

The Little School

Pre School Inc.

Family Information Handbook

(Revised: March 2018)

The Little School Preschool Inc.

ABN: 55 535 015 424

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Dombarton NSW 2530

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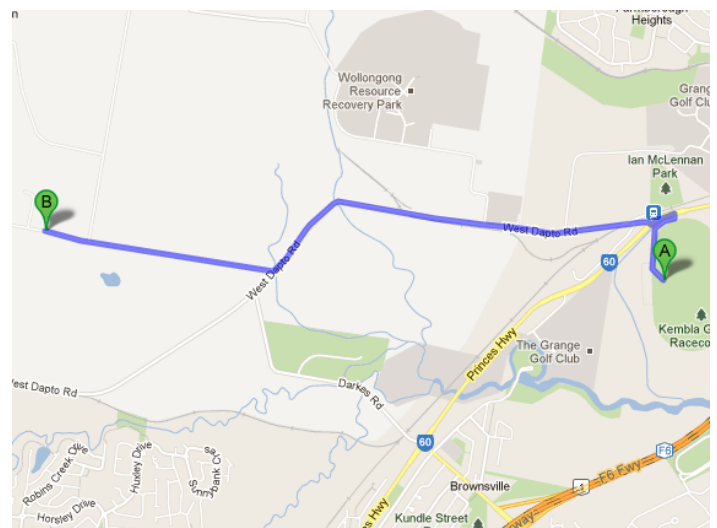
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Web: www.thelittleschool.org.au

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Instagram: www.instagram.com/littleschoolpreschoolinc/



Point A: Kembla Grange Racecourse

Point B: The Little School Preschool Inc.

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1. HOURS OF CARE AND LICENSED PLACES

The Centre operates five (5) days a week during school terms, Monday to Friday, except for Public Holidays.

Licensed places: Pre-School - 16 children aged 3 years to 6 years


The Centre provides different program options to meet the needs of its clients:

Preschool Hours

The care Pre-school hours operates between 9am – 3.00pm. From January 2017 we are trialling extended hours from 8am-3.20 pm

Casual Care

This is for families who are currently enrolled in the preschool and require an extra day beyond their regular booked hours. This can be provided only if a vacancy exists and is charged at the standard daily rate, bookings for casual care can be made directly through out parent lounge app and is accessible 24 hours a day. To assist in reducing the impact of non-funded fees, limited casual placement enrolments are provided for children in the unfunded category to allow access to preschool until the child enters the funded category. Fess for casual placement bookings are charged at the standard daily rate and are to be discussed with the Director.



SERVICE APPROVAL
Section 48, Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)

Name of education and care service
The Little School Pre School

Location of education and care service
Sheaffes Road, DAPTO, NSW, 2530

Service approval number
SE-00009285

Date approval granted
14/02/2008

Name of approved provider
The Little School Pre School Inc


Maximum number of children
This service is approved to provide education and care to a maximum of 14 children.

Waivers
There are no waivers on this approval.

Conditions:
This approval is subject to:
The conditions set out or referred to in Section 51 of the *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)* which include conditions prescribed in the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.
There are no other conditions on this approval.

Note: this service is subject to special transitional provisions in the *Education and Care Services Regulations* which relate to space requirements.

Granted under delegation by:



Carolyn Strange
Director, Quality Assessment & Regulation
NSW Department of Education & Communities

Issue date: 29/06/2012

2. WELCOME

2.1 Welcome from the Management Committee

Welcome to The Little School Pre-School Inc. and congratulations on making an excellent choice for the first stage of your child's formal education. At The Little School we have committed and experienced educators, great facilities and a beautiful bush land setting, all of which contribute to happy and exciting learning experiences for our children every day.

The Little School is a community based, not for profit, pre-school, which means it is operated by a Management Committee made up of the parents of children attending. We also have a Parent Committee who work with Management to Coordinate and organise activities to raises funds for extra resources and replacement of old equipment. All money raised by the organized events are injected straight back into purchasing resources and maintaining the physical environment to benefit all of our children and families. We hope that every one of you will become involved with the pre-school in some way.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the current Management Committee and outline key aspects of our role.

Management Committee 2017/2018

President – Danielle H
Vice President – Kylie O
Treasurer – Christie L
Secretary – Kirstan P
General Member – Joy T
General Member – Amanda B
General Member – Donna Vial
General Member – Karlie Zec

The committee meets approximately once a month and is responsible for ensuring the pre-school fulfils its financial and legal obligations. We discuss the general management of the pre-school and make decisions in relation to its operation. We also develop and review the policies of the pre-school in conjunction with staff members as required. These are available for all families to read, make comments on and suggest changes to on request.

It is also the committee's responsibility to resolve issues that any of our families may have regarding the pre-school. Issues involving your child's educational experience and behaviour are best discussed with his or her teacher in the first instance.

Wishing you and your child, a happy and rewarding time at The Little School Pre-School Inc.

Kind regards

The Management Committee

N.B: Positions for the Management Committee are voted on at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in February of each year. If you are interested in becoming a member of the management Committee please feel free to approach staff to discuss this. All families become members of the Parent Committee upon enrolment of your child at the service.

2.2 Welcome from the Director and Nominated Supervisor

Firstly, let me welcome you to The Little School Preschool Inc. I hope that this handbook prepares you well for your child and family's transition into a Not for Profit Community Based Preschool.

The purpose of this handbook is to ensure that you are introduced to important policies, procedures and practices that all Little School families need to know.

I am very pleased that you have chosen The Little School Preschool Inc. for your child and family and I am certain that you will grow to share the passion we have for the work we do here.

You are joining a dedicated group of educators, families and community members that work collaboratively to deliver quality education and care to children. We look forward to building trusting, mutually respectful relationships with you which work to ensure the best outcomes for your child, your family, the preschool and the community.

As an association we back the drive for excellence among staff by providing a workplace that is supportive, progressive, flexible, and harassment-free and delivers a standard of education and care that we can all be proud of.

One of the most important values for an association, particularly one that provides education services, is the ethical and professional behaviour of its entire staff. All families, employees and volunteers have a responsibility to uphold the associations Policies and Procedures, which reflect the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, and the Education and care Services National Law Act 2010.

In addition to the abovementioned; families, employees and volunteers also have a responsibility to uphold the associations Code of Conduct, Confidentiality agreement, service policies and procedures, Code of Ethics and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child.

The abovementioned codes underpins our commitment to a duty of care to all employees, children, families and community members. These explain the principals covering appropriate conduct and outlines the minimum standard of behaviour expected form all employees.

Early Childhood education and care is one of the most important areas in which to work. It is a challenging, but rewarding profession, and I thank you for joining our association.

If you have any further questions about your position or any of the information within this handbook please do not hesitate to contact me as my door is always open.

Your feedback is important, if you feel that there is any information that this handbook does not contain that you feel may be important to future families, no matter how small you think it may seem please let me know so I can add it to this handbook.

Kind regards

Danae Horsey

Director/Nominated Supervisor/Educational Leader

The Little School Preschool Inc.

3. THE LITTLE SCHOOL STAFF – 2018



Danae Horsey – Director, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader
Bachelor of Teaching (Birth - 5 years) - School readiness group
Currently completing Master of Education – Major in Special Education

Trained in Asthma, Anaphylaxis and Senior First Aid
Trained in Child Protection



Sheree Jones - Certified Supervisor,
Diploma Qualified Educator - 3 – 4 years group (Tues-Fri)

Trained in Asthma, Anaphylaxis and Senior First Aid
Trained in Child Protection



Sarah Broadhead – Certificate 111 Qualified Educator (Mon-Fri)

Currently studying to complete my Diploma of Children's Services
Trained in Asthma, Anaphylaxis and Senior First Aid.



Lyndal Gosek – Administration (Part time M,Th,F)

Certificate 111 Business Administration

Please feel free to introduce yourself and your family members, we have an open-door policy at the preschool so feel free to stop in for a visit. We look forward to getting to know you and your wonderful children, sharing days learning and exploring with them at The Little School.

We are always open to feedback so please feel free to approach us with ideas on how to enhance the individual and group experiences, the physical environment or maybe there is something we are not doing that you would like to see here. We would love to hear from you if your child has a new interest or experience that we can follow up at the preschool and help them to share with their friends.

We believe the heart of the relationship is the ongoing communication about the children, so please remember to come and see us with your thoughts. Your experience, knowledge and input is greatly valued and appreciated.

Casual Staff- Casual staff will replace core staff that are on leave and fill support positions

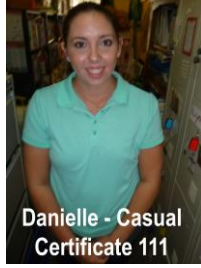
Sandy



Ashlee



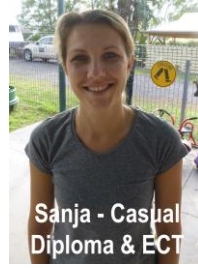
Danielle



Hannah



Sanja



Rachel



Jessica



Hollie



Qualifications:

EC Teacher – holds a 3 or 4 year Degree in Early Childhood Education from a University.

Diploma – holds an Associate Diploma or Diploma in Child Studies from TAFE

Certificate III – holds Certificate III in Child Studies from TAFE

All core staff at The Little School Preschool Inc. are trained in Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Senior First Aid and Child Protection as well as holding a current Working with Children Check.

4. INTRODUCTION

The Little School Preschool was established in 1979, by local teacher Mariam Temple, who rented the building off the Education Department. It was originally open for only 3 days a week for the children local to the area, with the building next door used for foster care. It was also open for vacation care for children aged between 5 – 15 years. Vacation care stopped in 1987 and the centre became autonomous from the foster care. In December 1991 the preschool become incorporated as “The Little School Preschool Inc.”

Between 1982 – 2011 the Authorised Supervisor and educator was local woman Sandra Nicholls and a dedicated team of educators, Celia Temple, Kim Freeman, Robyn Mills and Karen Rawlinson.

In January 2012 all long serving staff retired and Danae Horsey took over as the Director and Nominated Supervisor and the implementation of The Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards began. A complete restructure of the educational program, office management, leadership and governance of the preschool took place with all policies, practices and procedures reviewed, remodelled and implemented to bring the preschool up to date with the changes, laws regulations and practices of the:

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:
- National Quality Standards/Elements
- The Early Years Learning Framework

At this stage the preschool had less than 25% enrolments and with no waiting list, financial viability became a serious concern. The Management Committee at this stage considered closing the preschool. Parents, staff, other preschools and local community businesses rallied and worked to build the public profile of the service, advertise for vacancies.

Everyone took part in the advertising process with a Facebook page developed by staff, letterbox drops and local businesses displaying posters. The Illawarra Mercury came on board ran a story about the lack of enrolments and slowly and steadily numbers began to increase.

Cuts had to be made to the budget to assist the preschool in staying viable, local businesses were approached for help and community and staff family members and friends stepped up to assist in maintenance and making improvements through, volunteering time and resources, making donations towards the program and resources of the service.

Fundraising became a focus for parents to ensure the lack of funding did not compromise the quality of the program offered to the children, the service ability to maintain safety and keep all service accounts in credit.

The following months were dedicated to implementing strong leadership and governance, building relationships with children, families and communities and enhancing the program and physical environment for the children.

In June 2013 for the first time in 18 months The Little School Preschool Inc. was again fully booked out with a waiting list growing for future years. A draft budget developed in July 2013 with Accountant and governance expert Catherine Chen showed the preschool was again financially viable with great prospects for the future.

In December 2013 we underwent our first ever Assessment and Rating process and were very proud to be given an outstanding rating of EXCEEDING the National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care in all 7 quality areas.

5. CENTRE INFORMATION

Preschools are licensed by the Department of Human Services (Formally known as the Department of Community Services) under the *Children's Services Regulation 2004* as a centre-based children's services.

Preschools – alternatively known as Kindergartens – provide an educational program in a dedicated preschool setting catering for children aged between three and five years of age. These services are primarily aimed at children in the two years before they commence full-time schooling. Children may attend a number of sessions per week, dependent on the nature of the preschool.

Preschool services operate between 9am – 3pm during school terms only. Some preschools offer extended hours care, which consists of the preschool program plus additional care before and after the program; for example, from 8am – 9am or 3pm-4pm.

(Source Community Childcare Cooperative – *The Manual 'Managing a Children's Service'* p.14.)

5.1 FEES

5.1.1 DAILY FEE

As of Term 1 2018, the daily fee is as follows:

- **Unfunded – \$68/day**
- **4 year old (by 31st July) - \$46 per day when enrolled (must be enrolled for 2 days)**
- **Equity funded positions (ATSI & Low Income/Health Care card Holders) \$20 per day capped at 2 days (additional days at normal daily rate)**
- **Late fee \$30 at 3.30pm plus \$2.00 per minute**

Fees are assessed by the Parent Management Committee and are reviewed and generally increased according to the budget and audit reports at the end of each financial year. Fees are changeable upon two weeks' notice to parents.

Please see the Director or Nominated Supervisor prior to your child's enrolment to discuss the documentation required to receive fee subsidies for low income status. Fee subsidies are available for Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander or families with supporting documentation of low income status from Centrelink.

Please direct all fee enquiries to the Director or Nominated Supervisor preferably in person or in writing.

5.1.2 ENROLMENT FEE

A one-off enrolment fee of \$50.00 is to be paid before you child's forms will be processed for enrolment; this fee includes a preschool hat and shirt and is non-refundable.

5.1.3 MAINTENANCE FEE

A yearly maintenance fee is payable per child at a cost of \$60 per year for the first child, \$30 per year for the second child and all additional children free (added to fees accounts). This assists the preschool with covering some of the costs associated with regular maintenance, hygiene and cleaning essentials. E.g. tissues, toilet paper, hand soap, cleaning essentials, sunscreen etc.

5.1.4 LAWN MOWING FEE

Lawn maintenance the job of all families attending and a lawn roster is displayed on the calendar all year round for you to allocate your preferred week/day of choice. There is a \$40 annual opt out fee for those who choose not to participate in lawn mowing maintenance.

5.1.5 BOND

The bond (\$100) is to be paid on enrolment and is refunded to your outstanding balance when you leave the Centre, see Fee Policy for more information.

5.1.6 STORYPARK – see www.storypark.com for more information

There is an annual fee of \$12 per child for the Storypark online documenting and portfolio program, Storypark creates a secure online network of the people that matter most for your child. It helps working parents, far-away family, educators and specialists ensure children receive the best opportunities possible.

5.2 FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is an important aspect of any community based preschool. If you enrol your child and get the benefits of a community based preschool you need to be prepared to take part in fundraising, which benefits ALL FAMILIES and CHILDREN attending the service. Fundraising events for the Preschool are held several times a term and are organised and run by a Parent Fundraising Committee.

Fundraising is the job of all families as it reduces the cost of the service to all families, including the daily fees to parents through covering some of the costs associated with running the service. An opt out fundraising levy is provided for families who choose not to participate in certain fundraisers, this levy is decided by parents at committee meetings.

We utilise hardware store BBQs throughout the year to limit selling fundraisers, each family is required to attend/volunteer at least 2 BBQs per year.

5.3 CHANGES TO ENROLLED DAYS CARE

The Centre is licensed for a maximum of 16 children per day, with a specified number of children in each age group. Because of these licensing restrictions we cannot swap days; substitute children, or waive fees for absences, outside our normal operating guidelines.

Please advise the Centre of any absences -e.g.-sick, going on holidays, a day at home, etc. at the earliest possible convenience. You can use the Qkenrol website or smartphone app to log absences outside of preschool opening hours. This provides us with accurate figures for our attendance roll and assists the service with providing occasional care or extra days to families who require them.

5.4 TO INCREASE/DECREASE ENROLLED DAYS

Families using the centre are given priority for additional places when vacancies occur. If you require extra days, or need to change your enrolled days, please advise the office as soon as possible through the QK website, app or via email. If the day is not available, you will be placed on a waiting list for the next available vacancy.

Two weeks-notice is required, **in writing**, to withdraw from any enrolled day(s) - to give the Centre time to fill the vacancy. Six weeks-notice is required, **in writing**, to withdraw from enrolled days during term 4.

5.5 OCCASIONAL/CASUAL EXTRA DAYS

The availability of an 'occasional' extra care day (i.e. other than your normal enrolled days), is dependent on a vacancy, you can check for available days via your QK enrol site and book outside of preschool hours using the site or the app. Alternatively you can call staff during preschool hours.

5.6 SCHOOL AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

In the interest of fairness and equity for all families attending, fees are not charged for school and public holidays as the service is not open for children to attend.

5.7 PARENT COMMUNICATION

The Preschool keeps parents and interested others informed of the Preschool news in the Preschool Newsletter. This is distributed as needed throughout the year. Unless otherwise requested, information is sent to you by email, facebook and through storypark as it comes to hand, for example, interesting articles, parenting courses, reminders, performance notices. Please check your email and Parent Communication Pocket and email regularly so that you don't miss out on any important information. Parent communication currently used at the service is storypark, parent meetings (by request), Facebook business page, web page, newsletters, email, parent notice board and parent communication pockets.

5.8 PARENT MEETINGS

Parent meetings are held once a term at the Wongawilli Community Hall. These meetings are informal opportunities to meet with the staff and the parent Management Committee to discuss any issues that the Preschool or you may have.

5.9 PARKING

There is plenty of parking in front of the Preschool; we ask that you do not park in the landlord's driveway. We also must insist that you do not leave any children unattended in your cars as this is against the law and staff being mandatory reporters, are required by law to report incidences to the police.

5.10 PARENT LIBRARY

The Preschool has a collection of books and pamphlets on child development and related issues for parents. If you wish to borrow a book, please see the staff. It operates on an honesty system and we ask that you only borrow books on a monthly basis and return them as soon as you are finished.

The Preschool also subscribes to several Early Childhood publications which are available in the staff library. Please see staff for information about these.

5.11 GROUPING OF CHILDREN

Children will be integrated for most of the day, however, there will be times during the day when the children will be age grouped in to 3-4 years and the School Readiness Group 4-5 years (children attending school the following year). Parents are required to notify staff in writing at the beginning of the year as to their child's intended transition to school date, to ensure they are placed in the appropriate group.

Should there be reservations about a child's readiness to attend school this will be discussed with parents before mid-year break and teachers will advise of any concerns with children intended to start school the following year. Teachers will respect a family's right to make the final decision on when their child will start school and will do everything they can to prepare the child for the transition to school.

5.12 STARTING AT THE CENTRE AND SETTLING IN

Some children adjust quickly to a new situation or routine, while others take a little longer to feel comfortable in a new place. The Preschool has an Orientation process to support your child and your family as they settle in. Orientation visits are encouraged so that your child can adjust to the Preschool in a gradual way.

Remember to always say goodbye, rather than sneaking away, and talk in a happy way about your child's day at The Little School. It is natural for parents to feel some anxieties when leaving their child. Please share your thoughts with the staff as they have helped many children and parents adjust to leaving each other for the first time. You are encouraged to phone staff during the day to discuss your child's progress. We also have an open-door policy for those who wish to stay and chat or visit their child throughout the day. Please be assured that if your child has not settled within a reasonable time frame you will be contacted by educators.

5.13 CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS

Hooks are provided for your child's backpack where their belongings will be stored, it is recommended that the backpack be one that can be hung and large enough to fit all of your child's things plus craft. An additional hook is provided for children to hang their handtowel on, please make sure your child hangs their handtowel on the allocated letter so we can keep track of handtowels.

5.14 PARENT COMMUNICATION POCKETS

Information will be put into your Parent Communication Pocket, which is located near the entry gate. Please check it each day that your child attends. Newsletters, invoices, reminders and other messages are sent out via e-mail unless otherwise requested, so please check your e-mail regularly and ensure to update us if you change your email address.

5.15 LOST PROPERTY

We look for all belongings when lost but we cannot take responsibility for them. A lost property box is located near the entrance. Please check regularly in case of forgotten things that may cause distress later on. To avoid lost items, please label all hand towels, drinks bottles, lunchboxes, clothing and belongings (don't forget shoes and socks).

5.16 CLOTHING

Children playing will get MESSY so please send your child in play clothes. Children need to feel that they can participate without fear of ruining something new and 'getting into trouble'.

As we encourage children to dress themselves, it is especially important that the clothes are the easy, pull on kind. This is particularly important if your child is at the toilet training stage. Items such as bib and braces, overalls, small buttons, buckles and belts are very frustrating for little fingers in a hurry. Please do not send your child in this type of clothing.

5.17 SHOES

Thongs, crocs, gumboots and other loose-fitting footwear are not good for your child's feet and are not safe for climbing and running. We prefer for safety purposes that you please send your child in sneakers, joggers or sandals. We encourage the children to take off their shoes during summer, but to avoid injured toes, children will not be allowed to ride bikes, scooters, skateboards, go go cars, or cars without proper enclosed shoes.

5.18 SPARE CLOTHING

We try to keep a supply of spare clothes for children in case of emergencies, so if your child has Little School clothes on, please wash and return for us to be able to use again. For hygiene purposes, we do not keep second hand underpants, so please ensure that you pack enough spare underwear for your child in case they have an accident. Children get very busy when playing and even those who have been toilet trained for some time can still have accidents.

5.19 COMFORTERS

If your child has a comforter for security, please send it along, marked with his/her name staff will encourage your child to put it in their bag once they are settled. Please note that a dummy or bottle is not appropriate for the preschool environment and we ask that these are left at home.

5.20 DONATIONS

Contributions towards our environment, program, resources, garden, fundraising drives and supplies for artwork and creative play will be gratefully accepted and encourages ties for your child between home and the Preschool.

5.21 WHAT TO BRING EACH DAY:

Here is a guide of what to send each day:

- * An approved sun hat – Bucket and legionnaire hats are suitable to wear, baseball style caps are not appropriate sun protection.
- * At least 2 - 3 complete changes of clothes (this includes shirt, pants, socks, jumper, change of clothes for hot and cold weather not matter the season etc.)
- * Lots of extra clothes, underwear, socks and shoes if your child is still toilet training
- * Beanie and jacket in the colder months
- * Handtowel marked with your child's name
- * Drink bottle with **WATER** only
- * Healthy lunch with enough healthy snacks – remember preschool is busy work and creates very hungry children, any uneaten food will be sent home so be generous with what you pack in your child's lunchbox

5.22 T-SHIRTS AND HATS

The Little School Preschool sells approved sun hats for \$10 each. Preschool T-Shirts are \$12.00 each and come in sizes 2 – 6 in an assortment of colours.

5.23 Parent Participation

Parent participation is encouraged at all stages throughout the year – we gladly welcome you to the service through our open-door policy. We encourage participation through the Management, Parent and Fundraising Committees, working bees, maintenance and sharing your expertise in your child's interests and in sharing their cultures, customs and beliefs with the children through "Parent experiences".

6. PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY

CORE BELIEF: Children's learning takes place through play-based learning, relationships, exploration, creativity and love.

OUR VISION: To engage the children and their families in nurturing the environment, promoting respect for all living creatures and the development of positive attitudes towards creating a sustainable future.

OUR MISSION: To provide a stimulating environment that promotes independence and encourages each child to realize their individual strengths, and develop strong foundations that serves to improve the life chances of all the children and families equally.

OUR VALUES:

1. We believe the early years of children's lives is a unique and valuable stage, in which children acquire values and attitudes towards themselves, their friends, families and society that grow with them into adulthood.
2. Each child has rights as well as strengths and great potential. All children should be treated as equals reflecting anti-bias and inclusive practices, thus allowing them to develop a sense of belonging and positive self-esteem and to feel valued and respected for whom they are.
3. Respect is a core element to our preschool pedagogy; Educators respect each other, Families and the Children. Children are supported to show respect for each other, adults, Educators, spaces, materials and themselves. Families are encouraged to respect Educators, Children, spaces and materials.
4. We believe in actively promoting the education of all children in our care through an Emergent Curriculum, where children can learn through play, following their interests. The program is flexible to allow the inclusion of all children regardless of their individual needs. All areas of learning are included, such as Literacy, Numeracy, Science, Physical development, Spiritual awareness, and Social Competency, Emotional Intelligence, Creative and Expressive arts.
5. Educators recognize the importance of building children's social skills, emotional intelligence and spiritual competency which lays the foundations for all future learning and aims to support and enhance children's development in these areas above all others.
6. By focusing on children's strengths and interests it is our aim to support the development of life skills, encouraging the growth and independence of each child entrusted in our care. Educators act as co-learners and facilitators to promote learning through positive experiences based on children's interests, strengths and abilities.
7. Through careful observations and planning, we aim to meet the needs of both the children and families providing a developmentally appropriate program implemented within an environment that is warm, safe and conducive to exploring and learning.
8. We aim to set the foundations for future learning and to prepare the children for meeting the learning outcomes outlined in The Early Years Learning Framework, as well as preparing them with the necessary skills for a successful and happy start to life at 'big school'. The program aims to nurture the development of life skills and complements children's experiences, opportunities and relationships at school, at home and in the community.
9. Educators will integrate Environmental Awareness into the daily life experiences of the service practices and routine. We will provide opportunities within the program for children to explore and engage with nature and a variety of living creatures, whilst fostering and supporting the

development of respect for the environment and all living things.

10. Educators recognize the importance of promoting and role-modelling to children and family's environmental sustainability in everyday living and experiences. Educators aim to integrate all aspects of sustainability into the daily routine of the preschool, to educate and promote a sense of responsibility, respect, empowerment, active participation, enquiry and social change.
11. Educators will promote and support waste reduction within the policies and daily practices of the preschool through, educating families and children on recycling, reducing waste, reusing, composting during meal times, worm farms, respecting the resources and not wasting, in all aspects of the program and routine.
12. We believe it is in the best interests of staff members, children, their families and the community for all staff to work as a team and to show respect and understanding towards each other.
13. As educators, we must acknowledge, respect and foster the life situations of children and families from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and their families and families whose circumstances demand particular attention, and encourage their participation in the life of the preschool in a variety of ways.
14. Children with additional needs will be accepted into the preschool and will be assisted by programs incorporating specific developmental goals. These will be based on the child's individual needs and will be achieved in collaboration with parents and relevant support professionals.
15. Children with additional needs will be catered for based on their existing and potential capacities. Where possible, resources and adaption to the physical environment will be provided.
16. Educators will engage in ongoing learning and reflective practices in a continuous cycle of professional improvement through furthering their studies, attending workshops and in-services to benefit both the children and parents.
17. Policies regarding children's Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity will reflect the research and publications of the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents, Get Up and Grow and the Munch & move programs.
18. Service policies, practices and procedures will reflect the standards outlines in the National Quality framework.
19. Through working in collaboration with parents, community members, co-workers and networking, we are better able to provide an inclusive program that allows equal access to experiences for all children. Collaboration works towards, creating a positive identity within the community as a facilitator of innovative family and community learning.
20. As pedagogical leaders, it is important to use our own strengths on behalf of others, to assist in the creation of communities and environments that serve to improve the life chances of all our children and provide equal opportunities for the children, their families and society as a whole.¹

¹Sourced from –, The Early Years Learning Framework 2009, United Nations convention on the rights of the child, the National Quality Framework 2011, Code of Ethics, National Health Medical Research Council, Australian government Department of Health and Ageing, NSW Health, Arthur, Beecher and Harcourt, Dawn Emelie Griggs, Maggie Dent 2005, Bruner 1973, Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu, NCAC Accreditation Principals. NSW Curriculum Framework **Input from** – Danae Horsey, Sheree Jones, Vicki Burkinshaw, Jenni Macleay, Carino De Brito, Danielle White, Sarah Broadhead.

7. FOOD AND NUTRITION

7.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Parents and guardians are required to pack the children's lunch each day. The preschool has in place an excluded foods policy to protect children who are anaphylactic to certain foods. A list of these foods is provided to each family at enrolment and is updated when needed.

Children are encouraged to taste all foods that parents put into their lunchboxes. The Children are also encouraged to become independent with their eating skills. They are not forced to eat food. Staff eat with the children to encourage good habits and a social, family atmosphere. Staff aims to bring a variety of foods for their own lunch so the children are exposed to different kinds of foods. The preschool environment is a great place to try your child with new foods.

The staff at Little School are required to keep within the National Quality Framework Regulations. Preschool policies require families to encourage healthy eating practices. In keeping with healthy eating practices, parents are requested not to pack sweets, lollies, chocolates, cakes, chips or cordial. Children are required to have at least 2 - 3 pieces of fruit or vegetables in their lunch boxes each day, drink bottles must contain WATER only no cordial, soft drinks or vitamin water.

All policies regarding food and Nutrition reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia publication released by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) – see link for a copy of the publication

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf>

7.2 ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

At any time there can be children in the Centre who suffer from a life threatening allergic reaction known as ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK.

This means being extremely reactive to egg, peanuts, other nuts, chocolate, shellfish and in some instances other foods including fruits. Ingesting minute quantities can trigger an anaphylactic reaction in which the respiratory and circulatory systems can slow down and stop.

It is possible that there could also be a reaction after touching or smelling these foods or being touched by someone who has residue of the allergy food on their hands, such as, traces of peanut butter on toast from breakfast. At all times we will keep you informed of prohibited foods within the centre as a result of children's allergies.

The Centre has restricted foods policies, i.e., what you may bring to school in your lunch box, cakes for birthdays and special treats bought in by parents and staff, to ensure the safety of all children with food allergies. Children with this condition cannot share food with other children. Immediate treatment of this condition includes an adrenalin injection and/or EpiPen which is kept at the Centre at all times.

If parents send excluded foods in their children's lunch boxes these will be removed and sent home, children will under no circumstances be allowed to eat restricted or banned foods at the Little School.

7.3 NUTS

As many children suffer from allergies, some fatal, the Little School Preschool has a **"NO NUTS"** policy. Please do not bring in any foods containing nuts or nut products. Don't forget that this includes products such as **Peanut Butter, Nutella, many types of biscuits, muesli bars, cereals and cakes**. As some children's allergies are severe, we ask that parents also avoid giving their children nut products before they come to Preschool, e.g. **Peanut butter on toast**. This is because some children can react just from being touched or breathed on by someone who has eaten nuts.

7.4 CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS

Please feel free to send along a cake and we will have a small celebration. DO NOT send fancy cream cakes as these create problems for the children and staff. A plain cake, cupcakes or donuts are best as

these can be easily served and held by the children. Please ensure they do not contain nuts, as we will be unable to serve it.

7.5 LUNCHBOX IDEAS:

Remember to pack food from each of the following groups in your child's lunchbox each day. Staff will assist and encourage children to explore any new foods you pack. Remember preschool is busy work and your child may eat more than usual, so pack extra to ensure your child is not hungry throughout the day.

Dairy or Calcium	Iron& Protein	Cereal-based	Fruit & Vege	Leave for home
Yoghurt	Beef, lamb, veal	Scones	Fresh Fruit	Chips
Plain milk	Fish, Chicken, ham	Rice	Canned Fruit (limit)	Cordial/Fruit Juice
Custard	Wholemeal bread	Pasta	Dried Fruit (limit)	Lollies
Tofu	Dried fruit	Crackers	Chopped fruit	Chocolates
Creamed rice	Legumes	Rice cakes	Peeled Fruit	Sports drinks
Milk puddings	Milo	Rice Crackers	Fruit Smoothie	Packaged foods
Plain milk	Spinach	Fruit buns	Fresh Vegetables	Cakes, donuts
Cheese – block, sliced, cubed	Fortified breakfast cereals	Bread (all varieties, rolls, wraps, pita)	Cooked Vege, (mashed, baked)	Sweet/cream filled biscuits
Tatziki	Baked beans	Pikelets	Stir fry	Fruit bars/straps
Pink Salmon	humus	Muffins	Salad	Flavoured Milk
	Tuna	Crumpets	Potato	Saturated fats
	Quinoa	Fruit Bread	Avocado Mash	Sugar
		Porridge		Excess Salt

Part of providing a healthy lunch for your child's day at Preschool includes packing a drink bottle with WATER. Water is the best drink when you are thirsty and staff are required under the National regulations to ensure your child has access to water throughout their day here. If you have troubles getting your child to drink water please speak to staff and we will work with you to support your child in this area.

Tips to encourage new food and prevent or minimise fussy eating:

- Eat together as a family and try to keep meal times relaxed and calm
- Set a good example by eating and enjoying a range of healthy foods yourself
- Offer your child new food regularly. A child often needs to try new food many times before liking or accepting it. Don't give up and put a food on your child's "dislike list" after just a few tries.
- Encourage your child to explore new foods. Invite looking, touching and smelling of a new food before tasting it. Talk about the food with your child.
- Involve your child in choosing new foods to purchase.
- Congratulate your child when s/he tried something new even if it's just a small mouthful – give cuddles, smiles and lots of praise.

7.6 TASTING TABLE

Throughout the year staff engage children in trying new foods through the "tasting table". A variety of foods are brought out and the children are given the opportunity to explore, manipulate and sample the foods in a social and relaxed atmosphere. In this past this experience has proven to be very successful with feedback from families being that children were more prepared to sample new foods at home after participating.

7.7 COOKING

Throughout the year staff and families participate in cooking and food preparation experiences with children on a regular basis. This is a great chance for families with an interest in cooking to participate in and make contributions to the program.

For more information see staff for handouts or visit:

www.gofor2and5.com.au, www.livelifewell.nsw.gov.au, www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au, www.cancerinstitute.org.au,

Source: Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents, NSW Health, South East Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service, Munch N Move, Get up and Grow.

8. THE DAILY ROUTINE

We believe it is important for the children to be happy and settled in their learning environment.

Children learn through play, therefore our routine allows for long periods of uninterrupted play. This provides the children with multiple opportunities to interact with the environment and their friends, master skills, explore interests and use creativity.

Children are provided with choice and educators are close by to facilitate their learning and interact closely with them. Educators have time to interact in meaningful ways with individual and small groups of children and to facilitate in depth investigations based on children's interests.

8.00 am – Staff arrive for set up

- extended hours care available on a permanent or casual basis.

9.00 am – Transition to Preschool

- Families arrive, sunscreen applied to the children, lunches, drink bottles and hats unpacked. Sign in for children and families. Sharing of relevant information with educators. Indoor/outdoor play

9.30 am – Morning Yarn

– Acknowledgement of country, greetings, headcount, calendar, messages, changes to the routine or environment given to the children, introduction of new children or relief staff, discussion or interests. Sunscreen applied (as per the sunsmart UV indicator) and transition to toilet, handwashing, hats and recess.

10.00 am – Recess begins

- children asked to eat fruit and vegetables first, dairy second and snacks last, swish and swash teeth with water. Recess is seen as a valuable opportunity for social interaction and conversation. When children are finished recess, they put their lunch box in the fridge and move to play based learning.

11.30 am – Structured learning and Intentional Teaching – Butterfly Group

- Children asked to toilet, wash hands, have a drink and line up at the door for group time.

12.30 pm – Lunch

- Transition from group to lunchtime routine, sunscreen is reapplied (as per the sunsmart UV indicator) Children toilet, wash hands, collect hats, recognise their own lunch boxes and drink bottles.

Lunch is seen as a valuable opportunity for social interaction and conversation. When children are finished lunch, they put their lunch box in their bag and move to play based learning.

1.00 pm – Structured learning and Intentional Teaching – Caterpillar Group

- Children asked to toilet, wash hands, have a drink and line up at the door for group time. (15-20minutes)

2.15 pm Pack away time

– Children and educators tidy the environment and pack away outdoors. This is a time to encourage RESPECT for the environment friends, teachers and equipment, and developing social skills through communication and working together. Children out their belongings in their bag shoes on their feet and meet for afternoon group.

3.00 pm Home time

– Extended hours care available on a permanent or casual basis.

3.30pm Service closed

- Staff finish work and lock up and children still on premises at this time will incur late fees and charges as per the fee policy.

Children's learning is dynamic, complex and holistic. Physical, social, emotional, personal, spiritual, creative, cognitive and linguistic aspects of learning are all intricately woven and interrelated.

Play is a context for learning that: Allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness, enhances dispositions such as curiosity and creativity, Enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning, Assists children to develop relationships and concepts and Stimulates a sense of wellbeing.

(EYLF, pg 9)

Note: The routine varies slightly depending on weather and the seasons, during summer months outdoor play is limited when the UV level is high and when excessive heat makes it dangerous for children to spend extended lengths outside.

9. NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL AGES CARE

The new National Quality Standard (NQS or 'the Standard') is designed to help education and care services provide the best possible level of childhood education and care by outlining the factors that support a child's development. It outlines what a service can do to provide the highest quality education and care for a child. The National Quality Standard is divided into seven areas. These areas have been identified by research as being the most important to get right to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services as well as improving their educational and developmental outcomes. The Standard consists of guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements. From 1 January 2012, most long day-cares, family day-cares, outside school hours care services and preschools/kindergartens will be rated against the NQS.

The seven quality areas are:

1. Educational program and practice;
2. Children's health and safety;
3. Physical environment;
4. Staffing arrangements;
5. Relationships with children;
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities;
7. Governance and Leadership.

Guiding principles that apply to the quality areas:

Six principles apply across all seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard.

9.1 The rights of the child are paramount

Each child has the right to be an active member of the community in which they live; to have their individual and cultural identity recognised and respected; to express their opinions and have their views considered in any decisions that may affect them.

The National Quality Standard reflects Australia's commitment to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the obligation of all those who work with children to protect children from harm, respect their dignity and privacy and safeguard and promote every child's wellbeing.

9.2 Children are successful, competent and capable learners

Children are active learners from birth, constructing their knowledge, meanings and understanding through their interactions, relationships and experiences.

They are able to form opinions, express their ideas, collaborate with others, plan and persist in learning.

The starting point for all learning is what children already know. Rich, engaging environments and meaningful interactions, where children's voices are listened to and acted upon, build on this foundation for successful life-long learning.

9.3 Equity, inclusion and diversity

In a fair and just society the intrinsic worth of all children and their families, their strengths and their right to equitable access and participation in the community is clearly visible in all aspects of service delivery.

Programs for the care, education and recreation of children have a unique opportunity to include children from all family circumstances, cultural backgrounds and levels of ability. In particular, a commitment to the full participation of children with additional needs and their families involves enabling their initial access as well as supporting their day-to-day participation in the program. It requires capturing and maximising resources to support each child's participation in and engagement with the program. By providing nurturing environments and supportive relationships they ensure that each child is valued for who they are and has opportunities to reach their full potential.

One of Australia's greatest strengths lies in its unique history and diverse heritage. The many different cultures, contexts and values of families and communities contribute to the richness of contemporary Australian society and inform plans for meaningful learning experiences for children.

9.4 Valuing Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

An approach that recognises and respects the strengths and contribution each individual and group makes to the Australian community and challenges bias, builds positive relationships and responds sensitively to the particular needs of each child and their family. Such an approach values Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as a core part of the nation's history, present and future. This is relevant for all services, not only services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children and families enrolled in the

service.

9.5 The role of parents and families is respected and supported

Parents and families are recognised as the child's primary nurturers and teachers. They have both a right and a responsibility to be involved in decision making affecting their child. Respectful, collaborative relationships strengthen the capacity and efforts of parents and families and of early childhood education and care and school age care services to support their children and promote each child's learning and wellbeing.

9.6 High expectations for children, educators and service providers

The best interests of children and their right to learn and develop in a safe and nurturing environment is the primary consideration in all decision making at the service and is visible in the actions, interactions and daily work with children.

Programs that reflect best practice in the care, education and recreation of children set high standards and expectations for all those responsible for the delivery of the service. They have an open and accountable organisational culture that is flexible and responsive to the local community. They continually reflect on their practice to find ways to improve outcomes for children in their service

9.7 THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE WWW.DET.NSW.EDU.AU

From 1 January 2012, all services will be given a rating under the National Quality Framework of 'provisional – not assessments.

More information is available at: W: www.det.nsw.edu.au/whatwe-offer/early-childhoodeducation-and-care
E: cslicensing@dhs.nsw.gov.au
P: 1800 619 113 or 02 9716 2100 regulatory authority (the NSW Department of Education and Communities).

While the assessment and rating process is being evaluated, providers will not have to display services' ratings, and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority will not publish the ratings. Display and publication of ratings will only be required after Ministers are satisfied that the assessment and rating process is valid and reliable. Providers and services will be given ample notice of this. (In the meantime, it would be a good idea for providers not to display their services' ratings in case they need to be changed in light of the results of the evaluation of the process.)

10. The Little School Preschool Inc. Quality Rating

The ratings for Early Education Services can be found at www.mychild.gov.au.
Click on the link below to view this:

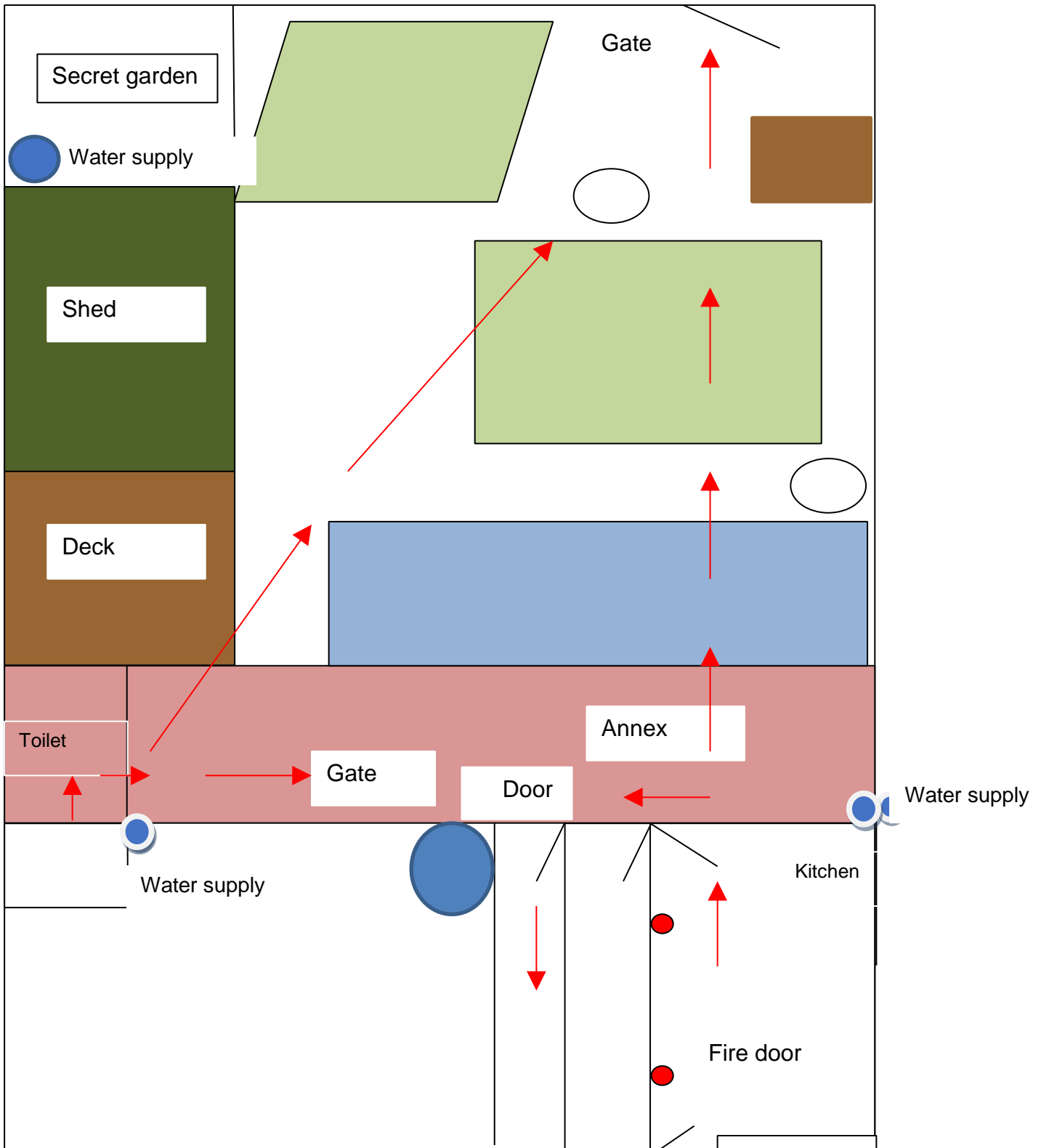
<http://ifp.mychild.gov.au/mvc/Preschool/Details/9206/>

The report of our rating and assessment is available at the preschool for families to view along with our service Quality Improvement Plan.



11. Emergency Procedures Drill

- One staff member will blow the whistle to inform the children there is a danger situation.
- One staff will quietly assemble the children and remove the children and visitors to a safe area, away from the danger.
- The Nominated Supervisor will check the sign in sheet and ensure all the children are accounted for. Names, addresses, phone numbers are located in the emergency evacuation bag.
- If required the Nominated Supervisor will ring the appropriate emergency authorities, e.g. Fire, ambulance, police, wires etc.
- Where necessary and if possible one staff member, not directly supervising the children, will turn off electrical equipment, close fire door, operate extinguisher or remove hazard/danger where appropriate to do so.
- Emergency drills will be carried out sporadically each term to ensure all children have equal opportunity to engage the safety drills.



**THE STAFF, CHILDREN AND MANAGEMENT WELCOME
YOUR CHILD AND FAMILY
TO THE CENTRE.**

**YOU ARE WELCOME IN THE PRESCHOOL
AT ANY TIME.**

We hope that your stay with us will be positive and meet the needs of your family. However, should you encounter any difficulties, please do not hesitate to speak to the Director/Nominated Supervisor.

If you would like to become involved in the Preschool, please speak to the Director/Nominated Supervisor, staff or a member of the Parent Management Committee.
