



Largs North Kindy News

February 2015

Dear Kindy Families,

Welcome to 2015 everyone, we hope it is a terrific year for you and your children. The beginning of a new year is an exciting time for educators - an opportunity to put into place new ideas gleaned from holiday reading, new children and families to welcome to the centre, that is, welcome to our kindy family.

We have had a great start to the year—not many tears and the children seem very settled and engaged. During the first weeks of any term, we spend time with the children talking about the ways of 'being' at kindy that help to make it a safe and happy place to be in. The children are thinking hard about how to be great friends, how to care for our things and how to look after the kindy space.

Over the break there have been big things happening at our centre. The new swings went in just before we started back and are already proving to be very popular. We were very excited to take delivery of the furniture we had ordered last year and have enjoyed setting up the learning environment as an invitation for the children. Our 'Artists Studio' is starting to take shape under the veranda and we are excited by the opportunities this dedicated visual arts space will offer for the children.

The learning environment will evolve over the coming weeks and months to reflect the interests of the children, offer exciting learning opportunities and reveal the learning taking place within the program.

The Kindy Team

We welcome our new kindergarten teacher Simone Misso to our team. Simone has worked extensively in kindergartens and preschools across the state. Simone actually has a past connection with the centre, having attended here as a child herself.

We are also pleased to welcome Amy Treen to our team. Amy will be working on Mondays to support our program as an Early Childhood Worker.

As we have so many part-time staff at our centre we thought it might be helpful for families to have a day-by-day account of who is rostered on each day.

Monday – Dannielle, Simone, Josephine and Amy

Tuesday – Dannielle, Simone, Josephine, Cheryl

Wednesday – Simone, Louise, Josephine, Cheryl (Dannielle has administration time on Wednesdays)

Thursday – Louise, Dannielle, Josephine, Cheryl

Friday – Dannielle, Cheryl (alternate Fridays Louise and Simone)

DECD Change Team

As part of the 'Building a High Performing System' plan, DECD has identified 13 change priority areas. These cover structures, policies, processes and practices across the department. 'Change teams', composed of practising experts in their respective fields will examine each of these priorities and provide the Department with a series of recommendations to improve service delivery both internally and externally. Throughout the first half of this term Dannielle will be working off the floor as a member of the change team focussing on 'Governance and Delegated Authority'. This priority relates to decisions which can be made at a site level that impact directly on student outcomes, reducing the 'red tape' around many decisions and deciding those areas that a centralised decision making process is most appropriate.

Dannielle will be at the kindy as much as possible but will need to attend meetings related to formulating proposals for the state wide changes needed in this area. Connie Cowling will replace her for the teaching component of the director's role, supporting Louise, Simone and the team.

What Does Happen At Kindy?

It may be of interest to you to know how our day runs. Below is a brief outline of our daily happenings. On arrival the children are encouraged to unpack their own bag, putting their lunchbox into the fridge. They then put their bags into a locker in the foyer.

Signing In - This year we are sending a strong message to our children, families and visitors that this is a place where literacy is very important. One of the most visible ways is our new 'sign in' sheets, which encourage children to write their own names. It has been wonderful to see the children signing their names each morning, and to see the different stages of 'mark making' that is evident.

If your child is not yet writing their own name, it is a significant achievement for them to even be recognising their own name amongst all of the others. Encourage them to attempt the first letter as a start.

You are most welcome to stay to do a puzzle, play with the dough, read a book with your child or chat with other parents and caregivers.

Gathering Time – We have an informal sharing and discussion time at the beginning of each session.

Inside/Outside Play – Children are encouraged to choose where they would like to play, both indoors and outdoors.

Inside Discovery – Hands on learning with an emphasis on developing our fine motor skills (using our hands and developing hand-eye coordination), creativity, problem-solving, literacy and numeracy.

Outside Discovery – An opportunity to develop our gross motor skills (using the big muscles in our bodies) through hands on learning.

Snack – Children are encouraged to recognise their own hunger and have a snack as they need.

Group Time – A literacy focussed time which ends with a shared story.

Our program is a play based one. Children of kindy age learn best through play, exploring their environment and the materials offered in their own way, at their own pace.

Learning Projects

Our program is based on the Early Years Learning Framework, with a focus on intentional teaching through Project Work. The children and teachers work alongside each other, learning together as each project develops over the course of a term.

What is a Project?

A project is an extended in-depth study of a real world topic that is worth knowing more about. It involves inquiry based learning.

Project work gives children:

- the opportunity for self-initiated learning, opportunity to really get into something and to investigate what appeals to them,
- to learn from resources like books, the internet and adults,
- to plan something, work the plan, struggle, fail and fix it thus encouraging perseverance,
- to work in small groups as a team on something that they care about,
- to build self images based on confidence in themselves as learners and the ability to overcome challenges,
- to see reading, writing, measuring, counting, adding and subtracting as skills they value.

This term our project is based on the concepts of 'Belonging and Identity'. We will be exploring big ideas about who we are, what we have in common and our differences, communities we belong to and our families.

As our project develops we will be documenting our learning, thinking and conversations throughout the kindergarten, please remember to 'read the walls'.

Family Night

Each term we invite you to come and celebrate our learning. We will share the work we have developed in our project. This term we will be holding our Family Night on **Monday, 16th March** from 5:30p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Please add this date to your calendar and join us as we celebrate the children's learning for the term, have a play and enjoy a meal together.

Families are asked to bring a plate of food to share.

Governing Council Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of our Governing Council will be held on **Thursday, 19th February** at 6:00 p.m. The Governing Council ensures that parents, families and the community contribute to the decision making and running of the Kindergarten. We encourage you to consider joining the Governing Council, which meets twice a term, to share your ideas and perspectives to enhance the short and long-term goals of our centre.

The AGM will be followed by the first meeting of the 2015 Governing Council immediately afterwards.

Parking

A reminder to families that the area directly in front of the Kindy is a designated 'No Parking' zone. We have had a complaint from a watchful neighbour and would feel dreadful if a family was fined for parking in this area.

Nut Aware Kindergarten

Thank you to our families for the huge effort you have put into ensuring the children's lunch boxes contain foods without nuts or traces of nuts. This year we have two children with severe nut allergies requiring the use of an EpiPen should they come into contact with nuts or nut products. We will be doing everything possible to ensure our centre is as nut free as possible and thank you for your continued support in keeping all of the children in the centre healthy and safe.

Contact Details

Please ensure your contact details are updated on your child's file throughout the year.

We are keen to trial emailing newsletters and learning stories to families in addition to the hard copies that sometimes get left behind in the children's name pockets. Please provide the staff with your current email address to ensure you don't miss out on important information.

The email address for the kindergarten is dl.5628.leaders@schools.sa.edu.au

Things to Remember

- ❖ Please make sure your child's things are labelled, e.g. hats, drink bottles, clothes, etc.
- ❖ Ensure there is a change of clothes in your child's bag. Children get distracted when they are busy and sometimes have accidents.
- ❖ Apply sunscreen before arriving at Kindy (we will reapply at lunchtime for full-dayers).

Family Discussions

The teaching team will be approaching families to organise a time in the middle of term to discuss your child's transition into the centre and for you to share your expertise about your child. We encourage families to take this opportunity to share the strengths and the things you notice about your child in the home environment. It gives us valuable insight to build a more holistic view of your child.

Grandparents are most welcome to come along to the interviews, or even arrange one for themselves, as their perspectives are very important to us also. Often grandparents these days care for their grandchildren (or great-grandchildren) and we feel it is important to give them a voice within our research and reporting process.

School Dental Service

A children's dental benefits schedule for 2-17 year olds started in January 2014. It is called the Child Dental Benefit Schedule.

The School Dental Service is a Child Dental Benefits Schedule provider and welcomes babies, children and young people under 18 years. Dental care is FREE for most children and the School Dental Service will bulk-bill Medicare. Our local School Dental Service is at Le Fevre Primary School.

Children who do not qualify for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule can still attend but a small fee may apply for each course of general dental care provided.

To find out more about the Child Dental Benefits Schedule visit the website at www.sadental.sa.gov.au

We hope this newsletter finds you all well and settling into the routines of the 'school' year. Please don't hesitate to ask the staff team if you have any queries or concerns.

Dannielle, Cheryl, Louise, Simone, Josephine and Amy