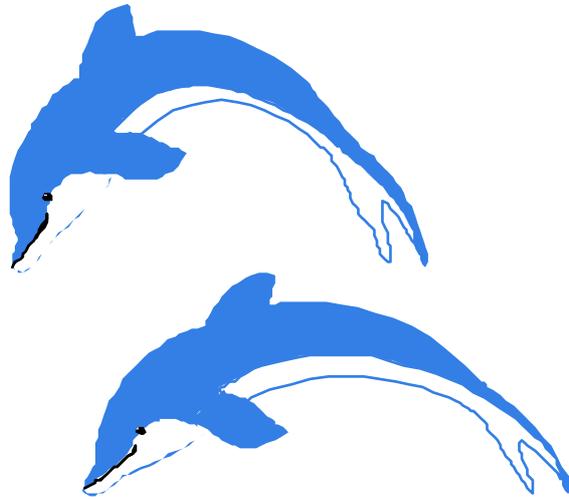


# DOLPHINS' PRE SCHOOL PROGRAM



Telephone: 9555 9352

This booklet is designed to give you an insight into the day to day operation  
of the Dolphin's Room.

If there are any matters you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to do so.  
We are here to support you and your children.

# **DOLPHINS' INFORMATION**

**Written information.** Signing your child in and out is a **legal requirement** as it provides us with an accurate list of children present for use in the event of an emergency. Please ensure that only an adult signs your child in and out.

**Parent Communication Diary.** Please write information in the diary situated near the sign in sheet, if you need to make staff aware of issues affecting your child, eg A different contact number for you, someone else collecting, how she/he slept last night, going on holidays or any special family event.

**Extra Days.** To apply for the **occasional** or **emergency** extra day, write your child's name in the parent communication book on the day of interest. Next to the name you must place a number to indicate if you are first or second on the extra day list. Your extra day must be approved by a staff member, who will write their name next to your child's name in the communication book. They will then notify you. It will most likely be approved if someone is on holidays or if someone calls in sick on the day. Please be aware each extra day requested cannot be guaranteed.

**Messages on the White board.** Please read this every day for information about planned events and general news.

**Accident Forms.** Any accident or illness will be written up by a staff member who dealt with the event. You will be asked to read and sign this when collecting your child. A reminder will be written on the sign-in sheets.

**Medication Book.** Please write up the need for medication in the Communication diary as well as verbally inform staff then write up time, dose, etc in the medication book which is kept near the sign in sheets. All medication will be administered and witnessed by our trained staff. Please make sure that all medication given to a Dolphin staff member the Dolphins Room and NEVER in your child's bag!

**Refrigerated medicine must be put in the kitchen fridge.**

**There are a few rules which need to be observed by Dolphins**

These are:

1. We listen when someone is talking
2. Running is for outside- we walk inside
3. Sit while involved in activities
4. Loud voices outside, soft voices inside
5. We care for the people and equipment around us
6. Comforters and soft toys are only used at sleep time

We also encourage each group of children in the Dolphins to develop their own set of rules - this happens through discussion about what is considerate behaviour and the consequences of unfair behaviour.

**What to pack.**

1. A hat (hats should stay in lockers even on rainy days)
2. Spare clothes - please remember to label all clothing including shoes/hats.

Please note that our sun smart Cancer Council policy requires a hat at all times and clothing should offer protection as well (please no singlets or strappy tops). The centre provides SUNSCREEN and we encourage parents to apply this to their child on arrival, we will reapply during the day.

**Spinner and Speckled Dolphins.** The Dolphins are divided into two groups, which we separate into for various parts of our program to ensure experiences are developmentally appropriate, for example, lunchtime, music classes, excursions and experiences that may relate to a particular age. The children learn quickly what group they are in through a number of fun experiences during the first few weeks, being either:

**Spinner Dolphins** - the younger Dolphins (3-4 years)

**Speckled Dolphins**- our older group/children attending school the following year (4-5 years)

If there are children on the border line between attending school either next year or the following. These children will be grouped with the Spinners. During the year the staff will be discussing the development of these children with their parents, and if suitable, some children may transition to the older group.

At the same time, some years there can be large numbers of Spinners so we may discuss placing your child with the Speckled group if it is agreed they will be able to manage the routine.

**Projects.** Part of our preschool program each year is ongoing projects with the children. These are based on the children's interests and needs, for example, dinosaurs, planets, insects etc. Projects are displayed around the room for parents, staff and visitors to view.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As well as excursions, we provide regular entertainers at the Centre as this allows all the Centre children to participate. Parents who are free are invited to attend. Examples of these are as follows:

- . Music concerts at Balmain Leagues Club
- . Tell Tales Production.... Dental Health Visitor
- . Fire engine/Police or Ambulance
- . Living Eggs Chicken Hatching
- . Parents with special performance skills
- . African Show....Spanish Show....Swag of Instruments...
- . Fred Reid Aboriginal Performer
- . Pyjama Day, Sports Day and more...

**Visiting Parents.** Can you play an instrument, speak a foreign language, cook a meal from another culture, sew, tell stories, or enjoy helping out sometimes? If so, please tell a carer. We will all appreciate your generosity in sharing your skills and talents with the children.

**Bus Excursions.** Getting out and about, away from the centre is an important avenue for extending our program. These trips vary as they are based on the children's current interest. The council provides the centre with a bus and a driver, three times a year and is shared with the grasshoppers. The times vary between 9am and 2pm, there is a small fee depending on where we are going. Dates will be notified during the year. As well as assisting the staff with supervision on the day, parents input and ideas always add to these experiences.

**Show and Tell.** This is held on the first full week of every month starting in March. Each child has an allocated day to present news to the group. The months alternate between 'show' and 'tell'. During 'show', children can bring in something, such as a photo, a special toy or basically anything they would like to share. During 'tell', we ask that you help your child select something to talk about - maybe a recent holiday or special event - and help them by jotting down a few points that we can use to prompt your child (Photos are ok as well). Please refer to the back of the handout for your child's allocated day.

## PROGRAMMING

Each of the trained staff have a group of focus children which they observe and develop programs for. At the start of the year you will be informed who your child's focus carer is. At the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of each year, focus carers compile a developmental profile of your child. This is done by observing each developmental area and filling out a 'Developmental Summary' thoroughly outlining all developmental areas. Through this, short and long term goals are set. Your help is invaluable at every step of the planning process, as your knowledge and observations compliment and add to our awareness of your child.

Each focus carer records observations for their group of focus children, which may consist of photography, written records of children's play and conversations, participation in routines and group experiences, and drawing/art & craft samples. These are kept in a portfolio, which is an important record of each child's progress. We encourage children and families, to have input and ownership of the portfolio- this may occur through borrowing the folio for a few nights, and adding information from home. The observations gathered are used as the basis for planning, and are discussed with other members of the Dolphin team. Strategies are then devised to achieve the goals set.

Each trained carer concentrates on two to four children a week, and plans for their developmental needs and interests, develops ways of extending their intellectual, language, social, emotional and all other skills and achieving the goals. You will notice your child's name/friendship groups appearing on the program beside experiences planned specifically for them, around once per month. The program is then evaluated both in light of the outcomes for the particular focus children and in relation to the group as a whole. An overall evaluation of the day is written up in the daily journal, which is displayed on the sign-in area.

Each year we invite you to hold a discussion with your child's primary carer so that we can plan the way forward together. A notice will be put up, and you will be asked to chose a convenient time for these discussions. During August/September we have a School Information night, where we invite local school to attend and present a speach to the parents about their schools. This will give you a start on what the schools offer, helping you to decide on a school for your child.

## OUR PROGRAM

The Dolphin teachers believe that:

“children are capable, powerful and resourceful and when they are empowered it allows them to engage in meaningful play, become confident and in control of their bodies, develop strategies for exploration, thinking and reasoning as well as create working theories to make sense of the natural, social, physical and material world we live in.”

(NSW Curriculum Framework)

Our program reflects aspects of different approaches that are recommended as a result of the latest research on child development. We believe that by combining aspects of the Emergent Curriculum, The Reggio Emilia approach and the Curriculum Framework that we provide a rich and broad approach focussing on the individual.

The Emergent Curriculum focuses on potential curriculum and documenting what happens rather than on preplanned experiences. This means that the planning is shared with the learners. It is based on the real life connections children make as they explore and react to the world around them. The children's interests, passions and questions are taken seriously in this approach and together with the teachers they learn and investigate through researching books and the internet, through discussions, opinions and sharing viewpoints and then by webbing and documenting this process of learning.

The 'Reggio Emilia' approach is the basis of the Reggio philosophy, which originated in Italy, is a view of children as strong and capable learners, who learn not in isolation but in collaboration with each other. Teachers, while guiding and supporting children's knowledge and interests, actually are learners in the process as well. Families are instrumental in the philosophy and the exchange of information about children between parents and the centre is very important. In essence Reggio is about relationships and valuing the different perspectives children and families bring to the centre. An aesthetic environment is also an important part of any Reggio inspired program, and the focus is on making the children's areas inviting, home-like and respectful towards children through the use of real-life equipment and careful display of children's work and conversations. Staff regularly document the children's discussions and activities through photography and written word and use these as a basis for further planning.

The Curriculum Framework combines contemporary and traditional ways of thinking about children” (NSW Curriculum Framework). It is a resource for children, families and teachers about the rationale, 'WHY' for practice. It encourages new possibilities for thinking and action, encourages professionals to think creatively and innovatively and empower themselves to reflect and move forward with change. We believe that the learning of a child can not be seen as in separate “subjects” when programming, but more importantly as the “whole child” who is “an active contributor and constructor of his or her own learning...as they learn in all contexts, flowing in and out of all the areas of learning, as they explore their environment” (NSW Curriculum Framework).

## The philosophy behind the DOLPHINS' PROGRAM FOR 2009

We believe very strongly in the principles of preschool education as set out in the NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services, and we are also guided by National Child Care Accreditation System principles and the DOCS Children's Services Regulation Act.

We believe:

- \* that the education of the whole child should always be considered; that each child be given opportunities to develop:
  - physically
  - socially
  - emotionally
  - creatively
  - intellectually
  - in language and communication skills
- \* that the curriculum should grow from the needs and interest of the children in the class, individually and as a group.
- \* that play is the single most important medium for learning for the young child.
- \* that children have a right to be happy at school.
- \* that the teacher is a facilitator, not an imposer of learning.
- \* that all children should be given equal opportunities for learning regardless of sex, race or cultural background.
- \* that parents have a major role to play in their child's development. Therefore good communication with parents is an important aspect of the role of a Dolphins teacher.
- \* that it is important to develop a sense of community through staff-parent relationships to work as a team.

## IN ORDER TO ENACT THIS PHILOSOPHY,

### WE ENDEAVOUR:-

(1) To make available a wide variety of play experiences to suit the age and ability levels of the children, including:-

- \* Social and Dramatic Play to enhance communication and self esteem.
- \* Art Experiences to enhance creativity and imagination
- \* Play experiences including construction to enhance cognitive and perceptual abilities
- \* Play experiences to enhance fine and gross motor skills

(2) To present elementary science and maths experiences as play experiences with opportunities to experiment on an individual/small group basis.

(3) To provide varied experiences in music through:

- \* Movement and Dance
- \* Singing
- \* Playing and Role Play
- \* Listening

(4) To provide a program of language development:

- \* through play
- \* through planned activities
- \* through interaction with peers and teachers

(5) To promote emotional well being and develop social skills through incidental and planned play activities which will:

- \* foster a positive self concept
- \* develop a respect for the rights, beliefs and customs of others
- \* encourage self discipline
- \* develop positive attitudes towards the body, nutrition and healthy habits.
- \* foster the ability to work co-operatively with others.
- \* encourage respect for self, family, school and community.

(6) To enable the child to begin to describe, conceptualise and reason by providing many opportunities to explore and discover.

(7) To allow the children many opportunities for self expression through a wide variety of creative activities where they are encouraged to use materials in their own way.

- (8) To be flexible in order to best provide for the needs of children, parents and staff. We need to be aware of each other's anxieties, ambitions, inhibitions and values.
- (9) To encourage children to enjoy themselves and realise that school is a fun place to be

### Other AIMS OF THE DOLPHINS' PROGRAM for 2009

To provide opportunities to lay the foundation for a rich and satisfying life:

- \* by providing a balanced, happy, secure environment which will contribute to the emotional, cognitive, physical, creative and social development of the children.
- \* by using stimuli which will suit children individually and help each develop at his or her own rate.

To provide a happy environment which first gives security to the children in the group and then promotes growth in all areas of development; one which provides for a particular age range as well as for the needs and capacities of individual children.

To continue developing an innovative program influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach through:

- further developing the aesthetics of the environment and promoting a home-like atmosphere.
- enhancing the program with more project & small-group based work and documenting meaningfully with photos and notes, displaying children's work and conversations.
- ensuring continuity and extension by following up on projects and experiences that interest groups of children.
- evaluating our progress on all goals mid-year and discussing programming issues as a team on a regular basis.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF the DOLPHINS PROGRAM

- \* To help children become independent and to develop self confidence.
- \* To increase self esteem by providing opportunities where the children will experience success.
- \* To enhance children's ability to express themselves creatively.
- \* To enhance children's ability to think, reason and solve problems.
- \* To help children to express themselves clearly verbally.
- \* To develop fine and gross motor skills to their full potential.
- \* To help children become aware of themselves physically and emotionally.
- \* To enable children to be individuals within the community of the centre.
- \* To allow children to accept some responsibility for themselves.
- \* To include parent participation in the Dolphins room for the benefit of children, parents and staff.
- \* To be aware of new approaches and ideas in education.
- \* To maintain good staff communication and co-operation. The centre needs to be a community of children and adults working in co-operation to provide a rich and stimulating environment.
- \* To further develop and extend our anti-bias curriculum.

# SCHOOL READINESS

## What is School Readiness?

School readiness refers to:

- the aspects of skill and development and maturity that are viewed as optimal for a child to possess before commencing school
- is how we prepare our children for their transition to school.

In more traditional times this was thought to be solely about educating the children about the alphabet, numerals, writing their names and cutting around shapes.

Today school readiness has a different outlook. We provide self confidence, security, familiarity and knowledge. It is about a child learning through play and having the opportunity to choose experiences and materials they wish to participate with. We want the children to have a passion for learning not to feel forced to learn. Through this they gain an enjoyment in exploring, investigating problem solving and interacting with others (Mielekamp.R, 2008)

The moment your child is born they begin the journey to school through their life experiences and then the moment your child is enrolled in our Centre we start to teach and build upon many of the skills which will equip him or her for a happy time at school. It is not possible for anyone to learn these requirements in the last few months before school, as it is a long term and ongoing process and requires consistent emphasis over some years.

We are aware of the importance of academic preparation yet there are other factors that children are often overwhelmed with when starting school. In the Dolphins we work together with the children, families and staff in making this transition for both Spinner and Speckleds smoother. Examples of these are:

- teacher ratio, 1teacher: 4teachers
- toileting, independence: guided and supported
- familiar faces, many new children of different ages: long term friends
- structure, sitting at a desk: freedom of choice and learning through play
- rules, small groups: large groups & putting up your hand to talk
- listening & following instructions, again 1 teacher: 4 teacher, being patient
- the school bell: dolphins warning times, tamborine, tamball
- the playground, a large space shared with older children: 3-5's Dolphin playground
- bullying, learning communication and negotiation skills

Some of the most important factors associated with a successful start and continued learning in school can be related to a child's social and emotional maturity. Examples of maturity that are promoted are:

- being able to separate from parent/caregiver when dropped off at the early childhood program without distress
- taking responsibility at a basic level for own possessions, like hanging paint smock

up after painting

- dealing at a basic level with conflict, not hitting out or hurting others when conflict or frustration occurs
- being able to talk with and respond to teacher
- showing an interest in peers although not necessarily close friendships with all
- following a few directions at a time without being distracted by others
- completing a task without needing lots of prompting from teacher
- making some decisions and initiating own play and work at the early childhood setting, without following the lead of others or needing lots of prompting from teachers

We believe that every child develops at their own unique pace and by forcing children to complete activities, learning then becomes a chore. Through our many approaches to the curriculum we promote school readiness in a fun and exciting way.

**Through the Emergent Curriculum we are working in partnership with the children by providing a choice to nurture their skills and interests and this enhances their development**

*(Sharing our Journey: School Readiness, Rachel Mielekamp)*

**Did you know what your child was learning today when he/she played in :**

- *Block building: develops creativity, balance, design, fine-motor skills, socialising, sharing, expressive language skills and construction skills.*
- *Home Corner: encourages self-help skills, leadership, sharing, independence, fine-motor skills, socialising, teamwork, imagination and expressive language skills.*
- *Computers: the use of encourages fine-motor skills, eye/hand co-ordination, patterning, sequencing, completing a task and teamwork.*
- *Book corner: develops fine-motor skills, literacy, expressive and receptive language skills and eye/hand co-ordination.*
- *The writing shelf: encourages pincer grip, colour recognition, representational drawing, cutting skills, name recognition, manipulation, fine-motor skills, expressive language skills and sharing.*
- *Playdough: furthers manipulation, fine-motor skills, creativity, cutting, design, expressive language skills and planning.*
- *Outdoor play: encourages gross motor skills, teamwork, climbing, organising, leadership, exploration and expressive language skills.*
- *Group experiences: encourage participation, expressive and receptive language skills, turntaking, concentration, listening, decision making and questioning skills.*

**WE BELIEVE THAT: children's work is their play.**

When they play they touch, feel, think, interact, decide, express, discuss, interpret, wonder, create trial & error. By extending on the children's interest they are more likely to take their play to the next level and question more within the environment. Children then feel passionate towards learning rather than pressured.

**Children Learn What They Live**

*If a child lives with criticism*

*He learns to condemn*

*If a child lives with hostility*

*He learns to fight*

*If a child lives with ridicule*

*He learns to be shy*

*If a child lives with jealousy*

*He learns to be patient*

*If a child lives with encouragement*

*He learns confidence*

*If a child lives with praise*

*He learns to appreciate*

*If a child lives with security*

*He learns to have faith*

*If a child lives with approval*

*He learns to like himself*

*If a child lives with acceptance and friendship*

*He learns to find love in the world.*

