

WELCOME TO BERRY COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL

Berry Community Pre-School Incorporated is a not-for-profit, community-based preschool and provides an educational preschool program for children aged 3 to 6 years old.

The preschool is administered by parents of children who attend the preschool and is staffed by an early childhood trained teacher and trained and experienced child care educators.

This booklet contains information that will assist you and hopefully answer some of your questions, including things you will need to provide, the purpose of preschool and policies and procedures of the preschool. Please take time to read and understand these procedures.

The Director and Staff at the preschool are available at any time to answer any questions you may have in relation to your child or in respect to the Preschool.

HISTORY

Berry Community Pre-School was originally an outreach program of Kangaroo Valley Pre-School. Initially situated in the old Catholic school hall building (which is now part of Berry Public School), and then St Luke's Anglican Hall. Preschool moved to its present site in 1988.

The premises were purpose-built on land purchased by Shoalhaven Council for preschool use. 1996 saw an extension to the original building for additional storage as preschool equipment had extensively grown.

Substantial funds for all these purposes were raised by preschool parents over many years.

Ongoing maintenance to our building and property is one of our priorities so that the children of Berry will continue to have the best facility available.

AIMS OF BERRY PRE-SCHOOL

- To provide a high-quality Early Childhood Education Program for preschool children over the age of 3 years.
- To promote the optimum whole development of each child through free-play and discovery learning.
- To provide a variety of enjoyable and stimulating learning experiences which help create positive attitudes toward learning.
- To provide a wide variety of developmentally-appropriate experiences offered in an anti-bias way, incorporating multicultural perspectives.
- To encourage parents to play an active role in the education of their children.
- To provide a safe and hygienic environment.
- To create an environment that has warm, supportive and positive interactions between staff, children and parents.
- To integrate children with additional needs through strategies and materials devised in consultations with specialised resource people and parents.

THE PRESCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The program offered at Berry Community Pre-School is influenced by the philosophy of Reggio Emilia, the importance of play-based learning and the National Early Years Learning Framework.

The learning environment reflects the view that the children are seen as capable and constructors of their own knowledge and the adults as facilitators. Children are free to choose the areas of interest in which to participate throughout the day, while the staff and children engage in collaborative decision-making about the

equipment which is used. Children also participate in group experiences with either a small or large group with the staff.

Each day, experiences provided are based on the children's interest and include art, puzzles, blocks, dough, dramatic play, writing corner, construction toys, journals, computer, books, sand, water, active and imaginative play, story-telling and music. Children can initiate or continue their own projects and investigations that may last days or weeks. Some children may also be involved in collaborative projects with other children. The program is flexible and recognises the individual needs and interests of the children. Visitors, excursions and informal outings are also planned to extend the children's learning beyond those offered in the preschool on a daily basis.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

We believe in continuous quality improvement at Berry Community Pre-School. Staff, management committee and families are involved in writing and contributing to our Strategic Plan and our Quality Improvement Plan.

On 1st January 2012, the National Quality Framework was established and aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services across Australia. Berry Community Pre-School has been assessed and rated against the National Quality Standards and has received **Exceeding in all 7 Quality Areas**. For more information see www.acecqa.gov.au Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PRESCHOOL

Berry Community Pre-School is a community-based centre and is licensed by the Department of Education (DoE) to care for and

educate, a total of 24 children aged from 3 to 6 years of age at any one time.

The preschool is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984 and operates under the Model Rules from the NSW Office of Fair Trading. The preschool's operation is overseen by a Management Committee which is made up from the parent body and/or members of the community. The Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the centre and is accountable to the Management Committee.

Enrolment priority is given to children who are eligible to attend school the following year. Children with additional needs are welcomed and included in every aspect of the Preschool Program. In the event that no vacancies exist, names are placed on a waiting list with placement being offered as soon as possible.

The Centre's operational costs are funded by the Department of Education (DoE), with the shortfall being met by the fees charged to each family by the preschool. We also rely on a variety of fundraising activities to help raise valuable funds to resource the centre.

STAFF

The preschool is staffed by experienced and qualified staff. Currently these consist of a Director/Teacher who holds a Diploma of Teaching in Early Childhood Education; a full-time Childcare Educator who holds a TAFE Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care and part-time Educators who hold Associate Diplomas and assist in Additional Needs Programming. We also have a part-time Administration Officer. All educators hold a current First Aid Certificate and are trained in anaphylaxis and asthma management.

Staff are encouraged to keep up to date on early childhood development programmes and innovations and attend Early Childhood seminars and courses throughout the year.

MANAGEMENT AND PARENT COMMITTEE

The preschool cannot operate without a Management Committee. It is important that as many parents as possible attend our monthly Committee meetings – it is a great way for parents to meet other parents and keep up to date with what is happening at our preschool.

The duties of the Management Committee include:

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the preschool;
- Oversee the adherence to the Education and Care Services National Regulations and the National Quality Standards;
- Review fees and hire staff.

The Fundraising Committee is a sub-committee of the Management Committee and is responsible for organising fundraising and social events for the preschool. Funds raised are used to provide equipment, educational toys and resources for the children and maintenance to grounds and buildings.

POLICIES

The preschool has policy documents pertaining to all aspects of the Centre. These policies are available to parents/guardians to read and are located in the office. Please see staff for further details.

FEES STRUCTURE

The following are the administration fees associated with attendance at our Preschool:

- **Enrolment Administration Fee: \$20.** This is an annual fee and applies to all enrolments at the preschool.
- **Enrolment Deposit: \$50.** It includes a \$45 **enrolment deposit** that is refunded on your child's last invoice from preschool and an **Annual Association Fee** of \$5.00 which is a compulsory fee payable annually per family NOT for each child enrolled. Membership of the Association gives parents and caregivers the right to vote at meetings. In addition, **Annual Maintenance Levy \$25 per term, per family.**
- **Term Fees: Fees 2019 - \$25 per day for 4 year olds. The cost may vary for non-equity 3 year olds. Low Income families fees are \$10 per day.** These are set each year by the Management Committee in accordance with available funds and operational costs. It is important to realise that you pay for your child's position at the centre not their attendance and therefore absences must be paid for.
- **Fees** are calculated for each School Term and invoices are distributed via the children's Information Pockets. Fees are due at the end of Week 2 in each Term and failure to pay fees may result in your child being excluded from the preschool in forthcoming terms.
- **Fees** can be paid in instalments and are deposited directly into the preschool bank account via a National Australia Bank branch or via internet banking.
- For more information, please refer to the preschool's Fee Policy.

ECONOMIC SUBSIDY

Economic Subsidy is available for families who meet criteria stipulated by Department of Education (Early Childhood Directorate). Application forms for Fee Subsidy are available from

the office. Your combined income must be less than \$48,000 per annum and you are required to provide proof of income i.e. a Low Income Health Care Card.

Failure to submit the completed application and supporting documentation by the required date will result in full fees being charged by the preschool.

PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Core Preschool hours are from 9.00am to 3.00pm each day

For safety and security, ALL children must be signed in on arrival and signed out on departure. The sign in book is located at the entrance. By law we are not permitted to allow children to be collected by persons other than the parents/guardians of a child and those authorised to do so on the child's enrolment form. Exception to this must be made by prior arrangement with the Director. If someone other than yourself or the authorised persons is to collect your child, the Director must receive a written note or phone call giving authorisation. Please also note – authorised persons must be over the age of 18 years as we are not permitted to release children into the care of another minor.

Extended hours

We offer, for no additional fee, extended hour sessions. The morning session is 8.30 am until 9.00 am and the afternoon session is 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm. Bookings for extended hours must be made. Attendance can be on a permanent or casual basis.

INFORMATION POCKETS

Most correspondence - fee notices, receipts and information notes concerning the preschool will be placed in an Information Pocket clearly marked with your child's name. These are located

at the entrance of the preschool. Parents/guardians are asked to check these daily to ensure they are kept up-to-date with what is happening at the centre. If you would prefer your correspondence to be emailed please let us know. We also have a closed Facebook Preschool page that you can join to receive updated messages.

ABSENCES

Parents/guardians are charged for their child's position at the preschool and not for their attendance. No fee exemption is made if a child is sick or absent. Two (2) full weeks notice either by phone or in writing must be given in the event of a child leaving the preschool. If a child is absent for more than two (2) weeks and the preschool is not notified, the child's place will be cancelled and fees charged accordingly.

EXCURSIONS

Excursions are part of early childhood learning and from time to time these are arranged for the children. A note will be sent out to all parents regarding the forthcoming excursion. If you would prefer your child not to take part in these outings, please see the Director prior to excursion day. Parents/carers are also required to assist on excursions. If you are available, please see staff prior to the excursion.

ACCIDENTS

A record is kept of children who may be involved in minor accidents, e.g. grazed knee, cuts, etc. If a more serious accident/head injury occurs the child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately, or if unavailable the "emergency contact" noted on your enrolment form will be called. Please make sure this information is kept up-to-date.

NUTRITION

Berry Pre-School aims to provide a healthy environment that promotes the importance of a nutritional diet. The preschool does not provide meals. Parents are required to supply lunch, fruit and a water bottle. When packing your child's lunch, please remember that the habits developed early in life are the ones which remain with your child throughout his/her life. We do encourage you to provide a healthy, nutritious lunch consisting of foods such as fruit, dairy products and sandwiches. Fruit is to be provided for morning tea (crunch & sip) and the staff will assist with cutting it up. Please see a copy of our Nutrition Policy attached to the Handbook.

- All children are required to bring a water bottle (**containing only water**) to drink during the day when he/she may be thirsty.
- Cordial is **not recommended** for children at preschool as the sugar and colouring content of the cordial will be coating their teeth for the remainder of their preschool day. Please **DO NOT** send cordial with your child.
- Please **DO NOT** send sweet items to preschool such as sweet biscuits, or anything with chocolate in it for your child's lunch.
- Please **DO NOT** send anything containing nuts, including peanut butter. Due to allergy awareness Berry Pre-School has a nut-free policy.
- Lunches and drink bottles are to be placed in the fridge on arrival.

Birthday Cakes

Birthday cakes are welcome at preschool on those extra special occasions. Cupcakes for the entire group are a novel way to celebrate a birthday, with instant, individual pieces.

CLOTHING

One never knows when a mishap may happen; this can be an upsetting time for some children. The stress of this can be simply alleviated by access to their own clothing. Therefore it is advisable that a change of clothes is kept in your child's bag and also a bag for dirty or soiled clothes.

Children are encouraged to play outside and be involved in messy activities; as a result, clothes may get wet or dirty, so please dress your child in washable play clothes. Please also provide a sunsafe approved hat (i.e. a brimmed hat) for your child to wear outside. We do have preschool hats and T-shirts available for purchase.

All articles of clothing that can be removed, including shoes, should be clearly named.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The preschool **MUST** be notified IMMEDIATELY if your home or work address and phone number changes. We must always have your current phone number in case of an emergency. The preschool must also be notified if you have changed your emergency contact details.

WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO BRING TO PRESCHOOL

- A full change of clothes.
- Warm hat & coat (winter).
- Wide-brim sunhat.
- Sandals and/or shoes. NO THONGS or slip on shoes please as they are not safe for climbing.
- Morningtea(crunch&sip), and lunch (fruit/cheese/sultanas/sandwich/yoghurt/etc) please refer to our Nutrition Policy for further suggestions.
- Water bottle containing WATER ONLY.
- Please label all articles.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Starting preschool can be a little overwhelming and stressful for both parents and children alike. As a result, it is common for some children to experience varying degrees of separation anxiety where they can exhibit a number of distressing behaviours from crying to anger and frustration. Staff are sensitive to this and are there to help you and your child. If you require advice or assistance in dealing with this please do not hesitate to ask. Briefly, it is most important that you do not sneak away even though it may save a scene. This causes insecurity in your child and will ultimately prolong the anxiety. After a short period of settling time, tell your child that it is time for you to go, that you will come back at 3 o'clock. Say goodbye and leave your child in the care of a staff member. **Be brave** – if you are hesitant about leaving your child, they will pick up on your apprehension. Most children settle quickly and learn that it is a safe and fun environment. You are welcome and encouraged to phone the centre if you are concerned upon leaving. The most important part about preschool is to enjoy the experience so please do not hesitate to speak with staff if you are experiencing any difficulty.

ILLNESS AND HEALTH

The Director must be notified if your child is to be absent due to illness. Please also notify the Director if your child has contracted an infectious disease. Children with contagious illnesses are required to be kept at home and not return to preschool until the infection has been treated and can no longer be passed on.

In case of an accident or illness at preschool, the Director where necessary will endeavour to contact the parents immediately and/or will complete an Accident/Injury form. This is required to be signed and dated by a parent or authorised person and returned to the Director. If necessary, medical assistance will be sought. Any expenses will be the responsibility of the parents.

Parents are asked NOT TO BRING SICK CHILDREN TO THE CENTRE.

Preschool staff has the right to refuse children showing any of these signs:

- *High temperature
- *Eye discharge
- *School sores
- *Common cold
- *Vomiting
- *Diarrhoea
- *Head Lice

Infectious diseases that will exclude your child from the preschool until all signs have gone include:

- *Bronchiolitis
- *Bronchitis
- *Chicken Pox
- *Hand, Foot & Mouth
- *Infectious Hepatitis
- *Measles
- *Mumps
- *Ringworm & Tinea
- *Whooping cough
- *Rubella

MEDICATION

Only prescribed medication clearly identified by a label with the child's name and dosage clearly shown will be administered to children. All medicine must be handed to a staff member and written instructions recorded by the parent in the Medication Book. Please refer to the centre's Medication Policy if you require more information.

FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS AND ANAPHYLAXIS

THIS PRESCHOOL IS A NUT-FREE PRESCHOOL

Our centre has a policy relating to food allergy awareness and anaphylaxis. The aim of our policy is to ensure that any child, with severe allergies who attends the centre is provided with an environment that is as safe as possible and allows them to participate in the daily routine without the risk or fear of being exposed to traces of their allergen.

For a small but significant number of children with food allergies, minute amounts of certain foods when ingested can be life threatening.

All parents and caregivers are asked to think carefully when packing their children's lunchboxes, limiting and avoiding such items as peanut butter, nuts and Nutella. Please see attached Nutrition Policy for further information.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

The preschool regularly practices emergency evacuation procedure, to ensure the children's safety is maintained.

Evacuation Plans are located near each external exit. Parents are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these.

COMPLAINTS

The preschool welcomes parents and caregivers comments and concerns. All complaints will be dealt with in an unbiased and confidential manner.

Parents are encouraged in the first place to advise the **Director** of any necessary issues. (Please refer to Complaints Policy for further information). All parents are invited to make comments/suggestions regarding the preschool.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/PARTICIPATION

The preschool is a not-for-profit, community based centre and relies on the support and help of the local community. Parent involvement is imperative to the operation of the centre and assists in keeping maintenance costs down through involvement in working bees and fundraisers. If you are able to help by participating in working bees, helping out with excursions, assisting with maintenance, cutting/collecting craft materials, fundraising nights or selling raffle tickets, it would be greatly appreciated. Many hands make light work!!!

SHARING YOUR SKILLS

Children and staff love to have people come for a visit to share their special skills with us. Please let us know if you have a skill or interest to share, e.g. instrument piano/guitar etc, handcraft skills knitting/spinning/cooking etc.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Our centre has a strong commitment to ensure the health and safety of all staff, children, families and visitors.

If you observe any areas of concern, please notify staff or a member of the Management Committee.

STAFF 2019

Director/Teacher/Nominated Supervisor - Janelle Emery

(5 days per week) Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood)

Full time Educator - Brittany Kelly Knox

(5 days per week) Diploma in Children's Services

Part-time Educators - Jenny Young

(4 days per week) Child Care Certificate

- Nicole Gorden

(3 days per week) Diploma in Children's Services

- TBA

(2 days per week) Diploma in Children's Services

Extra-Curricular Educators:**Art/Music/Zumba/Shoalhaven Zoo Educators****Administration Officer - Leanne Janos**

(Tuesdays/Wednesday morning)

TERM DATES 2019

Term 1

Monday 28th January - Australia Day Public HolidayTuesday 29th January – Staff onlyWednesday 30th January – Children’s First DayFriday 12th April – Term 1 ends

Term 2

Monday 29th April – Preschool CommencesMonday 10th June – Public HolidayFriday 5th July – Term 2 ends

Term 3

Monday 22nd July – Preschool CommencesFriday 27th September – Term 3 ends

Term 4

Monday 14th October – Preschool CommencesWednesday 18th December – Term 4 endsThursday 19th/Friday 20th December – PUPIL FREE DAYS*Attachments:*

- *Mission Statement and Philosophy*
- *Fee Policy*
- *Nutrition Policy – Nut Free Zone*
- *Immunisation Policy*