



family handbook



Alstonville
Community
Preschool

Together we can

Welcome to Alstonville Community Preschool!

.....a unique community of children, families and educators who share an understanding of the importance of the early childhood years to lifelong learning and development.

We look forward to getting to know you and your child and working towards their success, enjoyment and learning at preschool!

Preschool History

Alstonville Community Preschool commenced operations in January 2014 in response to the closure of the Alstonville Baptist Community Preschool, which had operated in Alstonville since 1972. A group of parents, staff and community members worked tirelessly to ensure there would be a community preschool in Alstonville for the future, and in January 2016 the current purpose built preschool at Crawford Park, Alstonville was opened.

The preschool is a not for profit organisation, managed by a voluntary parent Management Committee and funded by the NSW Dept. of Education.

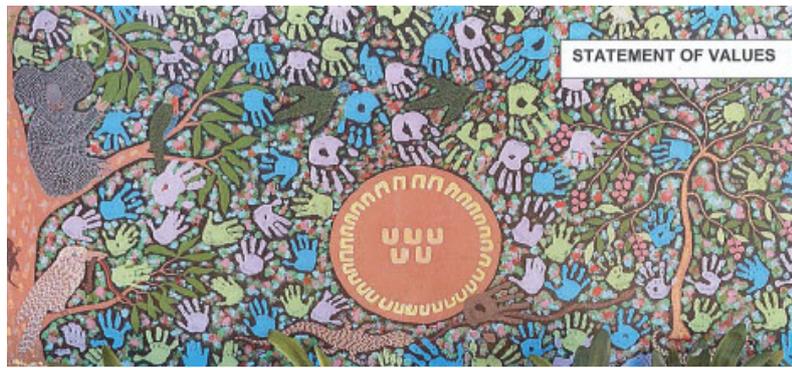


EDUCATORS AND STAFF

We have an experienced team of educators working at Alstonville Community Preschool with a wide range of skills and expertise which they contribute to our educational program:

Nominated Supervisor/Director:	Narelle Walker	(B.Ed EC, Adv Dip Community Sector Management)
Teacher/Educational Leader:	Hannah Nunn	(B Ed Primary (EC studies))
Educator/Inclusion Support Leader	Jo Sandra	(Cert III Children's Services)
Teacher	Jade Kerr	(B.Ed Primary, Grad Diploma EC studies)
Educator	Heidi Heinritz	(Dip. Children's Services)
Educator	Janet Grey	(Dip. Children's Services)
Educator	Carla Thomson	(Dip. Children's Services)
Educator	Nina Cannell	(Dip. Children's Services)
Educator	Hannah Foskett	(Dip. Children's Services)
Educator (Inclusion Support)	Abi Young	(Dip. Children's Services)
Educator	Nichole Roberts	(Dip. Children's Services)
Educator	Emma Webb	(Cert III Children's Services)
Educator (Inclusion Support)	Kylie Gilbey	(Cert III Children's Services)
Administrative Assistant	Naomi Blythe	(Dip. Finance)

OUR STATEMENT OF VALUES



"Alstonville Community Preschool sits on Ngyubul land of the Bundjalung nation. We pay respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, as we work and play here each day"

Welcome to Alstonville Community Preschool, a unique community of children, families and educators who together, share an understanding of the importance of the early childhood years, in the lifelong development and education process.

At this preschool we:

- believe that all children have the right to a positive start to life and access to high quality early childhood education;
- value and accept all children as individuals, who are curious, competent and capable learners and acknowledge that children are active creators of their own learning through play;
- value time for uninterrupted play to give children the opportunity to experiment, discover and build on skills and knowledge in collaboration with others;
- offer learning experiences that encourage children to be social, develop dispositions to work with and learn from others, and to learn resilience,
- ensure the educational program encompasses the spontaneous interactions and experiences, as well as the routines of each day, and the intentional teaching moments that promote deeper learning;
- see educators as co constructors of learning with children, and as instrumental in scaffolding further learning and interest;
- believe that nature, the outdoors and use of natural materials in play connects children to their learning, and develops curiosity and wonder, and adopt a risk benefit approach to encourage children to have agency to explore and make decisions for themselves and their play;
- understand the importance of the interactions and respectful relationships that develop between educators, children and families over time;
- acknowledge and value the culture, beliefs and parenting styles of all families;
- share meaningful documentation of children's learning to promote a deeper understanding for families of children's ideas, questions, growth and development;
- encourage a strong awareness of and engagement with the local community;
- value strong leadership and the contributions and skills of the many 'leaders' in this educational community;
- ground our everyday practice in critical reflection and evidence based practice;
- recognize the importance of creating a love for learning to support children in their transition to school and to build success for their future lives.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia;
ECA Code of Ethics

Revised October 2020

These shared values underpin all of our actions and drive our preschool in all aspects, from management and governance, to staffing and the teaching and learning that occurs with children. As a new family of the preschool, your beliefs and values will also help to shape this philosophy as it is reviewed and reflected upon regularly.

ACP Philosophy Tree

- regularly contributed to by children, families and educators.





PROGRAMS OFFERED in ADDITION TO THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM



'GUMNUTS' NATURE LEARNERS

This bush kindy group is one of the two day groups you can choose from, that has its focus on learning through nature.

At Alstonville Community Preschool we believe that learning in nature is not only beneficial, but essential to a child's development of independence, resilience, physical abilities and awareness of the world. Nature provides a range of contexts for learning in which children are able to notice, investigate, relate to and appreciate their environment.

Gumnuts' as this group is known, spend a lot of their learning time beyond the preschool fence, in beautiful Crawford Park where the children can explore together and achieve the expected learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework in a very practical, active and contextual manner.

For example, Gumnuts children investigated an area of bush inside the park, in terms of the insect life, plants and tree species there. They noticed some weeds growing there as well and actively worked together to protect the native species they found. Over the next few weeks, they wrote letters to the neighbours adjoining the park, and to the local Council to ask for their help in keeping this area of the park protected.

Our environment, both in preschool and outside the fence, encourages children to explore curricular concepts using higher order thinking, problem solving, self assessment of risk and complex language. For example, collecting wood for the fire involves estimation, measuring, sorting, science, knowledge of safety, sharing, taking turns, developing manual dexterity, discussion etc. Physical skill development is naturally encouraged in this environment.

The process of learning and children's thoughts and ideas of their learning are recorded in Floorbooks (project books) that are created with the children, as they share their ideas and contribute their understanding of their days at preschool at their own level.

We'd love you to join us....

INCLUSION SUPPORT

Alstonville Community Preschool is committed to inclusion for children with diverse cultural backgrounds, differing abilities and learning differences, and actively supports their full participation in the preschool program.

Disability Inclusion funding is available through the NSW Department of Education to support children in their preschool environment to learn and develop along with their peers. This funding may be used for resources to support learning, but is often used to employ support educators to facilitate each child's learning journey, plans and goals.

We work in partnership with local therapists, inclusion support agencies and schools to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in the preschool program to the same level as their peers, and progress successfully with their learning goals.

Our Inclusion Support Leader facilitates the implementation of programs for children with Inclusion Support needs and their families in the preschool.

FOR UNDER 3's

The preschool receives funding through the NSW Department of Education Start Strong Pathways program, to meet the early learning needs of young children (2-3 yrs old) by offering their families a pathway into early childhood education.

This program has three core objectives:

- To support educational engagement of children too young to receive a preschool education
- To support pathways to preschool
- To promote the importance of early childhood education to parents and communities.

Our Partners in Play (PiPS) playgroup operates weekly for 2-3 yr olds, and is facilitated by two preschool educators as an early introduction to the preschool setting.

You can register your interest at info@alstonvillepreschool.com.au



Come along to our
Partners in Play Playgroup
for 2-3yr olds
WEDNESDAY Mornings 9:30 - 11:00am
at Alstonville Community Preschool
Phone: 6628 0822 for more information
or visit www.alstonvillepreschool.com.au



PRACTICAL THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PRESCHOOL

OPENING TIMES

Preschool is open Monday to Friday between 8.30am – 4.00pm during school terms.

Late Fee - \$10 per 15 mins or part thereof after 4.00pm

On arrival at preschool each morning:

- Sign your child in for the day in the preschool foyer, noting the time of arrival.
This is a legal requirement that must be completed each morning and afternoon.
- Apply sunscreen, or have already applied sunscreen at home, and stamp your child's hand so that educators are aware that your child is ready for outdoor play.
- Please feel free to stay as long as you need to settle your child in for the day.

In the afternoons

- Be sure to sign your child out for the day
- Pick up artwork etc. from your child's wall pocket, next to the bag lockers
- Collect backpacks, lunch and morning tea containers, preschool hat, clothing and shoes.
- Check the Floorbook in each room for information about children's learning that day, and the photo slideshow of the day in the foyer;

Should an emergency arise and you find you are going to be late for pickup, please phone the preschool so that we can reassure your child. If you will not be picking your child up personally, the Director must be notified as to who will be collecting your child & this must be a person authorised by you on your child's enrolment form.

WHAT TO BRING TO PRESCHOOL EACH DAY

- **A Backpack** with your child's name clearly marked on the **outside**;
- **Morning Tea** Fruit, cheese, yoghurt etc. in a **clearly labelled container**;
- **Lunch** Sandwiches, salad, fruit or yoghurt in a **separate labelled container**.

Please do not send food in Insulated lunch bags. as all food is refrigerated year round

- **Drink bottle** We have a **water only** policy at preschool.
- **A spare set of clothes, undies etc. in case your child gets wet during play.**
- **A re-usable wet bag for wet/soiled clothing** (*in your enrolment pack*)

Please ensure your child's preschool hat is in their backpack each day so that they can fully and safely participate in outdoor play.

Replacement hats are available at \$15 each

Please label ALL OF YOUR CHILDS' BELONGINGS clearly with their name.

CLOTHES FOR PRESCHOOL

We have a nature and play based philosophy, and activities at preschool will include play with sand, water, mud, clay and paint. Please choose clothes that are suitable for these activities as your child **WILL** get dirty. It is important that they feel comfortable to play freely and explore the various activities and environments set up for play.

We encourage each child's growing independence and development of self help skills, so clothes should be able to be easily managed by your child when using the toilet.

Please note:

- Pull on shorts and skirts are preferred to those with buttons and zippers;
- All t-shirts and dresses must have **sleeves** to ensure good sun protection

- **Well-fitting footwear is required**, ie joggers, as walks out to Crawford Park are a regular part of our program as are fires in the winter months. Thongs or other loose fitting footwear (ie croc style shoes) are not suitable as they can slip easily when climbing and running;
- **Raincoats and gumboots** are needed year round, as outdoor play is an important part of the educational program.
- All children will be provided with a Cancer Council approved bucket hat and preschool t-shirt when they begin preschool (Cost for these is included on the Administration levy payable on enrolment.) Additional preschool t-shirts are available at a cost of \$18 each

All clothing worn at preschool MUST comply with our Sun Protection policy.

TOYS FROM HOME

Special toys and treasures from home are discouraged, as they may be easily lost or broken. If your child does need a favourite toy for relaxation time or to feel secure at preschool, please either leave it in their bag and let an educator know that it may be needed during the day.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special. Unfortunately, due to food allergies and intolerances, we ask that children do not bring birthday cakes to preschool. We will help them to celebrate by singing to them, and having them tell or show special birthday news at the morning circle.

OUR DAILY ROUTINE

Each day at preschool follows a similar routine, with some variation throughout the year according to weather conditions.

Our program is flexible each day according to the children's needs and interests, and even the weather.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 8 30 am | - Arrival and play outdoors and on deck |
| 9.15 am | - Morning circle time |
| 9.30 am | - Outdoor play and Morning tea |
| 12.30 pm | - Group time, story, music, language |
| 1.00pm | - Lunch |
| 1.20pm | - Relaxation time |
| 1.30pm | - Indoor play or on deck |
| 3.15pm | - Music/movement time |
| 3.30pm | - Afternoon tea |
| 4.00pm | - Preschool closes for the day |



PARENT PARTICIPATION AT PRESCHOOL

Parents are welcome in preschool at all times. We encourage you to be involved at preschool by:

- completing the *“What’s Important to Us”* family sheet at the start of each year,
- sharing current information about your child with us throughout the year and especially during your child’s Focus weeks within the educational program;
- sharing an activity, skill or aspects of your work, with the children,
- assisting educators with planned preschool activities ie excursions
- being involved in the preschool Management Committee, fundraising events, our annual Open Day etc.

Educators prioritise:

- development of respectful and supportive relationships with families
- respect for the values and beliefs of each family regarding child-rearing and family culture
- opportunities for families to be involved in the preschool and contribute to the decisions of the preschool;
- support for families in their parenting role;

Communication with Families

Educators believe that good learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when educators work in partnership with families. The preschool’s educational program relies on good communication between home and preschool, so that we can plan the best possible preschool experience for your child.

Because our educators prioritise relationship building and quality of interactions with your child to support their play and learning, we believe that their time is best spent with your child, and not in preparation of photos and documentation or in daily presentation of information on online platforms.

We will make time to communicate with you about your child’s learning by:

- adding continuously to your child’s Learning Book throughout the year. This includes work samples, educator jottings and continuous assessment of your child’s learning at preschool, and is available in the rooms for you and your child to look through at any time.
- Working with the children each week on a floorbook or project book, to share with you the learning that is happening for that week. These are available for you to look at each day.
- welcoming you to make time for an appointment to talk with educators, if you would like to discuss your child’s progress or development with educators, as we recognize that it can be difficult to discuss these things at drop off and pick up times

Parent Library

A selection of books on a range of topics, relating to child development, child health, starting school and parenting are available for loan. You will also find information about local services pertinent to early childhood and young families, and about our local schools in the foyer.

Policies

Clear policies and procedures are important:

- to ensure there are common expectations about how things are done at preschool, and
- to promote consistent, safe practice.

The policies of the preschool are informed by the legal documents that the preschool is governed by, including the Education and Care Services Regulations, National Law, WH&S legislation, Fair Work Australia, and the National Quality Framework.

You can find a copy of our current policies in the foyer, and welcome comments and suggestions on our policies at any time.

As policies are updated or altered, families will be informed of changes. Some of our policies, including the Nutrition and Sun Protection policies are available for your information on the preschool website.

FEES

The preschool receives operational funding from the NSW Department of Education, and in 2022 preschool will be **free for eligible families** due to the Start Strong Free Preschool program.

Eligible families are those whose children who are in their year before school (ie turn 4 yrs old by 31.7.22), or children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, or children whose families hold a current Health Care Card or Pension card, and children with a disability.

PLEASE NOTE: 3 year olds without a low income Health Care Card and/or who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are eligible for partial funding under the current Start Strong funding program, therefore limited places are available each year for children in this category, and a daily fee may be payable to cover the funding shortfall.

- **A Maintenance Levy** is payable each year to assist the ongoing maintenance and development of our physical environments at preschool. An invoice will be emailed to each family at the start the year for the annual amount. If requested we can provide a printed copy of this invoice.
 - Payment by direct deposit or EFT at preschool is preferred.

The Maintenance Levy for 2022 is \$20.00 per term per family

- **An Annual Administration fee** of \$100 is payable (\$75 for families with a low-income Health Care Card). This fee includes your Enrolment pack ie preschool t-shirt, hat and wet-bag and your membership to the Association of the preschool. This fee is non-refundable,

For further details, see our [Fee Payment Policy](#) and other important preschool policies at www.alstonvillepreschool.com.au

SCHOOL TERMS FOR 2022

TERM 1 – Monday 31st January– Friday 8th April

TERM 2 – Tuesday 26th April – Friday 1st July

TERM 3 - Monday 18th July – Friday 23rd September

TERM 4 – Monday 10th October –Friday 16th December

Checklist of documentation you must provide before starting preschool:

- Completed Enrolment forms
- up to date ACIR Immunisation statement
- Current Health Care Card (if applicable)
- Childs' Birth Certificate
- Proof of Address

How our preschool is managed

Alstonville Community Preschool operates under a community-based not-for-profit model of management. This means that we have a Management Committee (comprised of parents of preschool children and community members) and, any profits made by the preschool are fed back into the preschool for operational costs, new resources and continuous improvement. The Management Committee of the preschool is referred to as the “*Approved Provider*” under the NSW Education and Care Services Regulations.

Management Committee

The *Approved Provider* is responsible for the overall operation of the preschool. They determine the preschools’ vision and purpose, set and review the strategic direction of the preschool, appoint and monitor the performance of the Director/Nominator Supervisor, ensure staff are employed in accordance with industrial obligations, and ensure overall compliance with legal obligations. They also ensure the financial viability of the preschool, and work to enhance the profile of the preschool in the community.

The preschool is an incorporated association and operates under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009, and the Model Constitution. Therefore, our Management Committee has the executive committee member roles of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and Public Officer, as well as general committee members. These positions are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the preschool in March each year.

You are welcome to become part of our preschool’s Management Committee.

Current Management Committee

<u>President:</u>	Jane McKenzie-Hollows
<u>Vice President:</u>	
<u>Secretary:</u>	Anthea Payne
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Leah Wood
<u>Public Officer:</u>	John Wiley
<u>Committee Members:</u>	Meg Pickford Kirby Johnston

Fundraising

As a not for profit, community based preschool, Government funding is our main source of income.

From time to time we may need to do some fundraising in order to meet the costs of operating the preschool or to purchase new equipment or resources. We seek and greatly appreciate the efforts of all families involved in the preschool when holding fundraising or community events.

IF YOUR CHILD IS UNWELL

As per the Infectious Disease and Sick Children policies of the preschool, if your child has been ill during the previous day or night, or has needed Panadol for fever, they should stay at home to give them time to recover, rather than running the risk of further infection. The preschool retains the right to exclude any child who is regarded by the Director to be a health risk to other children, or who is obviously unwell.

Please refer to the guide below...

ILLNESS	INCUBATION	EXCLUSION
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	Usually 14-17 days	At least 5 days after rash first appears or until blisters have dried.
Measles	Usually 10 days	At least 5 days from onset of rash
Rubella (German Measles)	Usually 16-18 days	Until fully recovered or at least 4 days from the onset of the rash
Hand Foot and Mouth disease	Usually 3-5 days	Exclude until all blisters have dried
Conjunctivitis	Usually 1-3 days	Until discharge from eyes has stopped
Impetigo	Between 1 –10 days dependant on bacteria	Until appropriate antibiotic treatment has begun. All sores on exposed skin must be completely covered with a watertight dressing
Head Lice (Pediculosis)	Continuous	Not excluded if effective treatment begins before their next preschool day.
Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex)	Usually 2– 12 days	Exclusion until clear or until child can maintain hygiene practices to minimize the risk of transmission.

Medication

Educators at preschool will only give medication to your child if it has been prescribed by a Medical Practitioner. This includes the use of over-the-counter medications, natural remedies etc.

As per the Medication policy of the preschool, any medication to be administered at preschool, must be in its original packaging with either a pharmaceutical label detailing the child's name and dosage, or be accompanied by a letter from a medical practitioner.

Should your child require medication to be administered at preschool, you must complete a medication form indicating the medication, the time required, the dosage and any other information necessary. These are the regulations under which the preschool operates and are not a decision made by the preschool.

Under no circumstances should medication be left in a child's bag, or in a place accessible to children.

Immunisation

In keeping with the Public Health Act, **prior to your child's first day at preschool**, you need to have provided documented evidence that your child is up to date with his/her vaccinations, that they are on a recognised catch-up schedule, or that they have a medical contraindication to vaccination. From January 2018, under new Government legislation, children whose family have a conscientious objection to vaccination are no longer able to enrol in early childhood education and care services.

The required Immunisation documentation for preschool is provision of one of these forms:

1. A current Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) Immunisation History Statement which shows that the child is up to date with their scheduled immunisations.
2. A current ACIR Immunisation History Form on which the immunisation provider has certified that the child is on a recognised catch-up schedule.
3. An ACIR Immunisation Exemption – Medical Contraindication Form which has been certified by an immunisation provider for a child who cannot receive one or more vaccine(s).

You can obtain these by:

- telephone on 1800 653 809 or acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au,
- online at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/, or
- in person at the local Medicare office, or Centrelink office.



Important Contact details

Preschool

- Phone: **66280822**
- Mobile phone number for use on excursions **0431 289589**
- Email: for enquiries about children, enrolments or issues of a sensitive nature
director@alstonvillepreschool.com.au
for accounts information and fees
admin@alstonvillepreschool.com.au
for general enquires, enrolment
info@alstonvillepreschool.com.au

Other contacts

NSW Department of Education (DoE):

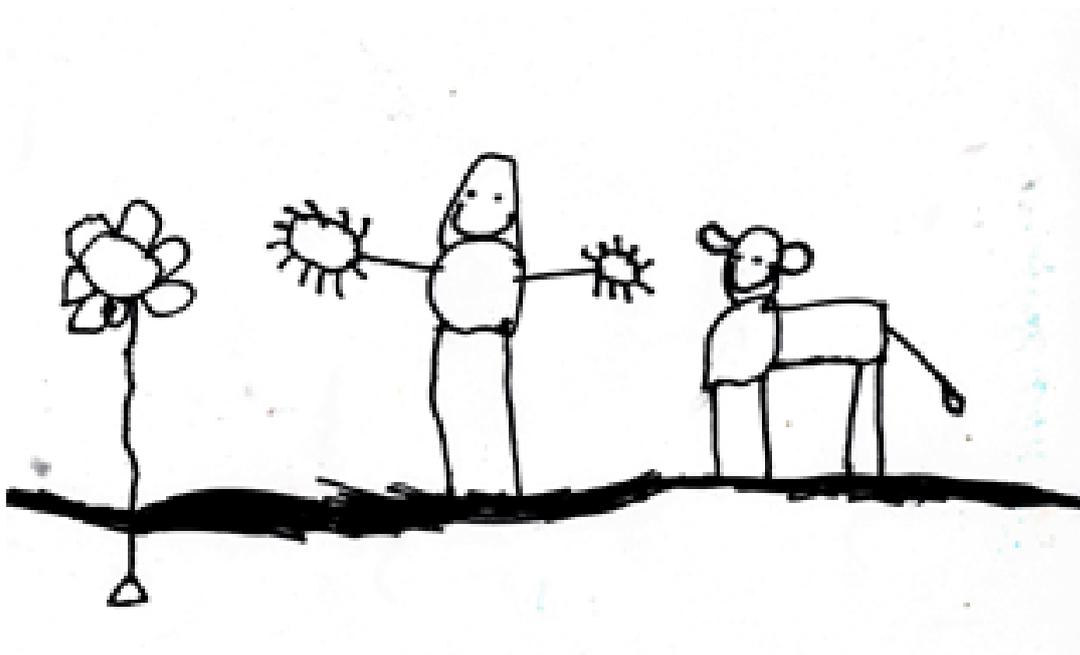
Ph: 1800 619 113 (toll free)

Fax: 02 8633 1810

Email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

Postal address:

Information and Enquiries
Early Childhood Education Directorate
NSW Department of Education
Locked Bag 5107
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124



SOME GENERAL TIPS on starting preschool

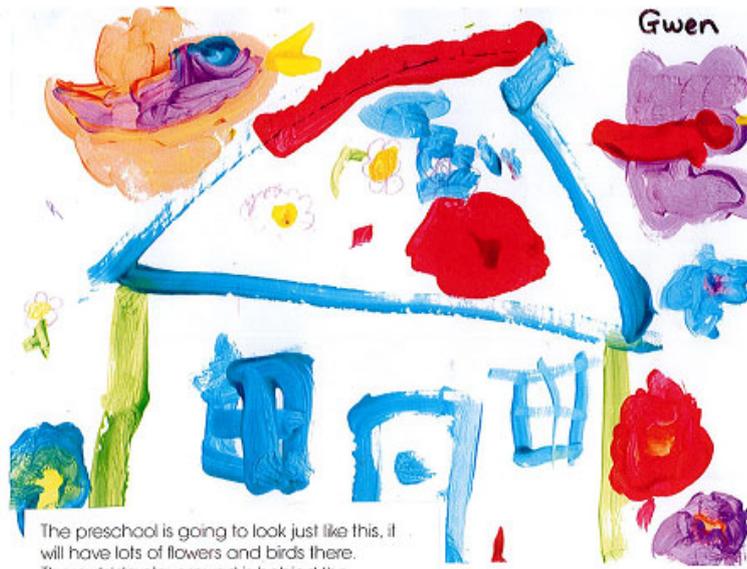
- When your child starts preschool be prepared for them to be hesitant and reluctant for you to leave. It is a big step for them to stay in a strange place with new faces all around. Your assurance and positive attitude will help them to feel more secure. Please stay for a short time each day if necessary, and settle your child in, ie sit with them to begin a new activity.
- When you are leaving always say goodbye – never just slip away. Tell one of the educators that you are leaving so that they may offer support to your child as you leave.
- Be prepared to listen, encourage & provide enthusiasm for your child in their explanations of their day at preschool. To help you do this you can check the whiteboard on the deck area, floorbooks at the entrance to each room, or the photo slideshow in the foyer, for more information about our day.

We always welcome your comments and suggestions about our program.

- Your child's Room Leader, the Educational Leader or Director, are the best people to check in with regarding your child's progress and participation at preschool. If at any time you would like to talk about your child's progress, please arrange a suitable time with educators, as they may find it difficult to be available at short notice at the beginning or end of the day, due to supervision and teaching responsibilities.
- Families are always very welcome to visit preschool, and are encouraged to do so before the actual start date—this builds a sense of familiarity for your child and yourself with our educators and the preschool environment. This year, due to the Covid 19 pandemic and associated restrictions, we are looking for alternate ways to help your child develop their sense of belonging to the preschool before starting next year.



An interpretation of our preschool logo.....



The preschool is going to look just like this, it will have lots of flowers and birds there. The outside playground is behind the preschool and it will have the same things as here to play with, Gwen

*I can
ask my own questions,
try out my ideas,
experience what's around me
share what I find;*

*If I have
plenty of time for
my special pace,
a nourishing space,
things to transform;*

*If you'll be
my patient friend,
trusted guide,
fellow investigator,
partner in learning;*

*Then I will
explore the world
discover my voice,
and tell you what I know
in a hundred languages*

Pamela Houk

This poem, first used as an introduction to the Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit at the Dayton Area Institute, was meant to alert viewers to aspects of the Reggio Emilia experience as well as to the dialogues of children printed on many panels.



Alstonville Community Preschool

Together we can

RATED

EXCEEDING

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

