



Grace Park Preschool

# STARTING PRESCHOOL

GRACE PARK PRESCHOOL  
INTRODUCTION BOOKLET

## **Introduction**

This is the first edition of the Grace Park Preschool *Introduction Booklet*. We wanted to give you an insight into the Preschool and an idea of what to expect from your children's Preschool years covering issues such as;

- Preschool Philosophy
- Structure and Programme
- Staff
- Family Involvement & The Preschool Committee
- The Progression to Four Year Old Preschool and School
- Enrolment Process

For some people, choosing a preschool for their child is a straight-forward choice based upon factors such as location or session times. For others the decision is less clear-cut. This booklet is designed to give you a basic outline of these issues. More specific information can be gained from an interview with our teacher.

Whatever your decision, we hope that the information gained here is useful and gives you a starting point for choosing the right preschool for your child.

Yolande Suffern  
President,  
Grace Park Preschool 2003.

## **Philosophy**

### **What is meant by ‘Community Preschool’?**

At Grace Park Preschool we see the community as being beyond ‘us’. We encourage the children to look at aspects which make a community strong and worthwhile: respect, love, care, being kind, talking to each other, sharing, taking responsibility for our actions, honesty and being supportive of each other.

Our preschool community is made up of teachers, assistants, parents, children, families, friends, support groups and guests. These people are working together for the greater good of the preschool community.

### **Are all preschools the same? What should I look for in a preschool?**

A safe and caring environment with open and friendly staff is essential in a preschool. We suggest you come during a session and get a ‘warts and all’ impression. Then make an appointment for a return visit out of session to enable you to talk to our teacher, ask questions and gather specific information you require.

### **Why is preschool so important? Isn’t it just a stepping stone between playgroup and school?**

Not at all! Preschool is often seen as a ‘preparation for school’. We believe this places unnecessary stress on parents, staff and especially children for them to be at the ‘right’ or acceptable level to enter prep.

Preschool is, in its own right, an important aspect of a child’s education. Preschool should be fun. It is a place where children go to explore and learn. At preschool they acquire basic concepts and skills. Children access a range of activities that will assist them when they go to school. For example; drawing, painting, problem solving, fine motor skills, cutting and holding pencils and scissors. They can enjoy sensory play such as finger painting, water play and sand. All of these activities are important. It is, however, the social, emotional and behavioural growth of a child that is, in our view, the most essential and memorable for children. Making friends, dealing with friendship issues, sharing, learning to respect each other and taking turns. Understanding the importance of listening to adults who are not their parents for example, teachers, assistants and duty parents. It is possible for children to be at the ‘right’ academic level for prep, yet be socially or emotionally unprepared for school. At preschool they have the opportunity to gain maturity necessary for them to deal with a larger community such as primary school.

At preschool children learn self care and independence: hanging up their bag, putting their lunch-box away, where to put the banana skin after snack and what to do if the compost bin isn’t where it was yesterday.

## **Structure and Programme**

### **What happens at preschool?**

At preschool there are lots of opportunities to play. Play is children's way of learning and they do this by exploring, experimenting and being actively involved with materials and new ideas and interacting with others.

The preschool programme varies from year to year. It is planned around the individual needs of each child as well as the group as a whole. Our teacher has many years of experience in child development and knows how to observe and assess each child's level of development.

Children's knowledge and experiences will be increased as they participate in the many and varied activities. Feelings of achievement and self-esteem result from the development of new skills and competencies. How each child achieves this varies with individual abilities, past experiences and present situations. Children form relationships, learn social skills, enjoy making friends and face many challenges during a busy day. They might deal with overcoming shyness with other children, remembering where things are and how to pack them away, trying a new physical activity or improving basic skills such as cutting or drawing.

### **What can I expect from the preschool programme?**

There are several areas of children's development

- Receptive and/or expressive language
- Cognitive development (intellectual skills)
- Social development
- Emotional development
- Self care and independence

Preschool programmes aim to nurture and develop each of these areas through set activities, social time, group discussions and inside and outside play.

Indoor activities may include painting and pasting, clay or playdough, puzzles, games, blocks and construction, books and sensory activities. We also have a 'home corner' which encourages dramatic play; dress ups, social contact and role-playing. Children are generally invited to select their own activity and work at their own pace and will be helped by staff or duty parents as necessary.

We are very proud of the natural setting of our outdoor activities. They offer a wide variety of activities and experiences including a sand pit, climbing equipment, swings, wooden blocks, water play, cars and bikes and gardens to create and care for.

Children are encouraged to pack away their activities at the end of the sessions.

Our programme includes group times for children to participate in stories, music, dancing, sharing their experiences and just talking.

## **Staff**

### **What does a Kinder Teacher do?**

The teacher's main role is to prepare a programme for the children and implement it within the allocated session time. She does this by observing children and documenting specific observations and goals for each child. Our teacher and assistant work closely to ensure that the sessions run efficiently and that each child is working or playing appropriately.

Teachers are responsible for the assistants doing their job and understanding aspects of the programme and they are available for informal interviews or discussions to keep parents informed of their child's progress.

In addition to this, teachers must complete specific records and administrative tasks such as keeping individual records and strategies for each child and liaising with other professionals in relation to some of the children. Our teacher liaises with the local schools and visits children from the previous year. There are also administrative tasks that relate to the centre and monitoring of department regulations, council matters, and building & maintenance matters. They lend a hand to the committee members and attend meetings and are required to attend ongoing training and professional development.

## **Families**

### **How can parents and families be involved in their child's Preschool?**

Parents have opportunities to participate in a variety of ways and degrees depending on their time, energy and commitment. We, like all preschools, rely heavily on volunteer parent involvement and this provides direct benefit to children and other families who use the centre.

Basically there are three ways in which parents can be involved:

- Participation in the day to day activities of the programme, for example fruit duty, special days or activities.
- Management of the centre, ie a committee role
- Active involvement with working bees and fundraising

Active parent involvement in your child's preschool years will have positive benefits for your child and family as well as the centre and it's future.

### **What does the committee do?**

Preschools in Victoria are managed by an incorporated Committee of Management which consists of parents and interested community members who are elected at the Annual General Meeting to manage the legal, financial and employment responsibilities of the Preschool. The Committee members are volunteers who are prepared to dedicate many hours to ensure the service operates in the best interests of the children and families within the community.

## **Moving on...**

### **What can I do to prepare my child for preschool?**

- Take advantage of any opportunity to become familiar with the centre. Open days, fetes and playgroups can reinforce positive, happy memories and 'ownership' of a centre.
- Keep it positive. Using kinder as bribes, for example, "If you don't eat your vegies you can't go to kinder" or "If you don't share with your brother the teacher won't want you at kinder" doesn't always have the effect that parents intend.
- Keep it in perspective. Children should be excited about kinder but not overwhelmed.

### **How will I know if my child is ready to commence preschool?**

Knowing whether a child is ready for Three-year-old Kinder or just in need of an organised activity or group such as a playgroup or music group can be tricky. This is especially so for children who have just turned three, or whose birthdays fall before May. Understandably parents do not want their children's learning to be 'held back'. Conversely neither do families want children to be unduly distressed by separation because they are not ready enter preschool situations.

As parents, we know how easy it is to be guided by friends and family who, unintentionally put pressure on for your child to start kinder. We suggest you make an appointment with our teacher to discuss this very important issue and how it relates to you and your child. Early Childhood Teachers are trained to assess and determine whether a child is ready for preschool. She will give you an opinion that is unbiased and based on years of experience.

### **Who decides whether my child is ready to move on to Four-Year-Old kinder or school?**

Ultimately this decision rests with parents and, in the case of a child repeating Four-year-old preschool, the available funding for a child should a second year be desired. Our teacher will make recommendations to parents based on discussions and observations of a child's development. She is trained to do this and it is part of her job to advise parents, however painful it may be at the time, as to whether or not a second year is recommended for a child. At some stage during the second term she will advise you if a second year is considered necessary or at least a possibility.

There are specific criteria which must be met for a child to receive a second year of government funding for Four-year-old preschool. Teachers have to work to a time-frame as applications for a second year of funding are made in August.

If this becomes an issue for your child, there will be information and support available at the time.

## **Enrolments**

### **Who do I contact to enrol in Preschool?**

Enrolments for Three-Year-Old Preschool are made direct with the Preschool's Enrolment Secretary. Please inquire at the kinder to obtain her contact details. As Enrolment Secretary is a committee position, details may change from year to year. To enrol for the Four-Year-Old Programme, you need to lodge an application with the Banyule Council Enrolment Officer. The contact numbers for these people are printed below. Offers are made in order of the receipt of your application and sent out in July of the previous year to your enrolment.

### **Useful contact numbers;**

#### **Grace Park Preschool**

179 Nepean Street,  
Greensborough 3088

Telephone: 03 9435 6179

Facsimile: 03 9435 3082

Email: [grace.park.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au](mailto:grace.park.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.vicnet.net.au/~gracepps](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~gracepps)

#### **Banyule City Council**

Banyule Enrolment Enquiries

Telephone: 03 9490 4222

Website: [www.banyule.vic.gov.au](http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au)

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## **I AM SPECIAL**

IN ALL THE WORLD THERE IS NOBODY LIKE ME. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANOTHER PERSON LIKE ME. NOBODY HAS MY SMILE. NOBODY HAS MY EYES, MY NOSE, MY HAIR, MY HANDS, MY VOICE.

## **I AM SPECIAL.**

NOBODY ANYWHERE HAS MY TASTES – FOR FOOD OR MUSIC OR ART OR PLAY. NO-ONE SEES THINGS JUST AS I DO. IN ALL OF TIME THERE HAS BEEN NO-ONE WHO LAUGHS LIKE ME, NO-ONE WHO CRIES LIKE ME.

## **I AM SPECIAL.**

I AM THE ONLY ONE IN ALL OF CREATION WHO HAS MY SET OF ABILITIES. NO OTHER PERSON CAN REACH THE QUALITY OF MY COMBINATION OF TALENTS, IDEAS, ABILITIES AND FEELINGS.

## **I AM SPECIAL.**

I AM RARE AND AS IN ALL RARITY, THERE IS GREAT VALUE.

## **OUR TEACHERS...**

OUR TEACHERS WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE EDUCATION TO WHICH EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT. THEY COMMIT TO INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN ORDER TO RELEASE THE UNIQUE POTENTIAL THAT IS PRESENT IN EVERY CHILD. OUR TEACHERS ENDEAVOUR TO WORK WITH PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN THE CONTINUING PROGRESS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION. THEY STRIVE TOWARDS 'TEACHING EXCELLENCE' IN ORDER TO EMPOWER EVERY CHILD WITH THE OPPORTUNITY OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE.