Welcome to Echunga Preschool

Welcome to Echunga Preschool. We look forward to getting to know you and your child in their preschool year and trust it will be an exciting and enjoyable learning journey for all of us.

Enrolment
Preschool enrolment information and forms are available from the Echunga Primary School front office.
Children must be 4 years old by April 30th in the year they commence Preschool.
On enrolment of your child, we need to sight one of the following: birth certificate; passport; or official Centrelink documentation.

Term Dates

Parent Communication
Emails - Families receive regular Preschool information electronically (in the form of a weekly newsletter) as well as the Echunga Primary School fortnightly newsletter. School newsletters are sent on the Thursdays of even weeks via email. Please see Merridee in the front office if you haven't received a school newsletter by Week 4.
Information pockets - Each family will have an information pocket located in the kitchen area. Please check these regularly.
Parent noticeboard - Our parent noticeboard is located just inside the front door and has a variety of health and community information.
Change of address/email - Please inform Merridee or Preschool staff ASAP if there is a change to any of your contact details.

Fruit, Lunch & Water
Please send morning and afternoon fruit ready for your child to eat (pre-cut in a container or labelled if necessary). Fruit is placed on the trays in the morning. Fruit time is set aside for a nutritious snack, please no sugary foods (ie lollies, cakes or roll-ups).
Please send a named water bottle along with a healthy lunch for your child. In line with the school, we promote sustainable and healthy food choices and encourage re-usable containers to
minimise packaging (often referred to as 'nude food'). The Right Bite Manual is a great source of nutritious and tasty lunch ideas and can be found on the DECD website. Right bite ready reckoner

**Clothing**
Please send children in clothing that is easy for them to manage, protects them from the sun (and cold in winter) and allows children to be able to play without being worried about getting dirty. Children need to have shoes that they can independently take off and put on (Velcro is good!). Shoes need to be secure and safe for climbing and running. Please send a change of clothes and a plastic bag for wet items. Rubber boots, jackets and hats are recommended items for the winter months.

**Sun safety**
To protect children from skin damage from exposure to the sun we:
* Encourage children to wear protective clothing for outside play
* Set up activities and encourage play in shaded areas
* Alter the routine by having outside play earlier in the day
Broad brimmed hats are compulsory from 1st September- 30th April.

Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child prior to the start of the Preschool day. We provide sunscreen for reapplication after lunch and staff will assist children in re-applying as required. Please consult staff if you have any concerns.

**Siesta**
Each afternoon we have a quiet time, which we call Siesta, where children are encouraged to lie down and listen to relaxing music to help them self-regulate and recharge. Each child needs to bring a *small square shaped* cushion that will be kept at Preschool. We will supply a blanket for children to use. The washing roster (art smocks, tea-towels etc) will include blankets at the end of a term.

**Settling routine**
If you believe your child may have difficulty separating from you, it is a good idea to develop a plan with your child beforehand, such as you will help them to unpack, read a story or do a puzzle, then 1 hug and say goodbye. You are welcome to contact us to find out how your child is settling if needed. We will contact you if your child experiences ongoing distress.

**Toys from home**
We welcome the sharing of interesting finds from nature such as rocks, shells, nests etc or contributions to a topic, but we ask that you leave toys at home. It can be very upsetting for a child to have a toy break or for a small piece to be lost (sometimes in the sandpit). Toys from home also become problematic when some children are given permission by the owner to be played with and others not.

We will have special days, for example soft toy day, wheels day, dress ups or teddy bear's picnic when everyone can bring along a toy.
**Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special event in a child’s life. When it is your child’s birthday we will celebrate this with a special activity (for example decorating a lantern with special metallic paint or a wooden letter for the first initial of their name). Children will receive a card, have “happy birthday” sung in both English and Spanish, and share a group birthday story. At the end of each term we will have a special activity, in which the “birthday children of the term” will celebrate their birthday with the rest of the group. Please do not send birthday cakes.

**School Library**

We visit the library during Preschool time and borrow books to take back to our library shelves in the Preschool.

Families are welcomed and encouraged to borrow from the library with their children to assist them with the selection of books that are suitable for their age and interest. Children may borrow 2 books at a time as often as you/wish. Library borrowing times are 8:30-9:00am and 3:15-3:40pm Mon-Thurs. Marina will be in the library to help you at these times.

**Fiesta Playgroup**

Our Spanish themed playgroup links with the preschool and school Spanish programs. It provides an entry point for families and children to connect and build relationships with the preschool. More information is available on the Echunga Primary school website. ¡Nos vemos pronto! (See you soon!)

**Arrival, Departure and Changes to Collection**

There is a large amount of setting up to be done before each session and we would appreciate families not arriving before 9am.

If you know there will be a change to the collection of your child please let us know so we can record it on the attendance form. Please remember to tell your child if somebody different will be collecting them. It is essential for us to have an accurate list of "authorised" persons to which we can refer. If we have been notified that a person who is not registered on the “Authority to collect” list, is to collect their child, we will ask for the collecting person’s full name and a contact phone number. At the time of collection, we will require photo identification. We will also advise Parents/Carers to inform the non-authority listed person collecting to have this documentation ready and available for us to sight.

Your list of authorised persons can be amended at any time and new information deleted or upgraded through the computerised Early Years System.

**Child Absence**

We would appreciate being informed if your child will be absent (phone Merridee 83888306 from 8am or let us know in advance for planned absences).
Medication, Illness and Immunisations
If your child is required to take any medication during the day, it is mandated that we have a
written plan from a doctor. Staff must follow a strict procedure to administer any medication.
Staff regularly check quantities and use-by-dates on medication.
Children with a medical condition (such as asthma) require a Health care Plan from a doctor.
We are required to inform families of the outbreak of certain infectious diseases. For more
information about infectious diseases see ‘You’ve got what?’ on the SA Health website.
Current information about immunisations is available from your doctor, local council, or Child &
Youth Services (Ph: 8391 3922). We are required to record immunisation status at enrolment
and keep it updated through the year.

Injury and First Aid
If your child receives any first aid while at Preschool, we are required to record the details in a
permanent register. We will also inform you of your child’s first aid treatment (generally
written information about your child’s first aid in your child’s newsletter pocket). If in the
busyness at the end of the day, we miss speaking with you, or your written notification has not
been collected, we will phone or send an email to you to inform you of the first aid issue.
If your child becomes unwell or has an injury of concern during the day we will contact you
straight away.

Allergy Awareness
If there are any allergies at our preschool (children or staff) we will notify all families in
writing of necessary food precautions and/or restrictions.

Child & Youth Health
Regular screenings are offered for all children during their preschool year. You will be invited
to attend with your child. The screenings are held at the preschool.

Special Services
We have access to the following services provided by DECD who assist and advise on specific
programmes for children with needs:
• Speech Pathologists
• Psychologists
• Social worker/Family Support
• Special Educators

Preschool Program
In planning for children we offer a comprehensive play based program using the National
Curriculum Framework and The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), “Belonging, Being,
Becoming”.
Belonging, being, and becoming are the big ideas that form the basis of the EYLF.
**Belonging**

To belong is to feel included. It is to feel connected to what is going on around you. Belonging helps to give children the security and confidence to explore their world. By building a sense of belonging, children also build identity, wellbeing and the ability to learn.

**Being**

Being is about having the chance to be yourself - to do the things that you want to do, and to do them in your own time. The idea of “being” is a reminder that life does not have to be hurried, and that childhood should be a time of joy, wonder and exploration, rather than one of pressure, haste and stress.

**Becoming**

Becoming highlights our role in helping children achieve their potential. Becoming is about having all the possibilities of life in front of you, all the choices open to you, and how we help children to make the most of these choices.

The 5 Learning Outcomes are designed to integrate and develop the complex learning dispositions, skills, and knowledge of Preschool aged children. EYLF’s learning outcomes are broad, long-term accomplishments. They are:

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

Our program is flexible and allows children to:

- Develop their social skills through interactions with peers and staff in a safe play environment
- Use their imagination, problem solve, question, contribute to discussions, develop thinking skills and to articulate them
- Engage and develop areas of personal interest
- Become independent, self-motivated learners
- Learn to manage their own time and learning
- Have opportunities to explore a wide range of learning experiences through play

We use Program Achieve (which focuses on social and emotional skills) to support children with developing learning dispositions such as:

- Getting along
- Persisting
- Confidence
- Resilience
- Organisation
We assess and record children’s progress through observations, work samples, questions and conversations (individual as well as group) including input and regular feedback from families.

**How can families be involved at Preschool?**
We welcome and value all parent participation.
Some ways to be involved include

- Contributing time (one off visits or regular volunteering) with a skill/talent eg music, playing an instrument, cooking, sewing, pottery, art, craft, gardening
- Assisting to plan for child’s learning by providing information when your child commences and throughout the year
- Providing regular feedback about the program and centre, and making suggestions for improvements
- Joining the Echunga Primary School Governing Council and being directly involved in decision-making regarding both the Preschool and school.
- Reading stories, especially first thing in the morning
- Coming on excursions
- Preparing collage materials and helping with repairs to resources etc
- Cleaning toys and equipment (at preschool or taken home)
- Taking a turn on the washing roster

**Community Volunteers**
We often welcome volunteers from the community into the Preschool and acknowledge the rich contribution they make to our site. Volunteers require specific documentation and a clear understanding of their role and expectations. Contact staff for further information.

**Your child's final term**
Being a Preschool on a school site, we are regularly involved in activities and events with the school.
In your child’s final term, however, they will be involved in further transition activities especially with the Junior Primary class.
Before your child leaves, you will receive a summative report of your child’s strengths, interests and progress during the year. With your permission this information will be shared with your child's new teacher. For children enrolled at alternate schools, we liaise with staff providing information to ensure continuity of learning.

**Emergency Planning**
Echunga Preschool has plans in case of emergencies such as internal or external fire, bushfires or threatening situations. At the beginning of each term, we have a safety drill/practice and record the event (the sheet is located behind the front door). Our bush fire drills are practised with the whole school.
Throughout bushfire season, please take note of information in the School’s newsletter. If the Preschool is directed to close due catastrophic fire conditions, an instant messaging system for
contacting families is also used the day before the closure. Please refer to information provided at the time of enrolment.

**Photography of your child and their work**
At enrolment we will seek permission for your child to be photographed by staff while at Preschool. Our preschool newsletters regularly contain photographs of events and children’s learning, these are not to be shared or re-posted to any social media platform (for example Facebook).

**Accounts**
Accounts are issued each term and all money needs to be paid at the School Office to Merridee. The Echunga Primary School Governing Council sets preschool fees and money received is used to directly resource the Preschool. Fees for 2016 are $65 per term, plus excursions/special activities.

**Policies**
Parents are able to view our policies at any time on the school and/or DECD website. Policies are also available for your viewing in the Preschool Policies folder, located on the kitchen bench or ask us if you require a hard copy to take home. Each policy has a review date and we will seek parent input at this time. Site-specific policies are ratified by the Echunga Primary School Governing Council.

**Out of Hours School Care (OSHC)**
Out of School Hours Care (Before School, After School and Vacation Care) is available to preschool children. If you are interested in accessing this service please contact the front office, go to the school website or ring OSHC on 83888563.