

# FAMILY HANDBOOK

## 2025

Kootingal and District Pre School



PHONE: (02) 67603861

ADDRESS: 14 Chaffey Street, Kootingal, NSW

EMAIL: [admin@kootingalpreschool.com.au](mailto:admin@kootingalpreschool.com.au)

WEBSITE: [www.kootingalpreschool.com.au](http://www.kootingalpreschool.com.au)

Like us on Facebook: Kootingal and District Preschool



Dear Families,



It is my pleasure to welcome you to Kootingal & District Preschool. I would like to acknowledge the decision to place your child with us and recognise the responsibility that this brings. We aim to work with families to ensure that being part of our preschool family is a positive experience for all.

Your child's time here at preschool will be full of growth and learning as your child explores their interests, develops new skills, grows in confidence and engages in a range of adventures!

Our team of educators are here to support you and your child the entire way. Now our beautiful indoor and outdoor learning environments are waiting for you!

Many thanks,

**Kate Russell**

Relieving Director/Nominated Supervisor  
[director@kootingalpreschool.com.au](mailto:director@kootingalpreschool.com.au)

### Acknowledgement of Country

We at Kootingal Preschool would like to say maarubaa (thank you) to the Kamilaroi people for letting us share your dhawun (land).

We promise to look after the dhawun, the dhii (animals) and ganu (all) people.

Yaama (hello) dhawun.

Yaama gunagala (sky).

Yaama ngayu (me).

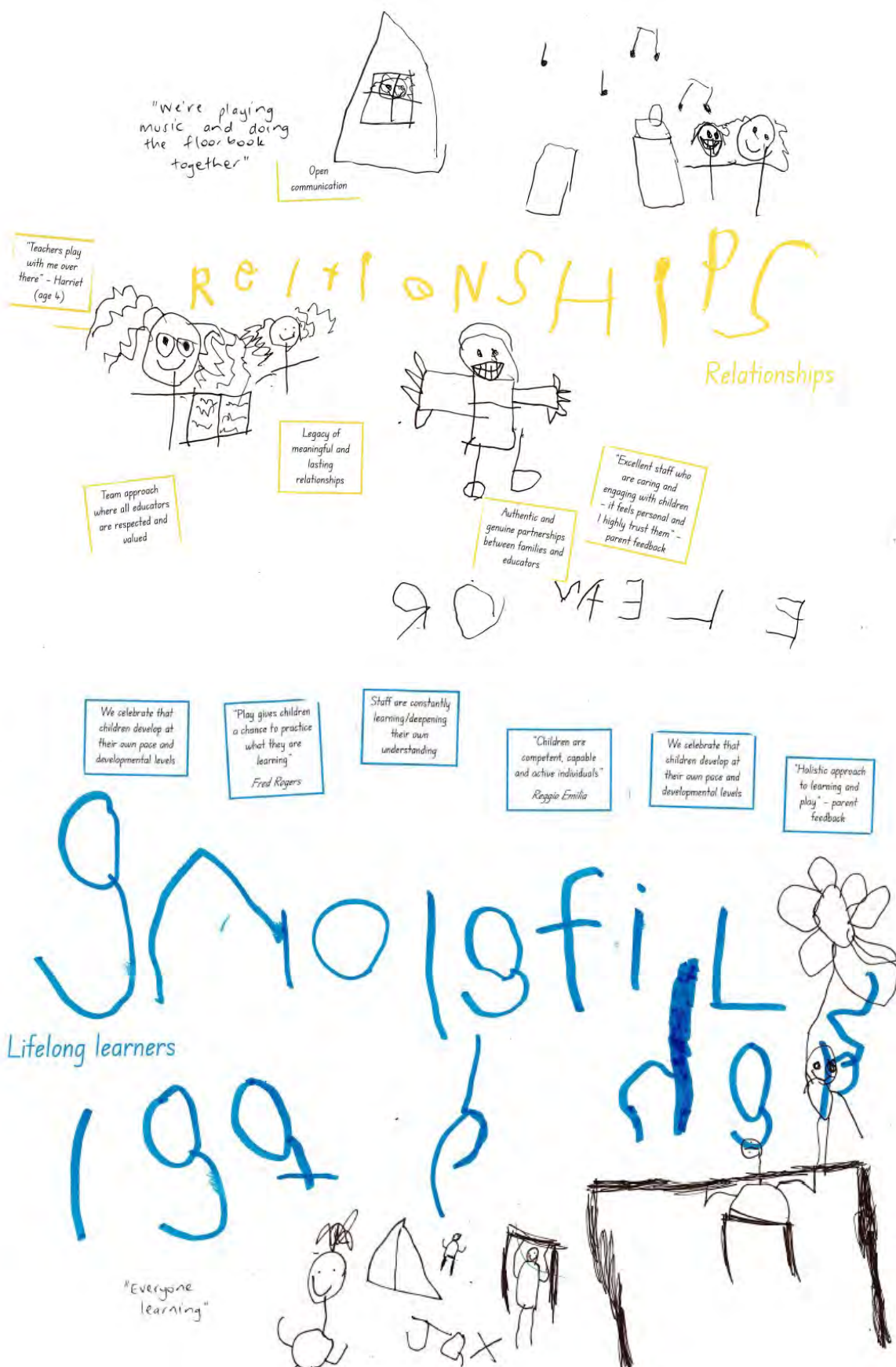
Yaama maliyaa (friends).

*Aboriginal culture is embedded in our program.*



# PHILOSOPHY







## MISSION STATEMENT

The community is at the heart of all we do.  
Our connections with others are authentic and true.  
We include everyone and support each need,  
with our passionate and professional educational team.  
We educate and care in a nurturing way,  
and support and collaborate with our families each day.  
Our Educators will keep learning and continue to strive.  
So, our treasured preschool will stay strong and thrive.



## PRESCHOOL HOURS

Open Monday-Friday from **8.30am to 4.00pm** during NSW school terms

Term 1: Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April

Term 2: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July

Term 3: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September

Term 4: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> October – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December

Due to licencing requirements, we are unable to allow families into the building until 8:30am and your child must be collected no later than 4:00pm

**Please note:** If your child is still present after 4:00pm a fee will be issued of \$20 for the first 15 minutes and then \$20 for the next 15 minutes.

## OUR CLASSROOMS

In the Gamilaroi language Kootingal means 'starry night'. Our classrooms are named Mirii – star and Gilay – Moon in honour of this.

We offer mixed aged grouping in both of our classrooms. There are many benefits to the children being grouped in this way.

- We can be more flexible with what days are available for children
- Siblings can be grouped together or separately depending on family needs
- Children can develop deeper relationships as they stay in the same room for their time at preschool
- Grouping children of different ages allows them to develop strong social and collaboration skills
- Allows for easier transitions to school as many schools have composite classes
- It nurtures empathy, social skills and emotional intelligence – younger children are exposed to

different perspectives from their older peers and the older children learn patience while helping their younger peers

## OUR TEAM

### Leadership Team

- Kate Russell – Nominated Supervisor/Relieving Director/Educational Leader
- Mel – Mirii Room Leader
- Bec – Gilay Room Leader
- Jessica D – Administrative Assistant & 2IC

### Educators

- Aimee – Mirii Room Educator
- Bec – Gilay Room Educator
- Linda – Gilay Room Educator
- Kimmy – Mirii Room Educator
- Jess F - Gilay Room Educator
- Nicole – Educator (both rooms)
- Madi – Mirii Room Educator
- Tehan – Educator (both rooms)
- Tanisha – Gilay Room Educator
- Shakira – Mirii Room Educator

## ENROLMENT FORMS

The enrolment forms are a legal document that contains all information relevant to your child. It must be kept updated at all times, please let us know of any changes immediately.

On enrolment, the following information is required

- Completed enrolment form with relevant information and signature(s)
- Immunisation History Statement
- Health care card (if applicable)
- Copy of child's Birth Certificate
- Information about any medical conditions/allergies/asthma etc.
- Any additional/specific learning needs your child may have



Please refer to the Enrolment & Orientation policy on our website

## START STRONG FEE RELIEF

A Start Strong Fee Relief Declaration will need to be signed to ensure your child's fees are subsidised. If you are claiming the fee relief at another preschool or long day-care service, you will be required to pay daily fees here at Kootingal & District Preschool.

## TOILET TRAINING

All children should be or starting to be toilet trained prior to starting preschool. Special considerations will be given to children with additional support needs.

## SIGN IN/OUT

Each child must be brought into the preschool and signed in/out by their parent/carer using our online check in system - SISO. All authorised persons will be able to set up an account to be able to sign in/out.

Staff must be informed if a child is to be picked up by any other person except parents/carers/other nominated persons. If a person who is not listed on the enrolment form is collecting the child, written permission needs to be given or in an extreme case a phone call made to notify staff. This person will be asked to produce ID.



**Please note:** It is a legislative requirement that your child is signed in and out of the centre.

Please refer to the Delivery & Collection of Children policy on our website

## PAYMENT OF FEES

If you have elected NOT to access the Start Strong Fee Relief at Kootingal Preschool you will be required to pay fees. **Fees apply even if your child is absent due to illness or holidays.** (Exceptions to this clause exist in circumstances of long-term illness). There are no opportunities to make up these days at another time.

Fees are required to be paid 2 weeks in advance.



Please refer to the Fees policy on our website

## OVERDUE FEES

All parents are required to have made payment of fees by **invoice balance due date**.

- If your child's fees are not paid you will receive a friendly reminder.
- All parents with an overdue amount by two weeks will be contacted and advised of our policy.

**Please note:** Children and/or siblings will not be re-enrolled if any fees are outstanding.



Please refer to the Fees policy on our website

## ABSENCES

If your child is unable to attend preschool due to illness or holidays, please notify staff as soon as possible. Please inform us of the nature of your child's illness, especially when it is a contagious illness that others may have been exposed to.

If regular unnotified absences occur our Administrative Assistant will be in touch to determine if a position is still required.

## CASUAL DAYS

When possible, we do offer casual days to children attending the preschool. You will be charged \$80 for the day. Casual days will be dependent on availability and not guaranteed.

## WHAT TO BRING

Backpack which includes:

- Wide brimmed hat (each child receives one upon enrolment and it can be left at preschool)
- Change of clothes
- Large drink bottle

- Lunch and afternoon tea in labelled containers that children can open themselves
- Separate piece of fruit for our optional Crunch & Sip break

Please make sure your child's lunchbox has an ice brick to ensure their food remains cold. Your child's drink bottle is stored in the esky.

PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING.

## PLEASE CHOOSE HEALTHY FOODS

Children have Crunch & Sip at 9:30, lunch 11.00am and an afternoon tea at 2.00pm. The centre has a low fat, low sugar and low salt policy as recommended by the Good for Kids, Good for Life program. *Please bring only water to drink.*

### WE ARE A NUT- FREE PRESCHOOL

What to aim for in foods that come to preschool is: **Per 100g**

- **Total Fat – Less than 20g**
- **Total Saturated Fat – less than 5g**
- **Total Sugar – less than 15g, If the product contains fruit – less than 25gm**
- **Total Sodium/Salt – Less than 600mg**

Some ideas of what to pack for your child are:

- Sandwiches, rolls or wraps with a healthy filling
- Salad, pasta or baked beans
- Dried fruit
- Fresh fruit or vegetables
- Cheese & crackers
- Yoghurt



Please refer to the Nutrition policy on our website

## CLOTHING

"There's no such thing as bad weather. ONLY inappropriate clothing" – Sir Ranulph Fiennes

We believe this statement to be true at Kootingal & District Preschool and ask that you ensure your child has appropriate clothing for whatever the weather might be.

- Lots of layers in winter that can easily come off when inside but keep them warm outside
- Raincoats & gumboots for rainy days
- Sleeved shirts for hot summer days

## SUN PROTECTION

Kootingal & District Preschool is a Cancer Council 'Sunsmart' service, meaning we promote safe and 'Sunsmart' policies and practices. It is expected that your child attends in weather appropriate, sun safe, comfortable clothing.

- Tops should cover the neck, shoulders, upper arms and back (no strappy singlet tops or dresses)
- Pants should be comfortable and allow easy movement.
- Please ensure that your child wears shoes that are suitable for the weather and the preschool environment.
- Children get dirty at preschool. Please choose clothes that are up to the task!

**Please note:** We may ask your child to put on a spare top if what they are wearing does not meet these guidelines.



Please refer to the Sun Protection policy on our website

## ILLNESS

Children do become ill, and often at unpredictable and inconvenient times. Many illnesses are contagious, and we need to be careful not to unnecessarily expose others. We have a responsibility to protect your child, other children and their families, as well as our staff and their families.



We understand that there may be days when a child is feeling less than their best but does not meet one of our exclusionary guidelines (ie. fever, vomiting, diarrhoea). We ask parents/guardians to be overly cautious and to think about whether or not your child can keep up with the pace of all our activities before sending them for the day.

Here is a list of questions to ask that may help your decision:

- Is your child coughing often throughout the day?
- Is there excessive and/or discoloured nasal discharge?
- Is your child lethargic or tired?
- Do they have less of an appetite than usual?
- Are they well enough to participate in all daily activities and routines?
- Are they well enough to partake in outdoor play?
- Are they noticeably uncomfortable or irritable?
- Are they difficult to console when upset?
- Do they seem like themselves?

Please DO NOT send your child when they are unwell or displaying any of the following symptoms;

- Loose cough
- Thick discharge from the nose
- Temperature, vomiting or diarrhea in the 24 hours before attending
- Requires medication (Paracetamol or cough mixture) in the morning before attending
- Tests positive for Covid-19 and is showing symptoms
- Has had vomiting or diarrhoea in the past 24 hours



Please refer to the Hygiene & Infection Control policy on our website

## MEDICATION

Please advise the preschool if your child has ever had asthma or an anaphylaxis reaction. Parents will be required to complete a medication form and supply medication which can be kept at the centre along with an Action Management Plan completed by a GP for any ongoing condition.

Staff are able to administer prescribed medications on behalf of parents. Staff are not permitted to administer non prescribed medication.

Staff make every attempt to provide medication as per parental and pharmaceutical advice but will not be held responsible if provision of medication is delayed or forgotten.



Please refer to the Medication Administration policy on our website

## ACCIDENT & INJURY

In cases of injury, illness, accident or incident, a report will be made. In the case of a major accident/incident, parents will be contacted, and an ambulance may be called. A copy of the accident/incident report will be provided for the parents upon collection of their child. Parents are required to sign the report.



Please refer to the Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness policy on our website

## MANDATORY REPORTERS

Kootingal & District Preschool staff are required by law to report any risk of significant harm to any child within our service. Reports are made to the Department of Family & Community Services or other relevant agencies.



Please refer to the Child Protection policy on our website

## RELAXATION TIME

Although most children have grown out of the need for a daytime sleep by the time, they commence preschool, everyone has a quiet time to recharge and reenergize. If a child needs a rest during the day, they will be offered a quiet place to rest.



Please refer to the Safe Sleep, Rest & Relaxation policy on our website

## GRIEVANCE & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Kootingal & District Preschool always seeks to resolve any parental concerns that impact upon, or affect the wellbeing of children, parents or staff, or the operations of the centre as quickly as possible. We seek to do this in a fair and positive manner, and in the spirit of consultation, cooperation and resolution.

Concerns are to be raised with the educators or Director. If you do not receive a satisfactory resolution, please contact our Parent Committee:

[preschoolcommittee@kootingalpreschool.com.au](mailto:preschoolcommittee@kootingalpreschool.com.au)

[president@kootingalpreschool.com.au](mailto:president@kootingalpreschool.com.au)



Please refer to the Complaints & Feedback policy on our website

## THIRD DAY POSITIONS

Children in the year before school may be offered a third day at preschool to assist them in preparing for Kindergarten. This is dependent on positions available.

However, a child may lose their third day position if a new enrolment is required, or the child is regularly absent without notifying the preschool.

## NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The National Quality Framework is a government initiative which sets a National Quality Standard creating greater consistency for Early Childhood Education and Care services across Australia. This initiative aims to improve educator-to-child ratios in services, increased skills and qualifications, national regulations and a quality ratings system. Our preschool is aiming to exceed all 7 - educational programs and practice, children's health and safety, physical environment, staffing arrangements, relationships with children and collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

## EDUCATION & CARE NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Kootingal & District Preschool works under the National Quality Standards which are under the National Regulations. Under these standards lies the Early Years Learning Framework which is the basis of our early learning curriculum.

## REGULAR OUTINGS

We often go for walking excursions within our community to the IGA, post office etc. These outings help children to develop confidence and feel connected with our community. When we go on a group outing, we empower children to step outside and try a new experience.

## PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Each week we have a range of programs for the children to participate in. We have various programs that occur each term (yoga, music, dance, library, fitness, art or Aboriginal language). They occur on various days which change each term to allow all children to participate in different ones across the year.



## TRANSITION TO SCHOOL STATEMENTS

Educators at Kootingal Preschool complete a Transition to School Statement summarising your child's learning, interests, dispositions, and other information about what supports your child's learning. This is then shared with your chosen school.

Please refer to the Transition to School policy on our website



Please refer to the Child Safe Code of Conduct policy on our website

## INDOOR/OUTDOOR ROUTINE

There are times throughout our daily routine that see the children having the choice to be inside or outside. The classroom doors remain open, and educators are in both spaces to allow children the freedom to move between spaces.

Children have agency in their learning and are exposed to a wider scope of experiences available at one time. Children can be out in nature which benefits their wellbeing, the indoor environment is not so overwhelming for those children that struggle when the space becomes noisy.

Educators' interactions are richer in smaller groups, as children are more settled throughout both spaces.

## PARENT COMMITTEE

The preschool is managed by a committee who are elected from, and by, the parents of the children enrolled at an Annual General Meeting each year, usually in March. The committee holds the licence to operate.

They employ the Director to ensure compliance and for all legal and financial matters, and the day-to-day activities involved in running a business/children's service.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the committee please see Kate or Jess D, alternatively you can email [director@kootingalpreschool.com.au](mailto:director@kootingalpreschool.com.au)



Please refer to the Governance & Management policy on our website

## WE ARE A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

At Kootingal & District Preschool we are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the safety of all children. This includes encouraging a culture where the prevention and reporting of abuse is supported and encouraged. All staff, tradespeople and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children. They also all hold current Working with children checks and are supervised by service staff while on the preschool premises.

## EMERGENCY DRILL PROCEDURES

Kootingal & District Preschool conduct emergency evacuation, lockdown and snake drills with the children during each term as required by the Education and Care National Regulations. These drills are vital to ensure that staff and children are prepared to take appropriate action in the event of a genuine emergency. Our designated safe area is at the double gates in the bottom corner of our backyard.

Each term we practice our emergency drills so that the children know what to do. In Week 4 we practice our lockdowns, going into our safe room. In Week 6 we practice our snake drills, using a toy snake in the yard so we know what to do if we see a real snake. Week 8 we practice our fire drills, practicing where we go if there is a fire at preschool.



Please refer to the Emergency & Evacuation policy on our website

## SETTLING YOUR CHILD INTO PRESCHOOL

Separation from home and saying goodbye can be tricky and cause anxiety for some children. To ensure that your child experiences a happy, relaxed and confident drop off at preschool, we need to work together. *Be sure to have at least one visit with your child before starting.*

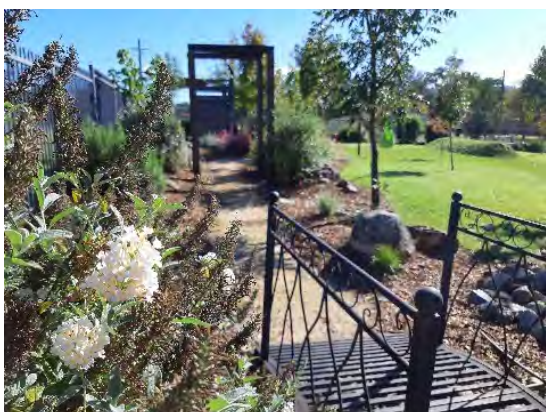
Make time to pass on any useful information about your child's experiences and interests to staff. Some children will be at ease and comfortable from the beginning. However, most children will demonstrate anxieties in a variety of ways. Feel free to discuss your child's way of dealing with this transition with the staff and we are always available to help with your concerns.

Don't be surprised if your child becomes upset during drop offs a few weeks after starting preschool. It is completely normal!

Here are some tips for helping your child during drop offs:

- Ensure your child knows what to expect when starting preschool. Talk about what will happen during the day
- Be positive. Try not to allow your own anxieties to be seen by your child, as children tend to mirror your feelings and can become distressed
- Prepare your child by letting them know that it is a preschool day in the morning when you are getting ready
- When you arrive, you are welcome to take your child through to the classroom & get them settled, however an educator is always available to assist you and take your child from the door if you prefer.
- Say "good-bye" to and tell them that you will return
- If your child becomes distressed, try to resist turning back. You can always call to see if they are settled. We will call you if we need you to return

Each child is unique and will possess strengths and weaknesses in different areas. As educators our role is to enable, support and encourage the child to be the best they can be, working in partnership with you.





- Be assured that every effort will be made to reassure and comfort your child
- Please avoid dragging out the good-bye, say a quick goodbye and follow through. It is more difficult for a child to settle if they are unsure that you are actually leaving
- Have your own goodbye ritual, such as a hug or a kiss.

**INFORM THE OFFICE STAFF OR EDUCATORS IF:**

- You are going to be away from your place of work or home for the day, and provide a contact number for a medical emergency
- Someone different is collecting your child
- Your child has been unwell or requires medication throughout the day
- Your child has been given medication at home within the last 24 hours
- You are aware of anything that may have happened or is happening that we should know about to ensure we meet your child's needs



## **Educators appreciate it when parents:**

- ✓ Help their child understand that learning is important
- ✓ Set expectations for learning, by taking into account their child's ability
- ✓ Show interest in what their child is learning and what is happening at preschool
- ✓ Remember that at this age, play is learning too
- ✓ Read the notes, emails and newsletters that are shared
- ✓ Take note of important dates on the calendar

## KOOTINGAL PRESCHOOL AIMS TO WORK ON 5 VERY IMPORTANT EYLF OUTCOMES:

1

### CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Children learn about themselves and construct their own learning within the context of their families and communities. This includes their relationships with people, places and things and the actions and responses with others. Knowing who we are is essential in forming relationships with others. Through our curriculum we endeavour to create successful, competent learners that have a strong sense of identity that is individually catered for and are equipped with skills that promote life-long learning.

2

### CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED & CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

Having a positive sense of identity and experiencing respectful, responsive relationships strengthens children's interest and skills in being and becoming active contributors to their world. Kootingal Preschool is a safe and nurturing environment where children will feel encouraged, equal and included.

3

### CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

At Kootingal Preschool, learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, personal hygiene, physical fitness, emotions and social relationships is integral to wellbeing and self-confidence. Physical wellbeing contributes to children's ability to concentrate, cooperate and learn. We aim to promote healthy, happy children.

4

### CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT & INVOLVED LEARNERS CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

A sense of security and sound wellbeing gives children the confidence to experiment, explore and to try out new ideas, thus developing their competence and becoming active and involved participants in learning. Our team encourages confident and involved learners by using families and community experiences to share understanding and include them in our early childhood setting. This assists children to make connections and to make sense of new experiences.

### CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

5

Communication is crucial. We are all social beings who are intrinsically motivated to exchanges ideas, thoughts, questions and feelings with others. At Kootingal Preschool we use a range of tools and media, including music, dance and drama for children to express themselves and connect with others and extend their learning. Our team aim to maintain a clear and open line of communication with our parents to promote healthy feedback and partnerships.



## LET THEM PLAY

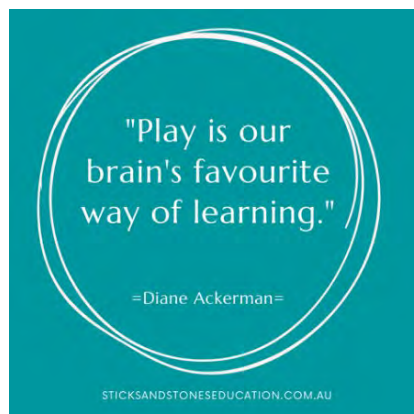
The foundation of our program is based on the belief that children are naturally motivated to play and explore their environment and that play provides the best context for learning.

Our programs are underpinned by research that shows play-based learning for young children can provide a strong basis for later success in school.

Play is a wonderful way for children to develop critical skills such as regulation, conflict resolution, autonomy, independence and communication. Play actively releases chemicals in the brain that naturally stimulate and open-up the pathways in the brain that support children to better access their thinking/learning brain (pre-frontal cortex). **Play primes the thinking/learning brain so that children can access the part of their brain that is needed for them to regulate emotions, focus, plan and problem solve.**

Educators encourage children's learning through play by:

- Providing resources that reflect children's ages, interests, knowledge, strengths, abilities and culture to stimulate and support play
- Planning play experiences based on the assessment of children's individual differences, interests, developmental needs and ability
- Observing children as they play so that they can understand how they play with other children, what skills and understanding they demonstrate in play and what activities can strengthen their skills in play
- Joining in children's play to extend the child's learning and to model skills such as reasoning, appropriate language, and positive behaviours
- Providing support and scaffolding children through different types of play experiences, including interactions with others and conflict resolution
- Providing large blocks of unhurried and uninterrupted time for play for children's ideas and games to develop





## RESOURCES

- **Starting Blocks** – First step to Early Childhood Education & Care  
[www.startingblocks.gov.au](http://www.startingblocks.gov.au)
- **Safe Sleeping** – [www.rednose.org.au](http://www.rednose.org.au)
- **Children's Safety** – [www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)
- **Children's E-Safety** – [www.esmart.org.au](http://www.esmart.org.au)
- **NAPCAN** – Prevent child abuse and neglect  
[www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)
- **NSW Health Kids and Families** –  
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/kidsfamilies/Pages/default.aspx>
- **NSW Poisons Information Centre** – 13 11 26