



PRESCHOOL PARENT INFORMATION

➤ *All children. All abilities. All possibilities.*



Welcome

Dear Family,

We are glad you chose us for your child's education and care needs.

Koorana Child and Family Services is committed to supporting children's positive learning opportunities and strengthening families through the provision of inclusive and family-focused services delivered through a diverse range of early education, intervention and family support programs.

We are looking forward to having you and your child at the preschool and hope you enjoy your time with us.

This Parent Information Booklet will provide you with all the important information you need to make the most of your time with Koorana. Such as:

- > Koorana preschool programs
- > Koorana policies as they relate to you and your child
- > What to expect from Koorana preschools
- > What you can do to make your child's experience more enjoyable

We currently have two centres; Koorana Croydon Street and Koorana Phillip Street. We are licensed and registered with the Department of Education and work within the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and the National Quality Standards (NQS).

Remember, Koorana is your preschool as much as it is ours.

Our Open Door Policy means that you and your family are welcome to come into the preschool at any time.

We actively encourage your participation and involvement in the preschool program, so please do not hesitate to ask us any question, or offer any suggestion.

Regards,

Helen Wilkinson
General Manager – Client Services



About Koorana

Opened in 1976, Koorana Child and Family Services is a not-for-profit, community-owned, social-purpose business that provides a range of services to children and young people 0-18 years.

We are actively engaged in furthering children's learning and social development and strengthening families in their familial roles.

Our services are inclusive of all children of all abilities.

> Our Vision

Our vision is for children and their families to have supportive connections, discover possibilities and participate to their full potential in all aspects of family and community life.

> Our Mission

We create and support learning and social opportunities in caring environments for all children and young people in our areas of operation.

> Our Core Values



Self
Determination



Access
& Equity



Collaboration



Respect



Ethics
& Integrity



Sustainability

> Who We Support

- 01 *Children and young people of all abilities*
- 02 *Families of all cultures*
- 03 *Siblings of children with additional needs*

Our Preschool Philosophy

➤ All children are individuals and unique

We believe that when children feel they belong to the Preschool, it helps them to be comfortable with their peers, educators and in their surroundings. This in turn helps them to become active and independent learners, who are eager to play, express themselves, explore and experiment.

➤ A second home

We believe in creating a 'homelike' environment that reflects the cultural heritage and identity of the Preschools' children, families, educators and Australia.

➤ Learning through play

Play allows children to follow their own interests and ideas with energy and enthusiasm. It provides them with opportunities to:

- imagine, improvise, discover and create
- engage in critical thinking, solve problems and test out ideas
- talk to peers and educators
- create social groups and learn about fairness
- look after their own physical wellbeing and that of others

We provide a play-based curriculum in which the children can learn and enjoy themselves, so they become confident global citizens.

➤ Educators

Our educators are warm, responsive and tuned in to the children's needs, interests and personalities. They are open to children's suggestions and ideas which are incorporated into the learning program and daily activities.

➤ Sustainability

We are committed to implementing sustainable practices and by educating children, their families and ourselves. We teach children about sustainability and caring for the environment as well as actively looking for ways to reduce, reuse and recycle our resources.

➤ Families and communities

Families are the first educators and most important people in a child's life. We encourage all families to play an active part in the Preschool community.

Families' cultural beliefs, heritage, customs and opinions are respected and represented in the curriculum. The curriculum also includes learning about and engaging with the wider local community.

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Koorana has a deep commitment to nurture individual potential.



Our Preschool Program

Our preschool program is guided by Koorana’s mission of providing learning opportunities to all children and their families in a caring environment.

Our programs are based on the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

Evidence based research, theories and literature guide the preschool program. The Education and Care Services National Regulations ensure all preschools provide an educational program (Regulations, part 4.1, p.73) and reflects the national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework captures the unique learning and development of all children across the birth to five age range.

The five outcomes are:

- › Children have a strong sense of identity
- › Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- › Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- › Children are confident and involved learners
- › Children are effective communicators.

The National Quality Framework supports our preschools in meeting the requirements of the seven quality areas within the National Quality Standard. It highlights the importance of play based learning to children’s learning and development. Play creates a brain that has increased flexibility and improved potential for learning later in life (Lester and Russell, 2008). Therefore play based learning environments offer children the opportunities and experiences needed to promote healthy brain development.

We recognise that families are children’s first and most influential teachers and we value the huge part you play in your child’s life.

At Koorana Preschools’ we create a welcoming environment where all children and families are respected and engage with us in curriculum decisions to ensure children’s learning and wellbeing.

Transition to School Program

Starting school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and their family. Transition to school is embedded into the daily program and available all day at our Preschools. Transition to school literature highlights the importance for children to have well developed social and emotional skills. Therefore, the curriculum is designed on making the child’s transition to school as smooth as possible and giving each child life skills to help them enter formal schooling as confident, capable and involved learners.

Inclusive Practices

Koorana Preschools’ are inclusive of all children of all abilities. We guide children’s learning and behaviour through positive messages that encourage children to reach their full potential.

Our program support the children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity – including learning styles, abilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children’s experiences are recognised and valued. Also to ensure all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference. (Early Years Learning Framework, p.45)

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Our preschools are staffed by experienced early childhood educators who ensure the preschool program is based around the interests and needs of the children.

Storypark

What is Storypark?

Storypark is an online programming tool that is used to allow teachers, educators and families to document and share the child’s learning and development. Educator’s and family members can access Storypark by computer, iPad or phone app.

How is Storypark used at Koorana Preschools’?

The dashboard on Storypark is updated regularly to highlight curriculum, inquiry based learning, intentional teaching, spontaneous and planned exploration, plus upcoming events across the centre. Each child also has their own individual profile on Storypark that can only be accessed by their family. Educators record and write individual observations on the child’s learning as well as collective entries. The child’s learning and development will be recorded, followed by collaborative planning highlighting extensions for play.

How can you contribute to your child’s learning on Storypark?

We encourage you to be part of documenting your child’s learning and development on Storypark. Families can share their own stories and photos of special events, highlights or developmental milestones of their child. You can also share comments and ideas on Storypark.

Start Strong Program

We participate in the NSW Start Strong Program which ensures children have access to at least 600 hours of preschool education each year to give them the best start at school.

The program also ensures that preschool fees are affordable for families.



Your child will be happy and safe at Koorana

Wellbeing describes a child's happiness, confidence, physical health and resilience. It compliments a healthy lifestyle which embraces all aspects including a balanced diet, exercise as well as social, spiritual, emotional, cultural and economic aspects.

Koorana Preschools support children's wellbeing by providing warm, trusting relationships, predictable and safe environments. "By acknowledging each child's cultural and social identity, and responding sensitively to their emotional states, educators build children's confidence, sense of wellbeing and willingness to engage in learning." (Outcome 3, EYLF p.30)

For many children a sense of wellbeing is connected to their increasing physical confidence and competence. It is important for educators to support the physical development of the children in an inclusive environment. Promoting and facilitating active and healthy lifestyles in preschool increases the likelihood that children will continue these habits after preschool.

We are licensed and registered with the Department of Education and work within the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF), and the National Quality Standards (NQS).

Our quality is regularly assessed against seven (7) quality areas under the National Quality Standard. The assessment is carried out by the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate.

Educator to child ratios and supervision

The Education and Care National Regulations (2011) determine the maximum number of children to educators and the qualifications required at the Preschools (1 educator to 10 children). At Koorana we have above the required number of staff.

Our ratios are one educator to six children. We have a Duty of Care to ensure the protection, health and safety of all children enrolled at our Preschools.

Active adult supervision is critically important in providing a safe and protective environment for all children to support children's play. All of Koorana's policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all children at all times.

Child Protection

Koorana Preschools recognises and strongly supports the rights of children and young people to be safe from significant risk of harm and abuse. Our educators are trained in child protection and aware of the reporting obligations and procedures they are required by law to follow. All Koorana preschool educators are mandatory reporters. This means that we must make a report to Family and Community Services if we suspect any child is at risk of harm.

Infection Control

When children attend preschool their exposure to infectious conditions may increase because they have behaviours that help spread infection. They may also be exposed to other children who are contagious without recognisable symptoms. Children need guidance and support to develop hygiene habits such as handwashing. We adhere to health mandates including the Education and Care Services National Regulations – regulation 77 (2), The National Health and Medical Research Council and Staying Healthy in Childcare.

Handwashing

Handwashing, including drying hands, is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of infection.

When teaching children to wash their hands the following points are a good guide:

- use soap and running water
- wash hands thoroughly while counting slowly from 1 to 15
- wash all parts of the hands including sides and between the fingers
- rinse hands well to remove soap
- dry hands well to remove soap
- dry hands with a new paper towel

Nappy changing and toileting procedures

If your child is not toilet trained and using nappies please provide enough nappies in your child's bag for the day. Our staff will also work closely with you if your child is being toilet trained. Please talk to your child's teacher about our toilet training routines and we'll follow the routine while your child is at preschool.

Immunisation

Effective 1 January 2018, the preschool is required by legislation to keep a record of your child's immunisation records and only an AIR Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled vaccinations. No other form of documentation is acceptable i.e. Blue Book. These documents must be stored by the preschool in a secure location.

Sick Children

Please don't bring your child to preschool if they are unwell. Infections spread easily amongst children while they play so sick children should be kept at home. This is especially important if your child has had any recent:

- vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- fever (38 degrees or above)
- skin infections such as cold sores on the mouth or chicken pox

Educators will ask you to collect your child from the preschool if they consider your child is not well enough to attend. This may occur regardless of a medical certificate.

➤ When notified your child is sick, please arrange for your child to be collected from the preschool quickly.

We reserve the right to request a medical clearance from your doctor in writing stating the child is not infectious/contagious and is fit to return to preschool, if necessary. If a child is diagnosed as having a contagious disease, please let the staff at the preschool know straight away. The preschool is also obliged to notify the NSW Department of Health when we have multiple cases of certain infectious conditions and we are then required to follow their advice in order to contain the outbreak.

We will advise parents when an outbreak of an infectious disease is reported to us by putting a notice up at preschool.

If your child needs medication while at preschool we will need the following:

- The medication authorization form is fully completed and signed
- The medicine is in the original bottle, has the child's name on the label and is current
- The Educator administering the medication will adhere to the instructions on the container
- Parents will be contacted if there is a discrepancy between the label and parent instruction on the medication form
- Educators must be advised of any non-prescription medication (Paracetamol, cough syrup, etc.) given in the last four (4) hours prior to attending preschool
- Educators are unable to administer non – prescription medication (Paracetamol, cough syrup, etc.) unless provided with a Doctor or Health expert's written advice.

➤ Under no circumstances should medication be placed in a child's locker.

Ongoing Serious Medical Conditions

If your child has a diagnosed medical condition our preschool staff are here to support you so it is important that you let the staff know. Your doctor or paediatrician needs to provide you with a written Action Plan. This Action Plan will clearly outline how to manage your child's condition in the event of an emergency.

A copy of the Action Plan must be provided to the preschool for ANY serious medical condition any child has. Such conditions could include asthma, anaphylaxis, epilepsy/seizures or any other diagnosed conditions.

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Starting at Preschool

We have specific arrangements when starting in the Preschool.

Orientation Sessions

Before your child starts preschool, they will be invited to attend the preschool with you for a couple of visits so they can become familiar and comfortable in the preschool environment. The Preschool Leader will talk to you after the first visit to plan for your child's start at preschool.

Opening times

Our licensed hours are 8:15am – 3:45pm. We are unable to supervise children before 8.15am or after 3.45pm.

Drop off

At drop off time, please remember to:
Sign In your child at our Kiosk iPad Station
Place their morning tea and lunch in the fridge
Place their bag in the locker
Assist in washing their hands

- Always say goodbye to your child and reassure them that you will be picking them up later
- Remember to apply sunscreen on your child before you come to preschool every day!

Pick up

At pick up time, please remember to Sign Out at our Kiosk iPad Station.

- You must be at the preschool before 3.45pm to collect your child at the end of the day.

If you are running late, please contact the staff to let them know as soon as possible. If staff cannot contact you, they will call someone you have authorised as an emergency contact to come and pick up your child.

On the enrolment form please nominate which adults you authorise to do this on your behalf.

Unauthorised persons will not be allowed to remove a child from the preschool. Photo identification will be required before collecting the child.

- It is a legal requirement that you **SIGN YOUR CHILD IN ON ARRIVAL** and **SIGN THEM OUT WHEN YOU COLLECT THEM.**

The Kiosk iPad Station has many important uses, including when we practice emergency evacuations with the children, which is a requirement of the National Regulations.

Your child's first day

Starting your child in care can be intimidating, as children need to become familiar with the environment and staff. This is why visiting the preschool before enrolling can help your child to become familiar with the environment.

When dropping off your child you can assist in your child settling in by:

- Engaging in an activity with them for 10-15 minutes so they can become comfortable with staff and surroundings.
- Inform your child that you will be staying for a little while, but you will come back to pick them up.

When it comes to saying goodbye, your child may become upset. Allow your child to go with a staff member, tell them where you are going and that you will be back, and say goodbye.

Your child may become upset, but will settle into an activity of interest with staff who will provide the appropriate care for your child.

- Delaying your departure will lead to your child's confusion and inevitably will become distressed.

Remember to:

- Put child's bag in their locker
- Put sun screen on your child
- Put a hat on your child
- Take your child to a staff member
- Read the notice boards
- Make a fee payment

What do you need to bring to preschool?

Knowing what to pack in your child's bag for preschool can be confusing. We've listed a few items below that should be in your child's bag every day for preschool.

- A change of clothes, including spare underpants and socks.
- Nappies if your child is not toilet trained.
- A hat (even if it is cloudy or raining in the morning).
- A drink bottle filled with fresh water.
- Morning tea, including a piece of fruit.
- A lunch box with a healthy meal for lunch.
- Clearly label all of your child's belongings with their name.

As we move into the warmer months of summer, the likelihood of flies and mosquitos increases. As such, could you please make sure you put insect repellent on your child before coming to preschool. If you would like staff to reapply during the day, could you please label the bottle with your child's name and place in his or her bag and alert staff.

➤ Things not to bring in!

Please try not to let your child bring toys from home into the preschool. We have lots of toys at the preschool for all the children to play with. Some children need a comfort toy/blanket and this is acceptable to bring in. If you are unsure please check with the staff.



Photographs

With your permission, photographs of your child may be taken by Koorana staff to be used for educational displays in the preschool, promotional purposes on our website, social media, professional development courses and conferences. You can view any photographs of your child at the preschool.

➤ At Koorana we respect the privacy of others - please do not take photographs of other children or parents on your personal camera or phone.

CCTV Cameras

We have installed Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in our preschools in the common areas of the centres. This is in keeping with the best practice approach recommended by the Early Childhood directorate.

The reasons for this are two-fold.

Firstly, if there is an incident in the preschool, we want to ensure that we are able to review and immediately put in place measures for safety. Time can often be taken up asking individual staff to report on their perspective of an incident. There can be a delay in acting swiftly to implement necessary changes. We will also be able to show parents exactly what happened if there is an incident involving their child. Sometimes injuries can occur very quickly, and staff may not always see every detail. A CCTV will record all details of an incident.

Secondly the CCTV will be able to assist the staff for training purposes. When good days occur, the staff will be able to review the footage and reflect on what made that day work so well. Similarly, if there are more challenging days. We can then provide an ongoing quality improvement process which will benefit all the children in meeting their goals.

Who will see the footage?

The footage will only be used to review incidents or for training purposes. Parents may be able to request to see certain footage if they have concerns about their child.

Will the bathroom areas be monitored?

The bathroom area will not be monitored due to the need for privacy for all children. Staff will continue to monitor children in the bathroom for safety as they have always done.

Does this replace supervision by staff?

Koorana Preschools continue to be run by more staff than is required by the National Regulatory Body ACECQA. We have always provided supervision in accordance with our policy on having staff in line of sight of each other and all children at all times. This will not change. The CCTV will simply be recording what is happening throughout the preschool day.

Will the CCTV replace Storypark?

The Storypark App will continue to be used to record and share with you your child’s achievements and connect them to the learning outcomes for the Early Years Learning Framework.

Will anyone be watching the preschool “live”?

No one will be watching the footage live. Specific parts of the recorded information will be accessed if required.

What will happen to the footage regarding storage?

The footage will be saved for a period of 6 months and then deleted.

If you have any concerns or comments regarding this change, please do not hesitate to phone or connect with me via email (helen.wilkinson@koorana.org.au). You can also discuss any issues with your preschool teacher and staff as they continue to work with you and your child in Term 3.

Evacuation Procedures

Each preschool has an evacuation procedure on display. Please make sure you know where you would need to go to in case of an evacuation. If you arrive during an evacuation drill, you are required to follow the directions of the educators present and evacuate with the children. Evacuation drills will be held at different times of the day.

Confidentiality

Koorana is committed to ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of all your personal information. We are required by law to comply with privacy legislation and national privacy principles in Australia. Koorana is committed to complying with 1988 Privacy Act legislation and principles.

Koorana only maintains information about a client necessary to assess the need for a service and to provide the service. Client Information is not shared without written consent of the client or their legal guardian/carer.

Disclosure of information

Koorana will only disclose information for the purpose for which it was collected, and where appropriate, after obtaining the necessary consent from the individual.

Information may be disclosed for other purposes, with the specific consent to do so. Koorana will only disclose this information in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act and the National Privacy Principles. We may also be required to disclose personal information where the law requires such disclosure.

All of the above information is thoroughly explained in the Preschool Privacy Collection Statement.

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These early years before school go by quickly and are the most important years in your child’s life. We want their Koorana experience to be a positive one. We look forward to working in partnership with you and your family over the years.

Fees and Payments

At Koorana Child and Family Services we are committed to keeping our fees affordable for our families.

Our fees are reviewed annually to ensure we continue to provide high quality education at the most efficient rates.

We do not charge for school holidays.

Some things to remember:

- All fees need to be paid two weeks in advance unless otherwise arranged
- Fees are payable even if:
 - you are on holiday
 - it is a public holiday (except if they fall in school holidays)
 - your child is sick and unable to attend preschool

Our preferred method of payment is by direct debit.

During an extended absence (e.g. overseas holiday), fees can be either paid:

- by regular direct debit on a fortnightly basis in advance (as usual)
- in full in advance

Flexible Deposit

A flexible deposit the equivalent of two weeks' fees is to be paid upon enrolment.

- The deposit may be forfeited as a result of unpaid fees, failure to commence at preschool or failure to provide adequate withdrawal or change of enrolled days
- The deposit will be carried over where a child's enrolment continues into the new calendar year

The deposit is returned to you either by Cheque or Direct Deposit when your child leaves the preschool and all fees have been paid.

Providing Notice of Withdrawal or Changing days

If you would like to withdraw your child from preschool or wish to alter the number of days your child attends, we require **two weeks' notice**, preferably in writing.

Please note:

- Non-term time cannot be included in the notice period
- The two weeks' notice can include the current week if it is given before the child starts their days for the current week (but not if the child has already started in that week). Full payment is required for the 2 weeks' notice period.
- Families giving their two weeks' notice with 4 weeks or less remaining in Term 4 of the calendar year will not get their flexible deposit refunded.
- Should a family withdraw their child from preschool before the child commences, the family will not get their flexible deposit refunded as per the preschools' fees policy. Fees paid in advance will be refunded in full or partially depending on when notice of withdrawal is given as per the above stated guidelines.

Koorana Policies

Koorana has Policies and Procedures that ensure your child's early education is provided in a positive and safe learning environment. These are readily available for you to look through at any time and are also available on Koorana's website - koorana.org.au

Families must abide by the Policies and Procedures of the preschool. Please ensure you are fully aware of these requirements and take the time to be familiar with them.

Open Door Policy

Our Open Door Policy means that you and your family are welcome to come into the preschool at any time to see how we help your child's development. We are proud of the part we play in your child's life and look forward to your visits.

Communication

If you have any concerns or questions, please speak to a staff member at the preschool

Communication between families and the preschool is important. We strive for clear and open communication between families, staff, and children. It is the family's responsibility to read all written communications from the Preschool, including posted signs, newsletters and personal communications, and to respond when necessary.

Also, families need to notify the Preschool Leader, in writing, of any important changes or information regarding their child's health, attendance, schedule, etc. We will do our best to ensure you are kept up to date with what's happening around the preschool.

Likewise, if you have some information from home (for example if your child is having difficulties with toileting or if you have observed a change in their routine or behaviour) it is important you tell us, so we can understand and support your child as best we can.

Interpreters

If you would like an interpreter, please let us know and we'll organise this for you.

Our Communication Plan

The communication plan outlines the opportunities for families and Koorana educators to share information together about individual children, the group and the Preschool as a whole.

On Enrolment

- Enrolment form must be filled out in its entirety.
- Families will be asked to complete a "Getting to know your family" profile outlining the child's routine, interests, likes and dislikes and any additional information about developmental requirement, for example sleep, toileting, food intake and medical needs.

- Preschool Information Night.

Daily

- Informal conversations with educators and administrators will take place at drop-off and pick-up times.
- Storypark and daily program and progress documentation will provide the daily experiences undertaken, achievements and social interactions.

Monthly

- At least one entry by Educators in each child's individual portfolio.

Annually

- Parent Meeting- this provides an opportunity for families to have an input on issues directly affecting the Preschool and/or their children.
- Parent & Educator interview at the beginning of Term 3. If you would like to request an interview at other times throughout the year, this can be arranged with Educators.
- Various social events for families and staff.

Compliments and Complaints

If you have any compliments, complaints or suggestions you can:

- Speak with the Preschool Leader, Educators or Preschool Coordinator
- Fill in the Compliments and Complaints form
- Phone, email or write to the Preschool or our Head Office

In the first instance, please speak with the educators.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the initial discussion with the educator, please approach the Preschool Leader and then our Head Office.

Head Office:

02 8321 9600

enquiries@koorana.org.au



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