Our Philosophy

We believe:

Children are individuals and that their social, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical and spiritual development will occur at different times and in different ways.

All children have strengths and abilities that can, and should be identified. These become the starting points for further learning of skills and understandings.

Children learn best when they are given extended periods of play, centred around their interests, where they can be actively involved. They learn through actions and conversations.

Children who feel confident in themselves, will also feel confident to learn.

Development is influenced by the quality of the relationships children make with the adults and children around them.

Although Early Childhood is important as the foundation for the rest of children’s lives, it also has its own significant importance.

Context Statement

Located on the grounds of the Trinity Gardens P-7 School, the Early Learning Centre has its own purpose built building and outside area, very near the Centre of the school. The building offers a main play area with carpeted and wet areas, a quiet multi-purpose room, bathroom and kitchen. The building is ventilated with windows. It is also has an air conditioner and gas heating. Outside, the Early Learning Centre has its own playground equipment, sandpit and shed for storing the portable equipment. There is a wide verandah with large trees for shade and a pergola covering the sandpit.

Governance

As a part of the School, the Principal and the Governing Council lead the Centre. The Governing Council ELC sub-committee.

The Principal, with the Early Learning Centre teacher oversee the day to day running of the educational programmes. The Governing Council, in consultation with the staff, is responsible for the policies. The Centre, sometimes with adaptations, supports the policies and procedures of the School.

The Committee Members for 2011 are

- Peter
- Tanya
- Suanne
- Deb
- Diana
- Linda
- Carolyn
- Debra

They are happy to answer any questions that you may have.
Values
Our values are respect, responsibility and learning.

Our Vision
Our school community is committed to creating an environment conducive to learning. We recognise the uniqueness of every child and support them as a learner to develop resilience, optimism, skills, confidence and social responsibility for them to achieve their full potential.

ELC Improvement Plan 2011
Priorities
- 21st Century Learning – Inquiry Based Learning
- 21st Century Literacy
- 21st Century Numeracy

Staff
Rowena Tennant, Shelley Leach Lalli Parkin (teachers)
Cher Litchfield, Peta Ware and Deb Hales (educators)

Eligibility
Pre-entry
Children are invited to attend one Pre-entry session a week during the term they turn four.

During the pre-entry session, the children will become familiar with other children, the staff and the routines of the Centre.

The Pre-entry sessions are integrated throughout the regular sessions.

Four Years of Age
Children are entitled to four terms of preschool education. In the term after they turn four years of age, children are eligible to start their full-time equivalent preschool education. This is equal to four ½ day sessions per week.

Actual starting dates depend on the school starting date. Please discuss this with staff.

If you are considering accessing the program at the Trinity Gardens ELC, please note that your child’s school start date influences their Preschool start date. The children who attend Education Department Centres are entitled to a maximum of 4 terms or 164 sessions of preschool education. This cannot be extended unless your child has been assessed as having learning difficulties.

The options for parents considering or enrolling in the Steiner Stream and wanting to access the ELC program are:
- preferably to decide to start at the beginning of a school year, then to adhere to that decision no matter when your child turns five during that year and therefore delaying the ELC starting date to align with the school start date.
If your child is eligible to start during the year they may be able to enter a mainstream class and then to transfer to a Steiner class at the beginning of the following year.

Access the ELC program as soon as they are eligible with an understanding that there may be a period of time when your child is unable to access either the ELC or school programs.

Follow the above option but with the possibility of a referral to the Steiner Kinder should there be a period when your child is unable to access either of the programs offered at Trinity Gardens.

**Fees**

**Current Fees:**

- Preschool Sessions: $70.00 per term.
- Pre-entry: $20.00 per term.
- Lunch Care: $7.00 per child per day.

These fees are determined by the School's Governing Council and are reviewed at various intervals. Excursion fees are in addition to the above fees.

**Session Times**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8.45 – 11.30 am</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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Full days are offered by the Centre. A full day is equivalent to 2 sessions.

See staff for more details.

During the early stages of a session, children are establishing the learning and friendship groups for that day. It is important to have your child at the Centre at the start of each session so that they too can participate in this vital process.

Please note that unless your child is staying for a full day, the afternoon session starts at 12.30 pm.

As the outside is a vital and valued part of our learning area, the staff spend time considering the needs of the children and what equipment will enhance their learning. Consequently, the setting up of outside is just as important as the setting up inside. We ask that you respect the professionalism of the Centre staff by
arriving at the Centre as the session starts so that we can deliver a quality learning program.

**Daily Requirements**
The children are required to bring

- A hat
- A drink of water
- A healthy snack for recess
- Lunch (full day option)

Perishable foods may be stored in the fridge but please make sure that your child’s lunch box is clearly labelled.

**Programs/Learning**
We are a play centred preschool. “The most powerful way young children learn is through play” (SACSA 2006). Play is as vital to the child’s development as nutrition, health and shelter. Play provides children with the opportunities to investigate their world and to test their knowledge, skills and understanding. Play allows children to be active and interactive. They learn how to form and maintain relationships. During play, children are regularly using higher order thinking skills as they imagine, create, negotiate, problem solve and experiment.

The program is developed from professional observations and the current Education Department curriculum document *The Early Years Learning Framework*. The program is displayed on the notice board each week and made available to parents in the pocket hanging on the door marked “Current Program”.

**Weekly Events 2011**

**Book Borrowing**
Children may borrow a book for a period of two weeks. We encourage the children to have a library bag for safe storage of the books.

**Extended Learning**
In order to give our children every opportunity to extend their learning we are fortunate enough to be able to access the school resources and facilities. Regularly and in many cases weekly, we

- Work with specialist teachers and have access to their skills and knowledge – the Resource Centre teacher and the Italian teachers
- Work with an older class on a vast range of learning activities. They become our friends and mentors
- Work in the Resource Centre with its extensive library of fiction and non-fiction books, math equipment, IT equipment and bank of computers where we can all access a computer at the one time
- Borrow equipment to enhance our science program
- Participate in lunchtime play with the older students in our yard
These experiences help promote an authentic transition between Early Learning Centre and school.

**Routines and Responsibilities**
The beginning and end of each session is held inside the building so that staff can monitor the arrival and departure of children. We therefore require that your child is delivered to the inside of the Centre at the beginning of a session and that they are picked up from inside the building.

For safety reasons please advise us if someone “new” is going to collect your child. The information can be entered into the **Communication Book** located on top of the lockers. Simply find the correct date and fill in the details. The same book can be used to advise us of other changes to arrival and collection times. One example might be if you needed to pick your child up early.

**Absences**
You are required to notify us if your child is going to be or has been absent. We are required by the Department to provide a reason (illness, family, medical) for any absences. Your cooperation would be appreciated.

**Sun Smart**
“No hat, no play” is our Sun Smart School policy. Children are required to wear a hat to play beyond the verandah from Week 6 Term 3 until Week 5 Term 2 inclusive. In order to protect your child the hat must be either a broad brimmed or Legionnaires design.

We do not provide sunscreen but if you supply a named bottle of sunscreen we will apply it before we go outside at lunchtime. We greatly appreciate it if you could apply the morning block if required.

**Health Policy**
Your child’s health is paramount. Research is telling us that there is a strong relationship between the child’s health and his or her adult health. The Early Learning Centre therefore has a **Healthy Food Policy**. The children are to bring healthy foods for both recess and lunch. Some suggestions may be fresh fruit, cheese, raw vegetables (grated carrot), savoury biscuits or dried fruit and healthy sandwiches.

**Illness**
Please keep your child at home if they are ill. Illnesses are spread quickly if children return to the Centre too soon after they have been unwell. Even though children will often tell you they are fine to go to Kindy, you are the adult and the best one to judge the suitability of your child’s attendance.

**First Aid**
You will be advised via your communication pocket if your child has received minor first aid treatment.
**Communication**

Effective and efficient communication between home and the Centre is extremely important.

Every family has a Communication Pocket that we use regularly to distribute notices. The pockets hang on the wall outside on the Amherst Avenue end of the building. Please check it regularly.

Some notices require a response slip from families. The slips can be returned by placing them in the small denim ‘return slip’ bag hanging beside the heater, outside the study door.

We publish our own news sheet on a regular basis and distribute the School Newsletter fortnightly. At other times, we will highlight events by putting a notice on a stand outside the door or by sending a separate notice home. These notices will be placed in the pockets hanging outside the door.

If you are unable to access these forms of communication please contact a staff member so that we can negotiate a process that will allow you to receive all the information. The Communication Book should be used to advise us of changes to drop-off and pick-up routines. The book is located on the lockers.

The staff are happy to discuss your child’s development with you. This may be before or after a session. However if you require a longer discussion, please make an appointment to see the teacher at another time. Throughout the twelve months that your child attends our centre, staff members will be publishing, for you and your child, stories of their learning when they are at the Centre. Parent Consultations are held during your child’s second term of preschool education. You will receive a Summative Report as your child moves into Reception.

**Getting Involved**

*A positive partnership formed between a child, his/her family and the staff at the Centre is vital for each child to reach their full potential.*

You can be involved in your child’s preschool education in a number of ways:

- Talk to your child about the things they do at preschool
- Share your knowledge about your child with the Centre staff
- Become familiar with the Early Years Learning Framework and the outcomes that we are developing through the programme
- Offer to share your skills and understandings about the current theme with the staff and children
- Assist with general housekeeping of the Centre on either a regular basis or when you have the time.
- There is a Volunteers Jobs Board hanging on the notice board above the lockers. The staff will list any odd jobs that need doing on the board. If you feel that you would like to or could do one of the tasks please see one of the staff who will be able to help you to help us.
School Enrolment
If you have not yet enrolled at a school please do so as soon as possible. If you are considering Trinity Gardens School an enrolment form and information is enclosed.