

Lyrebird Preschool



Play Together, Learn Together, Grow Together

2017 Family Handbook

Philosophy

The child, the family, the educators and the community are integral parts of the Lyrebird Preschool Community. We value, encourage and respect each individual who belongs to this community and understand that every child, family and educator bring their own culture, knowledge and experience to share with our community.

At Lyrebird preschool we acknowledge the original custodians of this land, the Dharawal people and their language and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the community. We believe our role is to our engage the Dharawal people in a collaborative authentic partnership with our preschool.

Our philosophy has been inspired and guided by our knowledge of current research, The Early Childhood Association *Code of Ethics*, *The National Quality Standards* and *The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia - Belonging, Being and Becoming 2009*

In relation to the children we believe:

- Children are capable and competent learners and value children's interest and perspectives in our planning and teaching.
- In strengthening resilience, critical thinking and informed risk taking.
- Children have a right to a rich play based learning environment.
- Everyone has a right to a warm and nurturing environment that promotes trusting relationships .
- Every child is a unique and valued individual and that all children including those with additional needs have the right to access a quality early childhood education.

In relation to families and the wider community we believe:

- That families are the child's first and most important teacher and respect their right to make decisions about their child.
- In working in partnership with families to develop genuine relationships that allow for open and honest communication.
- In the importance of connecting and establishing strong connections within our community to support our families e.g. support agencies, schools, health services.
- Families provide the bridge between the preschool and home by sharing information, unique skills, cultural values and a sense of belonging for the child to his/her learning community.
- Part of this community, we have a responsibility to our children and families to establish and maintain a sense of belonging and connection to the land and to our shared Aboriginal history and culture, to actively embrace reconciliation and spread this message.

In relation to our educators we believe:

- The diversity and strengths of individuals create the richness of our team.
- Educators are co learners with children, families and community and colleagues.
- Preschool acknowledges that qualified and committed educators are a core factor in the quality of the service.
- We encourage and support educators to continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge.
- The educators at lyrebird preschool display warm nurturing and respectful relationships, communicate openly and honestly and are influential in helping the children and families feel a sense of belonging.
- In supporting our educators personal wellness and wellbeing that enables them to be happy, resilient, confident and optimistic within their work environment.

In relation to the learning environment:

- We aim to link our preschool program with the diversity of our world by encouraging acceptance of others, supporting social inclusion, and taking advantage of the rich learning opportunities that diversity and difference bring.
- We believe in embracing education for sustainability and social justice into daily practise.
- We Place high importance on play outdoors and spending time with nature deepening a respect and a positive attitude towards the environment.
- We believe a sense of wonder, belonging to and love of the land, nature and animals are critical for young children to develop lifelong respectful, positive and proactive attitudes to our environment and to ensure our sustainable future.
- We believe in creating welcoming learning environments which reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the setting.
- We believe that learning spaces should be responsive to the interests and abilities of each child and invite open ended interactions and opportunities for exploration and discovery.

General Information

Lyrebird Preschool is a community based not for profit preschool. We are managed by a committee of parents from the preschool. Lyrebird Preschool is licensed by and accountable to the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and working within requirement of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and National standards (NQS) Lyrebird preschool is also guided by the Australian Children's Education and care Quality Authority (ACECQA). ACECQA oversee how the NQS is applied across the country and ensure that services are meeting the requirements. Lyrebird Preschool is happy to state that we are rated 'Exceeding' under this system.

The preschool caters for children aged 3-5 years. We have 40 children per day attending a variety of days throughout the week. The preschool operates during NSW school terms and is closed during school holidays. We have two rooms – the Bilby Room and the Possum Room - with twenty children in each room per day.

The preschool has a dedicated and experienced team of educators who work together to create a stimulating, homely and caring environment for the children that encourages experimentation, exploration and self-discovery. We value the importance of play based learning and present a wide range of experiences that follow the children's interests, are active and meaningful to them and incorporate independent choice as well as opportunities for interactions with others. Our experiences, environments and interactions reflect the National Early Years Learning Framework for early childhood services promoting children as capable and competent learners within their life and community.

For your child the preschool day consists of time interacting and exploring the indoor environment and the outdoor environment as well as endless opportunities to interact with peers and educators. We also have several times during the day where each room comes together as a group to share stories, songs and a variety of group experiences with the educators.

At Lyrebird Preschool we value the importance of active exploration during the day balanced with quieter and more relaxed times. After lunch time a rest period is encouraged where children can rest on individual mattresses or participate in quiet activities or relaxation experiences. This is a time for listening to stories and restful music, reading books and quiet individual and independent activities.

We value and encourage the support of our families and community within the preschool. We encourage our families to come in and share their knowledge, skills and interests with the children during the preschool day. It may be taking a cooking experience, spending time reading to the children in our book area, playing games with the children or helping on an excursion. The activities and opportunities are endless and benefit everyone and build a sense of community within our preschool.

The Program and Documentation

Our program and documentation reflects the national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for early childhood services. This framework has a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication and language and social and emotional development in children. Fundamental to the EYLF framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by Belonging, Being and Becoming.

Our program and daily experiences and interactions with the children reflect and promote the five learning outcomes of the EYLF for children –having a strong sense of identity, being connected with and contributing to their world, having a strong sense of wellbeing, are confident and involved learners and are effective communicators.

Every child has a particular educator who is responsible for observing and documenting their interests, development and progress at preschool. We record observations of children at play and use this information to plan, implement and create experiences and activities that reflect the children's needs and interests as well as encouraging and developing their skills and learning.

Each child has their own individual learning journal that contains a collection of photos, observations and work samples that document their learning throughout their time with us at preschool. It is a valuable and much treasured book that is always accessible to the family. Your child's learning journal leaves preschool with your child when they leave preschool and is full of great memories and learnings to look back on in the future.

The daily experiences and activities are reflected in our daily journal pages located near the signing books each afternoon. Please take the time to read these pages and share the experiences the children have engaged in during the day. We also value and welcome families' feedback and ideas to help us follow the children's interests within our program. We also have digital photo frames in the foyer area that scroll through the photos taken on that day for families to share daily events with their children.

The Parent Management Committee

Lyrebird Preschool is a community based preschool. This means that we are managed by our community. This community is our preschool families. When you enrol your child at preschool you become a member of the Lyrebird Preschool Community. This means that you have the opportunity to have your say in the decision making of the preschool.

The Lyrebird Preschool Parent Management Committee is made up of parents who are elected into different positions at the Annual General Meeting held each year in March. The Parent Management Committee are responsible for developing and monitoring the annual budget, staffing at the preschool, maintenance and WHS commitments, fundraising for the preschool and policy development and review.

The following positions are on our Committee. The executive positions are the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Other positions include the Fundraising Coordinator, WHS officer, Publicity officers and Committee/Staff Liaison officer. All positions are voluntary positions but need to be filled each year by parents so that the preschool can continue to operate effectively.

The Parent Management Committee are responsible to the Department of Education and Communities (DEC formerly known as DoCS) and are the licensee of the preschool.

Parent Committee and Community meetings are held monthly at the preschool and are open to any preschool parent to attend. An agenda is displayed a week before for any items parents would like to add to the meeting night's discussion.

The Parent Management Committee organise a variety of fundraising events throughout the year to raise money to purchase resources for the children or put towards large purchases such as outdoor landscaping or equipment for the benefit of all the preschool families.

Administration information

Hours of operation:

8am – 3.30pm daily during school terms

We offer extended care from 3.30pm – 4pm at an additional cost. Extended care can be used on a permanent basis or on a casual basis as the need arises. Prior arrangements need to be made when using extended care times or late fee charges will apply.

The preschool is open 41 weeks per year, closing school holidays and public holidays

Our fees

As a community preschool we run on a not for profit basis. We receive government subsidies and funding to help keep preschool accessible to all children. The fees and government subsidies cover our operating and maintenance costs each year. Most families are eligible to claim Child Care Benefit for Registered Care. Please ask at the office about eligibility requirements and to receive the necessary receipt to claim at the Family Assistance Office.

2017 fees:

	Full Fees	\$25 per day	Family Income over \$41,000 per annum gross
	Subsidy 1 Fees	\$14 per day	Low Income Health Care Card Holders, Low Income Families (under \$41,000 per annum gross) and Aboriginal families with an Income over \$20,000
	Subsidy 2 Fees	\$5 per day	Aboriginal Low Income Families (under \$20,000 per annum gross)

(Proof of income will need to be provided to claim the subsidy e.g. Low Income Health Care Card)

On Enrolment

We require the following:

- Enrolment fee (per family)
- Holding deposit equal to 2 weeks fees for the first child and 1 weeks fees for any subsequent children.
- Proof of income for families wishing to claim subsidised fees
- Immunisation and Birth Certificate (Originals to be sighted and copied)

Payment of Fees

Fees are to be paid at least two weeks in advance. Fees are due each fortnight on the first day your child attends preschool. Payment of fees is required for all absences caused by illness and family holidays, except for school/public holidays.

Options of Fee Payment:

- Cash, Cheque or EFT – Please note all credit transactions on EFT incur a 2% fee charged to the transaction.
- Centrepay is also an option for those families on government benefits
- Internet Banking (Please ensure you include the child's surname in the reference)
 - BSB: 062 585
 - Account No: 2803 2631
 - Account Name: Lyrebird Preschool

Emergency contacts

The parent must provide the pre school with the names, contact numbers and addresses of at least two responsible persons who can collect the child in case of an emergency or illness. When contacted by the Director or other staff members, the parent, or a responsible person authorised by the parent, must personally go to collect the sick or injured child as soon as possible. In the event a child is left after hours at the pre school and parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached, the Department of Education & Communities, or the police will be notified. On the advice of the Department of Education & Communities the child may then be released into the care of the police. The parents must also nominate an adult (over 18) who is authorised to consent to Medical treatment of, or to authorise administration of medication to the child and who is authorised to give approval for an educator to take the child outside the education and care premises.

Child Protection

Each staff member at Lyrebird Pre School is a mandatory child protection reporter. This means that all staff are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse to the Department of Education and Communities. For further information please see the Child Protection Guidelines or speak to the Directors or Supervisor.

Change of details

Please let the Preschool know as soon as possible if any details such as address, phone numbers, allergies, and collection authorities etc have changed. It is particularly important to inform us if you change your phone numbers in case of emergencies. These will need to be adjusted on the child's enrolment form and are vital in case of emergency situations.

Arrival and Departure

What to do on arrival at the pre school:

- On arrival sign your child in, quickly check the sign in area for any additional information.
- Hand any medication to the staff. Medication consent forms need to be filled out and can be done on arrival at pre school Medication can not be administered without this form.
- Place lunches and water bottles (clearly marked with student's name) in the room fridges
- Settle your child in by finding the group, greeting a staff member, taking your child to their favourite activity or alert a staff member that you are needing to go, they can assist you.

What to do on pick up at the pre school:

- Please sign your child out immediately
- Sign any documentation that might be relevant to your child's day
- Check for any new notifications
- Collect your child's bag
- Place hat in their hat pocket
- Collect any medication and sign forms
- Ensure that all your child's belongings are taken home
- Please say good bye and acknowledge at least one staff member before you leave The parent or their representative is responsible for completing the Child Care Attendance Record by signing your child in and out of our online Ipad system located at our sign in station.

It is extremely important that this is completed on each arrival and departure as this record is used to determine which children are in care in the event of an emergency situation such as a fire.

Please also check daily: Communication pigeonholes – items such as party invitations and artwork are left for collection.

When entering or leaving the pre school, please make sure that the child safety gates have been closed properly. Please discourage your child or older siblings from opening the gate themselves and swinging or hanging on the gate. Siblings need to be supervised by you during this drop off and pick up time.

Please do not drop your child off before 8am and make sure you arrive to pick up your child by 3.25pm. This is to give you time to speak to staff about your child's day, pack up their belongings and be ready to leave by 3.30pm. 4pm if you have booked in for Late Care.

If your child is not collected by 4.00pm, two staff members are required to stay behind until you arrive. Please also consider that staff have other responsibilities outside of work. If you are late to pick up your child, a late fee will be charged. Drop off Time: No earlier than 8.00am. Pickup Time: No later than 3.30pm, 4pm if late care. Parents are responsible for informing the pre school if they are unable to arrange collection of the child by 4pm. Staff will attempt to contact the parents by phone. If this is unsuccessful, staff will then phone the Emergency Contacts listed on the child's enrolment form to arrange collection of the child

Starting Preschool

It is natural for both parents and their children to have difficulty parting from each other, particularly when they have not previously been parted for any length of time. Each child's experience of starting pre school is different and while some children eagerly join right in, other children need a longer time to adjust.

Here are a few suggestions we hope will help make settling in your child easier:

- Organise your school bag the night before.
- Every child is an individual – patience is needed.
- Don't leave home in a rush. Make sure you have some time to speak with the Staff.
- Be positive about starting. If you are apprehensive about leaving your child, they will be apprehensive too. (Children tend to pick up on parent's feelings and often magnify them).
- Visit the Preschool prior to your child starting - see orientation details.
- Let your child bring in something comforting from home such as a favourite stuffed animal or a security blanket.
- Allow 5-10 minutes time to settle your child. Either rushing in and out or lingering too long can add to the anxiety.
- Establish a routine for dropping off your child. Children usually like some time to put away their bag first, then like you to settle them into an activity or chat/hand them over to a teacher who can hold their hand whilst you say goodbye. Try saying goodbye to your child from the gate or give a special goodbye signal such as 'blowing a kiss'. Try these along with any other ideas you may have to see what works best. When you find something that works stick to it.
- Promote conversation with your child.
- Call us during the day if you like – this can be reassuring.
- When you arrive in the afternoon give your child a big cuddle. Tell them you have missed them and that you love them.
- Encourage your child to wave goodbye to their teachers.
- Give staff information about your child, their habits, things they like, their routines and language(s) spoken at home, so that these can be followed by staff.
- Always say goodbye to your child. Children feel insecure and become clingy if they think you may suddenly 'disappear'. This builds trust between you and your child.
- Leave quickly and smoothly once you have said goodbye. If you have forgotten something please ring us rather than returning to go through the separation process again.

If you are having difficulty separating from your child, please let one of our staff know so that they can quickly comfort your child and allow you to go. If your child is quite distressed during your routine and will not be comforted, it is generally better not to stay too long. Children generally settle in the first few minutes after parents leave and staying only prolongs the period that your child is distressed. Allow our staff to guide you. Staff saying "Give Dad a kiss and a cuddle" or "It's time for Mum to go to work now" is giving you cues that now is probably a good time to go. If you are ever worried during the day please feel free to ring us at anytime. The settling in process can sometimes be just as upsetting for the parent and a phone call may just ease your mind. Likewise, if we feel your child is not coping with their day we will ring you. Other ways to help your child to settle into care is for them to bring in a photo of their family and display with others. This can be discussed and shown at group time. If your child experiences any difficulty or if you notice something in particular that helps, please talk to one of our staff. Each child is an individual who may need to be given help and support so that they can feel happy and secure at the pre school. We want the experience to be a positive one for both you and your child

What Your Child Needs to Bring to Preschool

- Please ensure that all your child's belongings and clothing are clearly labeled
- A bag containing at least one change of spare clothes and underpants (in case of toileting accidents or general play accidents).
- A wide brimmed or legionnaire style sun hat (reflecting our Sun Safe Policy).
- A labeled drink bottle filled with water.
- A labeled plastic lunch box containing healthy and nutritious food for both morning tea and lunch time. We do not encourage Cooler bags as they are stored in the refrigerator during the day, cooler bags actually stop the coldness getting to your child's food when in the fridge. Lunch boxes are placed in the refrigerator located in your child's room on arrival and picked up from the refrigerator at departure time.
- We recommend fresh fruit, plain yoghurts, cheese, crackers and sandwiches.
- No sweet biscuits, chips, sweets, cakes, muesli or fruit bars or chocolate flavoured desserts. (These treats are generally high in sugar or salt and are recommended for eating outside of preschool). Please refer to our nutrition policy if you have any questions. A copy of this policy and some food suggestions are located at the back of this handbook.
- A material bag containing sheets for rest time. A cot sheet set or single sheet cut in half work well to cover the mattress. You may like to include a light blanket in colder weather for your child. Please ensure the bedding is all labeled with your child's name.
- A donation of a box of tissues and a ream of plain or coloured paper is encouraged during your time at preschool. These donations help to support the children's experiences, the production of newsletters and parental notes and keep the preschool running costs lower.

Treasures from home

Toys, jewellery and trinkets from home can be lost or broken if brought to the pre school. Therefore, we discourage children from bringing these in, and ask you to encourage your child to leave them at home. A cuddly toy for rest time is fine. Interesting specimens and objects such as rocks, shells, flowers, bird's nests etc, or photos of family/special events are always welcome. If items are brought in from home the children can share them with their peers at news time and then put them safely back in their bags or leave them in the office for safekeeping.

Visiting children

We love to see siblings coming through our preschool at drop off and pick up times. Please remember that children not enrolled at Lyrebird are to remain your responsibility at all times. Please remind siblings to stay with the adult who brought them and to please not run around inside the Preschool. Our resources and equipment are suitable for Preschool aged children and may not be suitable for older or younger children. Any damage caused by children must be paid for and replaced.

Health

Unwell Children

Children's health is important to us and we ensure that we provide a clean and healthy environment and encourage appropriate and good hygiene practices within the preschool. However children can still become unwell whilst at preschool.

In the case of a child becoming unwell at preschool staff may request that the child be taken home. If a child displays symptoms of an infectious disease the parents, carers or emergency contacts will be contacted to collect the child as soon as possible.

In the case of an emergency a doctor will be called or if necessary an ambulance will be called. Any expenses incurred will be the responsibility of the parents or guardians.

If your child is sick or not attending preschool on a particular day please inform the preschool.

If your child has had diarrhoea or vomited we ask that they DO NOT attend preschool until 24 hours after the last loose bowel motion or vomit

(Please refer to our policy for unwell children)

If your child has been prescribed antibiotics they CAN NOT attend preschool until 24 hours after the commencement of this medication

(Please refer to our policy for unwell children).

If your child has been diagnosed with an infectious disease it is mandatory to immediately inform the preschool so that we can inform the families of the preschool

Immunisation

As of 1st January 2014 new legislation regarding a child's Immunisation Record and attendance at the preschool comes into effect. As per the Lyrebird Preschool Immunisation Policy, you are required to provide the preschool with a current copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement (obtained from Medicare). The Immunisation Statement needs to be provided at enrolment time or your child will not be allowed to commence in 2017 until this immunisation documentation is provided. If the immunisation statement is not provided promptly your child's position may be given to another child.

Our immunisation policy states that if a child is not immunised and an outbreak of an infectious disease occurs at the preschool the unimmunised child will be excluded until the outbreak or exposure time is complete. Our Immunisation Policy is available from the office.

Food Allergies

Please talk to our educators if you have any concerns about food allergies or your child suffers from food allergies. The centre has an anaphylaxis policy and will fully inform families if any foods have to be banned at preschool.

Sun Protection

Please ensure your child wears 'sun safe' clothing to preschool. **We ask that children wear shirts with sleeves and hats with a wide brim or a legionnaire style hat.** Caps are not part of our sun safe policy. Sunscreen is available at preschool for children to apply to keep sun safe during outside times (refer to our sun protection policy).

Sunscreen is applied during winter months by staff when playing outside later in the morning. It is the parents responsibility to apply sunscreen on arrival at preschool during the summer months. Sunscreen is available on the signing table in each room.

Children with Additional Needs

At Lyrebird Preschool we strive to effectively integrate children with additional needs into the centre and are committed to providing appropriate programs for all children. Programs for our additional needs children will be developed in cooperation with the family and external agencies and are integrated into the preschool routine and program.

Funding can be applied for through different agencies to support children with additional needs in the preschool program. This funding usually requires paperwork to support an additional need diagnosis and the earlier we receive paperwork the earlier we can apply for funding.

Children with additional needs may be allocated particular days to attend preschool. This allocation will reflect the needs of the child, the preschool and the family as well as any other external agencies that the child and family are involved with.

If a child with additional needs enrolls at the preschool a copy of the additional needs policy will be provided to the family. A copy of this policy is available in the policy folder on the parent library shelf in the foyer.

Excursions and Activities

The preschool participates in excursions outside preschool as well as bringing shows and visitors to the preschool. Families will be notified prior to these events happening. To make these activities happen we need the support of our families. We always welcome family members to join us for these activities and this helps to keep our children safe and also to comply to the regulations.

Birthdays

The preschool recognises and enjoys celebrating a child's special day. You are welcome to bring a cake to celebrate your child's birthday at preschool. Please consider a plain cake with icing or cupcakes to celebrate the special occasion.

Parent Library

In the preschool foyer there is a bookshelf with information books on it. This is our parent borrowing library. Our families are welcome to borrow any of the books. There are a variety of books covering such things as nutrition, behaviour management, children's activities and going to school information. The Lyrebird Preschool Policy folder is also situated on this bookshelf. This folder contains all the policies for the preschool which have been developed by the educators and management committee of the preschool.

Library

During terms 2 and 3 preschool has a special library shelf where children can borrow a story book from preschool to take home and share with their family. If you would like your child to be involved a named library bag (preferably with a drawstring) needs to be provided by you .and placed in the library box This is a weekly event during these terms and is run by our parents.

Staff

At Lyrebird preschool we recognise that our staff are paramount in the provision of high quality care and education for all children. Our staff have knowledge, training and experience in Early Childhood Education and Care. The staff work as a team and are committed to making your child's day happy, safe and educationally stimulating. All our staff members are screened through a Working with Children Check, carried out by the NSW Commission for Young Children and Young People.

Lyrebird staffing philosophy is to provide good working conditions for our staff, which in turn provide the best care and education for your children. Casual staff are only employed when necessary. Lyrebird builds its own team of casual staff for continuity of care.

Staff and students

Volunteers are welcome at the centre and the Directors ensure their suitability prior to their placement. If you would like to come to the service as a volunteer please talk to the Director. The service will also organise visitors such as musicians, storytellers and animal displays.

We believe in nurturing students to become professional Early Childhood educators so we often support student through the local schools, TAFE and Universities. We develop relationships with these organisations in our community to support up and coming professionals.

Complaints handling

If a parent has a concern, the first line of action would be to discuss this with your child's educator. If a suitable solution is not worked out, the next step would be to discuss this with the Director. If an agreement cannot be reached within the pre school, the parents or staff are able to lodge a formal complaint to the Committee and if still not feeling like it has been resolved a complaint can be made with the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate, Department of Education and Communities, Locked Bag 4028, Ashfield, NSW, 2131, Phone 02 9716 2100.

Confidentiality

All staff are aware that confidentiality of all matters concerning the pre school must be maintained at all times. Staff cannot give out any details contained in children's records to any other parent or discuss details of any child who has caused injury to other children at the pre school. Parents are assured that any information shared with a staff member will remain confidential within professional discussion at the pre school.

Smoke free environment

Lyrebird Pre School is a smoke free area. Parents, staff and all other visitors are requested to refrain from smoking within the indoor OR outdoor play spaces at all times. This includes at the fence line of the front of building.

Quality Assurance

Lyrebird Pre School is involved in the National Quality Standard (NQS) assessment process. This process is managed by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC). We are very proud to say we are rated Exceeding the National standard under the National Quality Framework. More information about assessments and ratings can be found at www.acecqa.gov.au

Conclusion

Thank you for choosing Lyrebird Pre School to educate and care for your child. We aim to provide the very best in early childhood education and look forward to working with you to ensure that your child builds the confidence and skills required for their next big step into primary school. If there is anything we can assist you with throughout your time with us, please don't hesitate to speak with our friendly teachers and staff.