tell an educator if you want to contribute or have comments to make. Alternatively, you can speak to the Director.

Fundraising

Fundraising is an integral part of our budget, particularly as funding conditions deteriorate. There may be small and large events across the year, and we ask people to contribute if and when they can. We understand that not everyone has the financial capacity to be involved, but perhaps you can donate your time.

Fundraising events are organised by parents and community members on the Committee. The Committee aims to make events suitable for the whole family and community to participate in. Any fundraising ideas are greatly appreciated.

Smoking

In accordance with our policy, no smoking will be allowed in the building or grounds of the preschool at any time (this includes after hours and during events).

According to the Regulations, alcohol of course is not allowed while children are present, and illicit drugs are prohibited at any time.

Evacuations and Emergencies

Please be aware of the evacuation procedure so that you will know what to do in the event of an emergency. It is displayed in various prominent places around the centre as well as exit and entry points in each room. We practice evacuation with all the children several times each term.

All staff are actively involved in the safety procedures of our preschool and are included in fire extinguisher training, fire awareness, first aid techniques and other safety measures. We have occasional visits from Ambulance Officers, Fire Officers and the Police to encourage children's confidence and knowledge.

Child Protection

Under NSW law all educators are Mandatory Reporters for child protection purposes. If we reasonably suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm due to abuse or neglect, we are legally required to notify the Department of Community and Justice.

Policies and Procedures

Policy development for early childhood services is an ongoing process. Policies are reviewed every two years or as deemed necessary. We welcome your comments and ideas. Our policies reflect how we respond to the requirements of our Regulations and the National Quality Standards, along with other issues that arise. You can be involved in policy development by commenting on draft policies when we put them out to parents, and by offering your feedback.

By law, we are required to notify you of any changes to policies 14 days before the changes take place.

A copy of the full policy document is kept in a folder in the foyer for you to consult at any time. Please see The Director or Cathy if you have any comments to make or feedback on our policies.

The important policies you should definitely be familiar with include:

- Enrolment Policy
- Fees Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Infectious Diseases and Immunisation Policy
- Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation Policy

Health and Safety

Part

3

What to Wear at Preschool

It is important that your child be comfortable and able to play easily in their preschool clothes, and this includes running, climbing and being very active. Please avoid clothing that might restrict your child's ability to play. This could include dresses with frills or long skirts. We also encourage you to send your child in play clothes (ie clothes that you are happy to get dirty). As they play children will often get paint, mud, dirt or sand on their clothes and we would rather that they are able to relax and enjoy their play rather than worrying about getting dirty.

In choosing clothes to wear to preschool please bear the following in mind:

- ☑ **For sun protection:** All shoulders to be covered...no thin straps or tiny capped sleeves; please no crop tops that expose the tummy or back or racer-back tops that leave shoulders or parts of the back exposed. Please also bring a hat with a brim (bucket hat). No caps please as they do not offer enough protection from the sun. If you would like a Pied Piper hat you can buy one from Cathy in the office for \$15.00.
- ☑ **For safety and comfort:** Please choose shoes that are comfortable and suitable for active play. Thongs and sandals that leave the toes exposed can be dangerous when riding bikes or climbing, so we ask that these are not worn for preschool. Similarly, loose slip on shoes or sling backs (eg: Crocs) are often not secure enough for fast running and changing direction.
- ☑ **For warmth:** Please include a long sleeved top and a jacket in your child's bag at all times (even in hot weather) as the temperature can change quickly. In autumn and winter please bring a coat, scarf and beanie and gloves if your child likes to wear them) as soon as the cool weather starts....it can get very cold in our playground (especially on windy days) but as far as possible we aim to play outside every day and warm clothes help to make that much more enjoyable!

Sunscreen

Sunscreen is an important part of our sun protection policy. During the warmer months we encourage you to apply sunscreen to your children BEFORE they come to preschool or alternatively use the sunscreen available at preschool when you arrive. We then reapply sunscreen through the day to ensure children remain protected.

Please note that we do not apply sunscreen during the winter months when the UV rating is not high enough to need it.

If your child has an allergy to sunscreen or is unable to use the sunscreen provided, please let the educators know immediately. Your child will need to bring sunscreen clearly labelled with their name for their use at preschool. This will need to be left at preschool.

Please refer to our Sun Protection Policy on our website for further information about how we can work together to keep your child safe in the sun at preschool.

Immunisation

From January 2018, parents enrolling their children into preschool will be required to provide evidence of either their child's vaccination status, or an approved exemption, **before their child can be enrolled.**

Your child cannot start preschool without this documentation.

Please Note: From January 2018 Conscientious objection to immunisation is no longer an approved reason for exemption.

One of the following forms must be provided and attached before starting:

1. an **Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement** which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations. A copy of this statement can be requested via your myGov account (if you have one); from a Medicare Service Centre, or by calling the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809
2. an **AIR Immunisation History Form** on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule
3. an **AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form** which has been certified by a GP.

Due to changes in NSW law we are no longer able to accept other forms of immunisation documentation (eg: Blue Book or letter from a doctor).

If your child receives a vaccination while they are at preschool (typically this happens when they turn four) please provide us with an updated immunisation form so that our records remain up to date.

If there were an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable illness at the preschool (or in the local community) we would ask any children who are not vaccinated against that particular illness to remain at home until the danger of infection has passed.

Accidents and Injuries

At Pied Piper we believe that children benefit from challenging (and even risky) play. Such play allows children to develop their physical skills as well as their self-esteem and ability to judge and manage risks in later life. At the same time, we supervise the children's play closely and aim to keep it as safe as possible. Even so there will be times when your child may injure themselves while at preschool. Usually these are minor scrapes, grazes or bumps although sometimes they can be more serious.

All our permanent educators have a current First Aid Certificate and by law a staff member with a First Aid Certificate must be present at all times when we have children in attendance. In addition, most educators are trained in Asthma and Anaphylaxis First Aid as well.

Generally, this means we are able to treat any minor injuries ourselves, however in the case of more serious cases we will call an ambulance or seek other medical treatment. When children have accidents that require first aid or adult attention, they are recorded in the OWNA APP and this information will come through immediately. You can sign on the OWNA app at that time or when you arrive for pick up you will be asked to read and sign a copy of any accident reports relating to your child. We usually write "please see staff" on the sign on sheet as a reminder to you (and us) that there is something we need to tell you about.

While it may sometimes seem as though we are reporting on lots of minor things, it is important that you are aware of any cuts, scratches, bruises or other injuries, incidents and illness that happen during the day and it is a requirement of our regulations that we report this information to you. You are welcome to take a copy of any reports if you wish.

Illness

There will be times when your child should not come to preschool. Because we need to balance your child's needs with the health and safety of all the other children and educators at preschool, it is likely that if you send them, we will call you to come and pick them up if we see the following:

- ☑ If your child is ill from a contagious viral or bacterial illness (flu, stomach bug, cold, etc)
- ☑ If your child has a skin condition, discharging eyes, or head lice until it has been treated.
- ☑ If your child is unusually tired, pale, lethargic or irritable, or constantly crying from discomfort due to illness and in need of constant one-on-one care
- ☑ If your child has rashes or skin irritation that can't be identified
- ☑ If your child is vomiting and/or has loose bowel motions
- ☑ If your child has been injured involving a head injury or had a medical procedure requiring stitches. Your child should not attend preschool until recovered or for at least 48 hours

If you have given your child medication to ease pain or fever during the night or in the morning before coming to preschool this may be masking symptoms which are likely to reappear when the medication wears off. If your child needs pain or fever medication to come to preschool, they should be kept at home.

Medication

There are strict Regulations around the administration of medication for your child at preschool. If your child requires medication during their time at preschool, please speak to an educator in the morning. We will ask you to fill out a medication form, detailing the medication and dose and give us permission to administer it.

Please note, we can only administer medication that is prescribed **by a registered medical practitioner (even for over-the-counter medication)**. It must be in the original container with the original prescription label with the name of the child (for prescription medication). The medication must be still within the expiry date or use-by date.

We cannot administer **over-the-counter products**, which include cough medicines and pain or fever relieving medications without a doctor's instructions to do so. **Nappy rash and other required skin creams can be applied but** must be in the original container with the original label and instructions and be within the expiry or use-by date.

We do not administer Panadol or other pain and fever relieving medications at Pied Piper Preschool except in the event of a temperature above 38 degrees Celsius while we wait for you to arrive to pick up your ill child and where you have given written authorisation in the Enrolment Form or verbal authorisation over the phone. This will only take place after consultation with the Nominated Supervisor or in their absence, with the Responsible Person on duty.

The only other exception to the administration of medication will be in the case of the need for an emergency medication to be administered for asthma or anaphylaxis when asthma or anaphylaxis had not previously been diagnosed.

Parents and guardians will be asked to record all medications in our Medication Register, which is then signed and witnessed by another staff member at the time the medication is given. You will receive a copy of this report.

Please note: At Pied Piper Preschool children are not permitted to self-administer medication.

Medical Conditions

We have a responsibility to ensure that the needs of children with ongoing health issues (such as asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis, food or chemical intolerances or allergies) are considered and addressed. Alternatively, your child may have a particular condition or illness that impacts on how we meet their care and health needs at preschool.

Please refer to the Medical Conditions Policy that you will be given if you answer “yes” to the medical conditions question in the enrolment form or see a copy of this policy on our website. You will be required to complete additional paperwork that gives the educators specific instructions on how to support your child’s medical, health or care needs.

Additional Needs

Pied Piper Preschool has a commitment to integrating children with additional needs into the preschool wherever possible. If your child has any additional needs, please discuss these with the Director, and we will talk about specific care, therapy and other needs your child may have. In some cases, funding may be available to employ a support worker if this is required for your child.

Arrival and Departure

We ask that you please hold your child’s hand as they leave the centre and ensure that they remain with you if you are chatting with educators or other parents in the Playrooms and foyer in the afternoon. Children can easily slip out the front door when others are leaving, and it is a quick gallop to the car park. **Please be aware of closing the front door and gates behind you every time you enter and exit.**

Road Safety

The preschool carpark can be very busy at pick up and drop off times. Please be aware of others whenever you are walking or driving in the carpark and do not allow your children to play in this area. **Please make sure that you use appropriate child restraints or car seats in your car for the age of your child.**

Please do not leave any young children in your car while you drop off or pick up from preschool. While this may be convenient it is also dangerous.

If children are not restrained appropriately when being picked up or dropped off or are left in cars during pick up and drop off, we may have to report the situation to the authorities.

Please also remember that **the laneway leading to the preschool is one way only.** Make sure that you drive in and out in the correct direction at all times!

Toileting and Toilet Training

We understand that children will have the occasional accident, so please send a **complete change of clothes** in their bag every day. For toilet-training children, multiple pants and undies/pull-ups will be required, and a spare pair of shoes and socks would be helpful too.

We support and encourage children with their toileting, but please don't feel any pressure to rush your child through toilet training because they are starting preschool. We happily follow your toilet training procedures and have nappy changing facilities if required. Keep us informed if you've decided to start toilet training your child so we know how you'd like to approach it and can work in with you. If you would like some assistance or information on toilet training, please don't hesitate to ask your child's educators.

Dummies

If your child uses a dummy, we need you to do a few easy things to help keep it hygienic. Put it in a small, sealed plastic container and clearly mark both the dummy and the container with your child's name. That way, if it's not being used, we can put it somewhere safe and protected.

Sleep and Rest

Children's sleep and rest needs are very individual, and also change as they grow. We find that most children at preschool do not need (or want) a sleep during the day. Instead of a "sleep time" we provide a relaxation time after lunch each day where the children are encouraged to relax and rest for a short period (usually around 15 minutes).

However, if your child still needs or wants a rest or sleep, please let us know. For those children who do sleep we provide preschool beds and child-size fold-out mattresses which we place on the floor. You will need to bring a child's sleeping bag, or a set of cot sheets and blanket. Please put bedding into a named bag - an old pillowcase or big draw-string bag is a good idea. If your child has a comforter, teddy or small pillow etc that they use when they sleep, please remember to pack this as well.

You will need to take your child's bed-linen home regularly to wash it so please chat with your child's educator to see how often this needs to be done.

For any children who do not normally sleep at preschool we do have some spare bedding for the rare occasions when they may be tired and need to sleep.

Bike Helmets

At preschool, we have lots of bikes that have a low centre of gravity and are hard to roll. However, if you would like your child to wear a helmet as they ride (particularly to reinforce that important message about needing to wear a helmet whenever you ride), we would ask you to do the following:

- Bring a helmet clearly marked on the outside with your child's name
- Bring it each day they attend (we don't have room for helmet storage) and place it in your child's locker

These things assist us with storage, and mean your child wears a helmet that is theirs, fits properly and is only used on their head to maintain good hygiene.

Birthdays

Birthdays are usually an important occasion for your child, so if you would like to send a cake to celebrate your child's birthday with their group at preschool, you are welcome to do so. It is preferable if you can send cupcakes (one for each child in the group) if possible so that we don't have to worry about children blowing out candles on a shared cake (for cross-infection reasons). Cakes do not have to be "healthy" as they are a treat and not a daily occurrence. Occasional cakes (and other treats) help to teach the children about "sometimes" foods and their place in a healthy diet.

If you have invitations to give out for your child's birthday celebration, please do so discreetly so that other children do not feel left out. Please do not ask staff for personal information relating to other children at preschool, as this exchange of information is not allowed. However, you may place invitations in the pigeonholes in the front foyer.

Healthy Food and Drinks

Part

4

As a preschool we do not provide food for the children. However, we do encourage healthy eating and have a Nutrition Policy that guides our decisions about food and drink. This section of the handbook will give you some guidance about what to pack for your child's morning tea and lunch while they are at preschool.

Allergies

The Preschool has a NO NUT POLICY as we regularly enrol children who have severe life-threatening allergies to peanuts and tree nuts. Please do not send foods that contain any kind of nut product. This includes friands, any item made with almond meal and any muesli bar or other snack bar that contains nuts.

If your child has any allergies or intolerances to certain food products, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can discuss any changes we might need to make to our program.

Healthy Eating

We encourage the children to develop healthy eating habits while they are at preschool, and we ask for your help in packing healthy lunch and snacks to support this message. Included in your enrolment pack you will find two Munch & Move fact sheets (Health Lunchboxes and Choose Water as a Drink) that provide some suggestions.

As a general rule, we discourage chocolate, lollies and chips as well as cakes, donuts, sweet biscuits and other sweets (even if they are homemade). Fruit based or plain yoghurts are good but please do not bring chocolate or caramel yoghurts or desserts or jelly.

We also encourage you to limit the number of processed "snacks" in individual packaging that you send, as while these foods may be promoted as healthy, they often contain high amounts of fats, sugar and salt.

Food that does not meet the *Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy* will be returned home, along with a note explaining why and suggesting substitutes. However, we will make sure that your child is not hungry by providing a suitable alternative.

We realise that children can be "fussy" eaters and that it is not always easy to encourage healthy choices. If you are unsure of what to include in your child's lunchbox, please talk to an educator and we will do our best to make some suggestions.

What to Bring

Each day we eat two meals at preschool – **morning tea and lunch**. Please pack enough food for both of these meals. This can be included in the one lunch box.

Please pack **at least one piece of fruit** (we encourage the children to start morning tea with fruit) as well as something more substantial (such as a sandwich or wrap) for lunch.

Educators always sit with the children during mealtimes, but it helps if children are able to handle their food independently. If your child likes their fruit cut in a particular way, please do this (where possible) before you pack it as we are not always able to do so during mealtimes.

If any of your child's food needs to be kept cold you can either put an icepack in their lunchbox or place the item in the refrigerator in the preschool kitchen. Otherwise, lunchboxes go into your child's locker along with their bag. Please label anything put into the fridge with your child's name and also make a note that you have put something in the fridge on the whiteboard on the door to the kitchen. This makes sure that educators are aware that they need to get it out.

We are not able to heat or reheat food for children. Hot food can potentially cause burns or scalding and also requires an educator to leave the room/meal area for the time it takes to heat the food.

For more information you can find our full *Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy* on our website. You will also find recipe books and a healthy lunch folder in the foyer to give you some ideas on what to pack.

Drinks

Water is the best drink to quench thirst. Most children enjoy drinking water if they get into the habit at an early age. Please send a drink bottle containing water for your child to have at morning tea and lunch. Fruit juice, cordial, energy, health drinks or soft drink are not accepted at preschool.

Lunchboxes

We prefer **Nude Food lunchboxes and containers**, where you can put healthy snacks, sandwiches, fruit etc in the little compartments without having to include packets, plastic wrap or other rubbish so we can reduce the amount of packaging waste we are sending to landfill.

Cooking

As part of our program, we regularly cook with the children. This provides lots of valuable learning opportunities as well as being a chance to talk about healthy eating and nutrition. We aim to cook healthy food wherever possible and to use the fruit and vegetables that we grow in the preschool garden. We generally share anything that we have cooked with all the children at morning tea or lunch time. We often find that children are more adventurous and prepared to try something new when they have been involved in helping to make it.

If you would like to get the recipes for any of the food that we have made at preschool, please ask an educator.

What We Do – The Preschool Program



Our Educational Program

At Pied Piper we strongly believe that children learn best through play. As a result, we provide many opportunities for the children to explore, create, pretend and get involved in hands on learning. We carefully observe the children as they play and interact with each other and use this information to help plan a program of activities and experiences that will extend the children’s learning.

Each day we provide a balance of free play (both indoors and outdoors) as well as small group experiences and whole group times. In this way children experience the freedom and independence to make their own choices as well as learning to be part of a larger group.

Throughout the preschool we display evidence of the children’s learning and their work as well as our program of planned experiences. We use the OWNA App to share information with you about what has been happening at preschool on a regular basis.

We also maintain an individual “portfolio” on each child that acts as a record of their learning and development over their time at Pied Piper.

If you have any questions about the program or your child’s part in it, please speak to an educator in your child’s room.

OWNA and Digital Documentation

See your child's stats, daily log & history to make sure they are being cared for. Receive messages about your child’s activities and see the fun they’re having on a daily basis. Interact with educators through comments, posts and messages.

 <p>Real-time updates Know if your children have eaten, slept, nappy changed or even how much milk / water they've consumed.</p>	 <p>Track learning outcomes Consistent with the Early Years Learning Framework.</p>
 <p>Communicate with educators Interact with educators via the secure social network, with comments, photos & videos.</p>	 <p>Keep up-to-date With all events & activities at your child's centre.</p>
 <p>It's the small things that matter Notify the centre that your child will be absent, book a casual day or complete a medication permission.</p>	 <p>Private & secure Using the latest SSL technologies and Google Cloud Services.</p>

© 2021 OWNA | www.owna.com.au Building the next generation software for Child Care, Early Learning Centres, Pre-Schools, Aged Care & more.

OWNA is the platform where observations and planned experiences are shared with families. The posts will show what learning educators see through the day and how it links to the Early Years Learning Framework. Families will be able to comment on posts or upload their own posts which allows educators to link the home and preschool contexts through learning experiences.

OWNA is also used for our 'Outreach Program' which was developed to reach families who were isolated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our educators upload different activities or recipes that families can do with their children at home. There is even an OWNA community section which has a large range of activities for families to do with their children at home.

End of Year Portfolios

Each child is assigned to an educator who works with that child. While this educator will work with ALL children, they will have a group of children with whom they will build a close relationship and watch how each of those children interact with their peers, with the preschool environment and the things that interest them and 'make them tick'. The educator will also be planning experiences, follow-ups and small group experiences based on the interests they have seen your child demonstrating.

This educator will use this information to write a series of Learning Stories (or observations) over the year, and some of these are kept in a Portfolio. Portfolios are kept in the Playrooms, and are there for you, your family and your child to look at. Portfolios are a summary of the year and all of the information can be found on the OWNA program.

Please feel free to access your child's Portfolio whenever you are in the centre. We'd love you to jot down your thoughts, contributions, ideas and feedback. These will be very valuable for us if you can take the time to contribute a little. You will be able to take your child's portfolio home with you to keep at the end of the year (although we do retain portfolios until fees are up-to-date at the end of the year).

The 2-year-old portfolios are a condensed version as the focus of this program is transition to Preschool and developing relationships with children and families.

Our Interactions

The way we speak with your children is important. We gently challenge their thinking, show our interest in what interests them, ask questions, demonstrate, teach, listen, laugh, share and gently guide their behaviour.

The Physical Environment

The way we structure and set up our physical environment gives children a range of messages and learning opportunities:

- Distinct areas are created for each type of play to make choices clearer for children
- A range of materials are provided within each area, so that no matter where or what children play, there are opportunities for learning and engagement
- Materials are placed on low shelves, on racks or on hooks so children can access them and put them away more easily
- Our environment is prepared with care and attention to detail so children can be supported in developing a sense of pride and respect for their play environment
- We try to keep shelves clear and uncluttered, so materials are easier for children to see and find
- We group similar items together for children to sort and classify
- We put picture labels on containers and shelves, so children know where materials belong

What We Learn at Preschool

We encourage families to ask questions about the experiences/activities we provide for the children, and the learning potential they provide. However, here is a brief overview of the learning potential of each area:

Blocks: To develop concepts such as size, shape, volume, height, width, area, balance, construction and comparison. They learn about spatial relationships, maths concepts and problem solving and relate to the world around them...the buildings and geography and landmarks. They also strengthen their muscle control and physical co-ordination.

Painting, drawing, construction, clay and collage (the art area, or the visual arts): These give your child an opportunity to develop creativity, express emotions, frustrations, images and stories through the use of different mediums. Whether the product is recognisable or not is not important, but the process is. These also develop skills with brushes, scissors, pencils and crayons - they are refining small muscle movements and developing the fine motor control they will need for writing.

Our creative activities are also very much child directed, so you won't find all children coming home with the same completed craft or artwork. Again, this is an appropriate way to work with young children or to engage with their learning. Enabling children to find their own voice with creativity enables us to find out what they know and how they see the world, letting them come up with how they express their own ideas and theories that ensures that we cater to how they learn.

Howard Gardener, an educational specialist, identified that we all learn in very different ways - some by doing, some by listening, some think in logical ways, some through music and some through movement. Sometimes it's a combination of these different learning styles. Our job as educators is to facilitate each child's learning style to get the best out of them.

Small worlds: This is another form of imaginary play and dolls houses, police stations, fire stations, hospitals etc would all fit into this category too." Small world" is exactly what it sounds like - a miniature play scene with figures, objects, scenery and a sensory element to enrich play and stimulate imaginative, creative and language development. Children as young as 2 and a half can begin telling their own stories through scenes like these. Educators at Pied Piper will regularly create small worlds that reflect the children's current interests, or that represent stories we have been reading. We love to watch how the children interact with these, the language they use and the way they engage with both the props and each other.

Books: To develop imagination, familiarity with the written medium and an appreciation of literature. The process of learning to read and write begins as we talk and read to children. Awareness of print is an essential first step in learning to read and write.

Science and nature experiences and sustainability issues: To develop a wider interest in and knowledge of the world around them. Our ultimate aim is to encourage children to be aware of their physical and natural world and to respect and care for it. Many of these experiences we provide will help sharpen children's observation skills, understand life cycles, understand cause and effect and change processes and to develop logical thinking and the development of theories.

Puzzles: To develop concentration and emerging maths skills such as sequencing, matching and classification as well as fine-motor (small muscle) and eye-hand coordination skills. Puzzles also help children to feel satisfaction in completing a task, and about returning equipment to appropriate places.

Games: To develop matching, sequencing, concentration, memory, and other such cognitive (thinking, or intellectual) skills.

Sensory: To explore and develop an awareness of the senses; touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing. Language is also encouraged through the description of these experiences.

Music and movement: To develop the recognition of such elements as pitch, tempo, dynamics and rhythm. Also, helps to develop creative expression and confidence as well as a range of physical skills.

Home Corner / Dress-ups: To develop new skills as they act out roles. They learn from one another as they interact in socio-dramatic play. This play provides the opportunity to develop and practice socially acceptable behaviours. Children learn to ask and answer questions and to work together to solve problems. They also get opportunities to re-enact real-life scenarios.

Outdoor play: There is some powerful research that suggests the most important and special memories from our childhoods usually take place outside. Outdoor play also fosters the development of gross-motor (large muscle) skills and body control. Don't forget, children have a lot of skills to develop and refine. Certain skills such as catching, kicking and throwing a ball, climbing, hopping and skipping are difficult. The outdoor play environment also provides a vast array of opportunities that provide similar opportunities to many indoor experiences, but with an emphasis on contact with nature, gross motor skills, physical challenges, social interaction and imagination.

Building Site: This important area of our outdoor play space provides an assortment of basic building materials which children move, arrange, stack, balance and problem-solve alone or with others. We also have a "Workshop" where the children can engage in tool work – woodwork and tinkering.

Play dough: To develop muscles in the hand and arm and manipulative skills similar to those needed when learning to write. It also encourages tactile exploration and opportunities for creativity.

Cooking: This provides maths opportunities such as measuring, comparing, recalling and predicting the outcome, as well as being adventurous and tasting new things. Cooking experiences also give us the opportunity to reinforce healthy eating messages. There is also a pre-literacy aspect to cooking when a written or symbolic recipe is used.

Daily routines: The daily routine offers children a sense of predictability by knowing what happens next and having a routine. While there can be flexibility within this routine, children develop a sense of security and independence within the broader framework. They learn to anticipate what is going to happen next and what their role should be. Children become fully involved in the transitions within the routine by assisting with tidying up, preparing tables for lunch, removing rubbish and compost and returning equipment to its correct place.