

Information Booklet



Koluka Preschool-Moama Public School

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Koluka Preschool wishes to acknowledge the Aboriginal people of this land on which our preschool is built. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging and the Elders from other communities who may live here today.





Welcome to Koluka Preschool

Welcome to preschool. What an exciting time for you and your preschool child!

Our preschool classes are staffed by two permanent part-time personnel:

Teacher - Tracey Gray

Aboriginal Education Officer - Sarah Thomas

Attending preschool is an opportunity for children to experience a range of activities that will enhance and facilitate their development, create enthusiasm for learning, and foster a sense of enquiry about the world in which they live.

We are privileged to be a part of this important phase and look forward to working together to provide the highest quality care and education for your children.

This handbook provides some information about your Preschool and the importance it has in the development of your child. Please refer to it from time to time and do not hesitate to contact your child's teachers or the school principal if you have any comments or queries.

I know your child will benefit from the wonderful learning environment offered at the Moama Preschool. We look forward to welcoming you and working together to provide the best possible start for the beginning of your child's formal education journey.

Scott McKenzie
Principal



Contextual Influences

Koluka Preschool is situated in the grounds of Moama Public School.

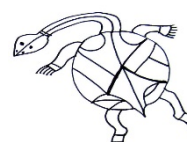
Aboriginal students are given priority to ensure equal access to early learning. This brings an enriched cultural focus to our preschool community. 18 hours of preschool is delivered over 3 full days. Koluka Preschool is supported by the NSW DoE and provides a play-based curriculum focussed on the learning outcomes, principles and practices of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Therefore, strict guidelines regarding the enrolments are as follows:

- 1 Preference is given to Aboriginal students.
- 2 Non-Aboriginal students attending our school with siblings in our school are next given preference.
- 3 Open to the community.

Input into Philosophy Development- Preschool Educators, Families, Principal and School Community.

Last Reviewed: 17.7.2020



Our Preschool Philosophy

Koluka Preschool offers an open ended, innovative play based educational program that encourages children to be active lifelong learners. We understand the importance of allowing the children the time, the age appropriate materials and resources to extend on their previous knowledge to develop new more complex thinking. We give the children the space to focus on their play, role model behaviours to engage, encourage and to extend their ideas and challenge their learning.

We promote each child's individual development, self-esteem, teach social and communication skills in a supportive and secure environment that facilitates the children's natural curiosity and their desire to learn. We inspire to build positive respectful relationships with both the children and families and believe that children are unique individuals that have a voice, are capable, resourceful and can contribute to their own learning.

We have wonderful dedicated professionals with extensive knowledge, experience and various skills in early childhood development which enriches each child's preschool experience. As early childhood educators, we are committed to and guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) curriculum. The framework assists us in how we deliver and support our children's play base learning.

We value parents as partners in the education of their children and respect the diverse range of cultures families bring to the preschool. We believe that family involvement in the program is essential and that building strong partnerships between families, educators and the school community can directly impact and improve learning outcomes for children.

We believe and value the importance of sustaining and embedding Aboriginal culture in our program and follow the 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning Framework. We believe it is important to have connections with Aboriginal elders, families and the wider community of which we are apart.



Story Sharing



Learning Maps



Non-Verbal



Symbols & Images



Land Links



Non-Linear



Deconstruct/Reconstruct



Community Links

Goals of Early Childhood Education

Koluka Preschool is a Centre that 'encourages children to acquire knowledge about the world in which they live, through playful interactions with objects and people' (Bredkeamp 1990).

Early Childhood Educators are more like guides or facilitators (Forman and Kuschner 1983) for the children. They prepare the environment to provide simulating challenges, materials and activities for the children.

Through observation, teachers are able to build on what children already know and pose additional challenges accordingly (Bredekamp 1990)

We welcome you to our preschool whereby we promote a warm and caring environment. We want children and families to feel safe and valued as individuals.

We believe we are building a good foundation for their education; they are learning skills through play.

Children bring with them many strengths, capabilities and abilities to express themselves. Opportunities will be provided to enable them to develop, grow and learn at their own pace, using their individual interests, strengths, needs and backgrounds. When children learn through their interests, learning becomes much more meaningful to them and therefore they gain a better understanding of ideas, concepts, their environment, society, people and life. We encourage parents to show an interest and become excited through seeing their children's ideas and suggestion being valued.

Children will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through thinking, imagining, observing, investigating, questioning, reasoning and experimenting through the day as they learn routines, experience a variety of creative, vigorous, quiet activities and opportunities to dramatise real situations.



The Value of Play

The value of play experiences is endless and promotes children to:

- Become physically adept with eye-hand coordination and development of small and large muscles
- Familiarise students with the complexities of language
- Stimulate curiosity and creativity
- Extend thinking, concentration and communication skills
- Establish social skills such as turn taking, sharing, rehearsing life, taking risks and building self-esteem
- Provide opportunities for legitimate messy play.

Because we value the early childhood years, our program will be child focused, flexible and play based. A variety of rich, open-ended experiences that respect the cultural diversity of our community will be available, enabling children to be active participants in the learning process and teachers to constructively reflect the curriculum and foster meaningful, caring relationships among staff, children, families, and the community.



Preschool Session Times

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
9:05am - 3:05pm Preschool	9:05am - 3.05pm Preschool	9:05am - 3:05pm Preschool

Dates of Operation: School Terms Only (VIC)

Teacher: Tracey Gray

Educators: Sarah Thomas

Phone: 0354821564

- Preschool classes will operate as per Victorian school terms and public holidays.
- Classes will have a maximum enrolment of 20 students.
- All children must turn 4 years old by July 31st in the year they attend preschool.

Fees

From the start of 2012 the full daily fee for the preschool has been set at \$20 a day by the NSW State Government. There are concessions for Aboriginal students and low-income families.

Under the policy fee relief is available and should you wish to discuss your family's situation, it is important that you make the time to contact the Principal about any concerns you may have about your eligibility for fee relief, so that an appropriate fee can be arranged for your child's attendance at preschool. Invoices will be sent out in the second week of each term and payments are required fortnightly. Payments can be paid at the office by cash, cheque or eftpos.

Enrolment Form

Parents will be requested to complete a Preschool Enrolment form asking for relevant child information and details of custody orders, immunisation records, food allergies and emergency contacts. It is a legal requirement that this form be completed prior to the child commencing preschool.

The Major Aims of the Preschool Program

The major aims of the Preschool Program are as follows:

- To provide a curriculum for children which is relevant and challenging, which promotes their intellectual, social, emotional, physical and language development.
- To foster a respect for the rights and needs of others.
- To offer a range of learning opportunities so that children may acquire the skills and competencies necessary to participate successfully in a group.
- For each child to develop a positive attitude to learning.
- To consult children on issues that relate to them
- To provide flexible routines that promote spontaneity
- To plan for children through observation that focus on the whole child
- To provide experience that extend children's interests
- To provide opportunities for individual and group play
- To encourage family involvement in program planning
- To appreciate the family, community, linguistic and cultural background of all children
- To promote good relationships with families and the wider community
- To support a smooth transition to kindergarten at the Moama Public School

Our program aims to foster a love of learning and discovery and is planned and based on individual observations of each child and on the interests expressed by the children. Activities will be appropriate for the age and development level of the children for whom they have been planned. We accomplish this by following the children's interests and providing experiences that target their skill level. The staff also concentrates on developing listening skills (auditory, memory and processing and visual memory through memory games).

Friendships become an integral part of the program as children learn to share ideas and work co-operatively under the guidance of teachers. Language skills are enhanced by the dramatic play situations in which they become involved with their friends.



Fundamental Aspects of Preschool learning

What is the 'EYLF'?

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) adopts a comprehensive approach to children's learning and development. The EYLF guides early childhood professionals to work together with families in support of their children, embracing and responding to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the N.S.W and bordering Victorian community and diverse approaches to child rearing.

It recognises and respects Aboriginal cultures and their unique place in the heritage and future of N.S.W/Victoria. It celebrates the wealth of learning and experience that is available within local communities. It acknowledges that every child will take a unique path toward achieving the five Outcomes (Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning, and Communication), and that all children will require different levels of support, some requiring significantly more than others. The EYLF draws upon the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and seeks to recognise all children as rights holders and full members of society, capable of participating in their social worlds through their relationship with others. These rights, expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

All learning activities in the preschool have a purpose and are aimed at developing the whole child.

- Gross Motor (Large muscle development): climbing, jumping and balancing.
- Fine Motor (Fine muscle development): cutting, drawing and threading.
- Cognitive (Thinking): increasing knowledge in science, literature, developing concentration, problem solving and persistence.
- Social/Emotional: how to make friends, share and wait for a turn, follow rules, build confidence and self-esteem, cope with anger, cope with disappointment, look after equipment, accept responsibility for actions, experience success, develop independence.

These skills are developed through activities base on:

- Music/Movement.
- Language and Literacy.
- Numeracy.
- Drama.
- * Sensory Experience.
- * Art and Craft.
- * Science and Technology.
- * Society and our Environment.

Program & Individual Needs of Children

A program plan is located in the Preschool which outlines the programmed experiences your child will have the opportunity to participate in i.e. Songs, stories, both the indoor and outdoor activities and the learning outcomes we would like the children to develop.

Each child's individual needs and interests will be incorporated into the fortnightly program. Please provide feedback by writing in the program learning journal in the parent/guardian section on the program page.

The main areas included in the program may be:

- Individual/group observations and linking them to the learning outcomes.
- Creative works
- Children's interests
- Evaluations



Attendance Sheets Signing In and Out

We would like you to bring your child safely to and from the preschool.

All children need to be signed in at the beginning of the day and out at the end of the day. Times of arrival and departure must also be recorded.

The attendance sheets will be kept on the shelf at the entry foyer.

Whoever drops off or picks up your child needs to be listed on the enrolment form and sign on sheet.

The attendance sheet is a legal requirement and it is essential that these are kept up to date as these are used in case of fire drills, evacuations and lockdowns.

Access and Custody

The Principal must be notified in writing of any legal requirements concerning access to your child and, where applicable, a copy of any Court Orders and instructions from your legal advisor.

Comfortable Clothing

At preschool we will play with mud, sand, water and paint. We will be climbing as well as sitting on the floor, grounds or grass.

To enable your child to participate freely in these activities it is important they wear comfortable clothes suitable for play that are non-restrictive. Closed shoes are also safer and offer more protection for the various activities. **THONGS** are not appropriate at Preschool for an active running and climbing child. Please be mindful of our SunSmart policy- **NO SINGLET OR SHOESTRING STRAPS.**

Please apply sunscreen just prior to the start of the session and feel free to use the preschool's sunscreen (It is beside the learning journal book on the outside table).

Another consideration is your child's ability to undo clothes easily to go to the toilet independently.

(Preschool navy/Gold polo's & zip up tops can be purchased at Worklocker in Echuca). 130 Hare Street, Echuca. Ph: 5482 1822

See store for prices and Order form

What you need to provide each day

- A school bag (clearly labelled)
- A hat (clearly labelled)
- Morning snack - healthy nutrition is promoted
- Lunch - health nutrition/food
- An extra piece of fruit for afternoon tea
- Drink bottle (clearly labelled)
- Spare set of clothes (just in case)

Morning tea /Lunch & Afternoon tea Fruit Plater

Children will need to bring their own individual healthy snack etc. for morning teatime and their own lunch a sandwich, wrap, roll etc.



cheese sticks

Can parents please send an extra piece of fruit to share at afternoon tea shared fruit time.

Children can also order their lunch from the canteen menu, please be sure to write preschool on the bag with their order and money.

Communication with Parents

Communication with parents is achieved in a variety of ways; directly to parents, via the school newsletter, on the walls in the Preschool foyer or by appointment for a parent/Teacher conference. We also use an app called 'Private Group Facebook Page' to upload information to our families documenting the children's learning.

Parent & Community Committee (P&C)

A Parent and Community Committee govern the Koluka Preschool and school and are made up of parents who have children in attendance. Members of the committee are dedicated in offering support and input into the Preschool Program.

Parent Support & Participation

Parents are welcome anytime and we encourage their involvement in the preschool activities.

Parents are their child's first teacher thereby any involvement strengthens the bond between family, preschool and the child's positive development.

It is not up to us to tell parents how, when or where they should be involved but more to discover parent and family needs and suggest ways families may choose to become involved and support the preschool at times which are suitable to them.

Some ways which parents and families can become actively involved are;

- * Sharing information and communication regularly
- * Participating in the program
- * Assisting with excursions
- * Sharing your special skills and talents
- * Joining preschool and school committees
- * Attending social events
- * Being a volunteer help when asked or required

Volunteer Helpers

Volunteer helpers are required to sign a 'prohibited employment' declaration. Benefits of being a helper are:

- Greater understanding about the preschool.
- Getting to know staff and other children and allowing us to get to know you.
- Children love having special days with mum, dad or grandparents as helpers.

The Orientation Process - Settling in at the Start of the Year

The beginning of the year can be an anxious time for both parents and children. Every child reacts differently, some settle quickly while others need more time to adjust. Some suggestions to help you and your child:

- Show a confident and happy face - even if you feel anxious - and your child will feel confident too
- When leaving, be positive, smile, say goodbye and go quickly
- Reassure your child that you will be returning
- Never slip away - advise staff when you are leaving, so extra cuddles, support and reassurance is available if necessary.
- If you are concerned please ring us through the day. If your child is really distressed we will ring you or your contact person.
- During the year if your circumstances change, e.g. birth in the family, death in family, parent separation etc. please let us know. These circumstances can have an effect on your child's well-being and behaviour
- We promote independence and doing things for yourself. Initially we will need to work together, both parents and staff, to support and remind children about arrival routines and knowing that these are their responsibility.

Please ring the school office for next year's orientation days. (Varies year to year)

Transitional Information.

As part of Moama Public School, we are able to forge links in many areas of school life. As well as offering a highly successful, formal Transition Program in Term 4, some of these special links include:

- Participation in social and cultural gatherings on special days e.g. school fete, Reconciliation Week, N.A.I.D.O.C Week etc.
- Inclusion in special visits to the school from visiting Educational and Entertainment groups.
- Participation in school assemblies.

Rest/Quiet Time

Provisions are made to enable children to have quiet time for a rest. Your child is not required to sleep but will be encouraged to rest and relax. Activities promoted during this time may be relaxation music, individual books, slow movements, listening to recorded stories.

School Readiness for the Preschool Child

Staff are committed to helping children and families experience a positive and smooth transition from home to preschool and then to kindergarten at Moama Public School.

We will:

- Be flexible and responsive to local needs
- Provide experiences, information and resources to children and families about school and community
- Promote a positive attitude to learning and self-reliance
- Work collaboratively with school, preschool, parents and the community to promote positive relationships
- Support children and families with special needs into the school environment through links and referrals to appropriate professionals, facilities and services

Fire/Evacuation Drills

An evacuation procedure is displayed at Preschool. Staff and children practice evacuations and lockdown drills regularly.

Excursions and Special Visits

Excursions are a valuable component of the preschool environment.

- * They allow opportunities to broaden your child's experiences of the wider community.
- * Will be conducted according to Departmental regulations.
- * Written permission is required from parents/carers for all excursions outside the school grounds.
- * Support is needed from parent helpers to maintain adult: child ratios



Celebrations

As our philosophy is child-centred, we will celebrate things that children feel are important and that have meaning to them as individuals.

Some things we might celebrate are;

- Birthdays
- Mother's & Father's Day
- Relevant cultural events
- Pets
- Easter
- Christmas



Please let us know if there is anything worthy of celebration in your family.

A celebration may not always mean a party, but we will celebrate what is important to the children in other ways.

How do we celebrate Birthdays?



We love to celebrate birthdays with our preschool friends. If you like, you may bring in cupcakes (cupcakes are an easier option to hand out than having to divide a cake into many pieces), or perhaps you'd like to bring chocolate frogs, individual jellies or another idea. In keeping with our healthy snack policy, we do discuss these treats with the children, talking about how they are sometime foods, eaten for a special reason. We use our non-edible preschool cake for the blowing out of the candles the children refer to this as our 'fake cake'. (just so that we don't have any spit particles on the real cakes we'd like to eat!) For those children with allergies we ask the parents to provide cakes / treats which we will label and keep frozen at the preschool. Please make arrangements with the Preschool teacher prior to the day.

Special Occasions

The year is full of festive occasions. Parents are invited to join us for some of these, while others we celebrate within our program. These include:

- Easter Hat Parade.
- Book Week.
- Special School Performances.
- Special Assemblies.

Pets and Special Interest

Bringing pets or items of special interest into the preschool is encouraged but we would appreciate discussion with staff regarding this beforehand. It is important we ensure the safety and well-being of all children and respect their fears and phobias.

Fostering a Respectful and Supportive Environment

The aim of Welfare is to foster a co-operative, positive and supportive environment in which children feel safe. We aim to create an atmosphere of care and respect to foster positive self-esteem and a sense of belonging to the school community. This is achieved through modeling and discussion of friendly appropriate behaviours in our programming. The foundations for children to become independent learners and thinkers begin at this stage.

Children who display unacceptable behaviour will be redirected to a more constructive activity. They will be guided towards acceptable behaviour and will be given a clear example of how conflicts can be resolved.

Children are encouraged to use language to resolve confrontations. All conversations with children are affirmative. Encouraging terminology builds self-confidence and enables the child to learn and behave in a co-operative manner.

Parents will be consulted if the intervention of the School Counselor should be required. At the Preschool level, we aim to work in partnership with parents in formulating strategies for individual children.





Sick Children, Illness and Absence:

If children are unwell, please do not send them to preschool. Your child is best at home, resting and recuperating. Some parents bring children to preschool when they know they are not well but say the child has insisted upon coming. In this situation, we ask you to be firm, as the parent or care givers, in telling the child that it is not fair to the other children to risk spreading the illness. Preschool requires a lot of energy and participation which children who are 'off colour' are unable to give. Children with a temperature must not come to preschool.

Please notify staff if your child is expected to be absent for more than two days and if they have contracted an infectious disease. For health reasons, certain childhood diseases have prescribed exclusion times.

Unfortunately, we cannot avoid illness entirely, but we do ask if your child is unwell, please consider the health and wellbeing of other children, families and staff and keep them at home until they have fully recovered.

Medication:

If your child requires medication while attending preschool, you are required to enter in the Medication Book details of administration and dosage. Give the staff the medication in the original, clearly labelled container.

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATION IN YOUR CHILD'S BAG

Children may be given medication at preschool if:

1. Medication prescribed by a medical practitioner is in a container, labelled by the Pharmacy with the child's name, medication name; dosage required and times to be administered.
2. Parents/guardians must fill in the relevant details in the Preschool's Medication Book.

Children with asthma, epilepsy, anaphylaxis or other diagnosed medical condition must supply the preschool with a Management Plan/Communication and Risk plan signed by the parents and the child's doctor, and provide the child's own medication, labelled by the Pharmacy with the child's name, medication name, dosage required.

Medical Conditions, Asthma and Allergies

Does my child need an Action Plan?

Each child attending with a diagnosed medical condition, Asthma, Allergies or Anaphylaxis or any other life-threatening illness, must have a completed and current (less than 12 months old) medical action plan, Asthma management or Anaphylaxis plan prior to commencement. This plan must be completed and signed by the child's Doctor, outlining what action needs to be taken in the event of your child having an attack or a reaction. All staff at the centre is trained in First Aid and is also Asthma and Anaphylaxis trained.

Children with food allergies:

If your child is on a special diet, or is unable to eat certain foods or additives, please ensure that you supply the preschool with appropriate food for your child. Please supply a small airtight container clearly labelled with your child's name for these 'treats' to be kept or frozen at preschool to have on special occasions such as birthdays and cooking experiences.



Koluka Preschool would like to discourage Nut and Nut products in our service due to
Severe Allergic Reactions

Anaphylaxis



Procedures for the Bushfire Season

The way preschools and child care centres in VIC/N.S.W respond to bushfires has been revised.

New fire danger ratings and warnings have been introduced in N.S.W to provide clear direction on the safest options for preserving life.

Children's services - and schools - identified as being at highest fire risk will be closed on days declared by fire authorities to be Code Red.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to three days' notice of a planned closure. We will contact you directly by notice and/or SMS with advice on planned closures and will confirm the decision to close by 12 noon the day before the planned closure.

Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child.

No staff will remain on site when the facility is closed by the risk of fire. On days such as these, families are encouraged to enact their Bushfire Survival Plan.

For those of us living in a bushfire prone area, when Code Red days are forecast, the safest option is to leave the night before, or early in the morning of the Code Red day.

On all days of high fire risk, children should never be left at home in the care of older children.

As part of preparing our facility for the threat of fire, we have completed the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's self-assessment of our emergency preparedness. We have also updated our emergency management plan.

What can parents do?

Make sure your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements in the event that our facility is closed. Make sure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters, and by talking to your child's teacher or any other member of our staff.

Most importantly at this time of year, if you're planning a holiday or short stay in the bush or in a coastal area, you should check warnings in advance of travel and remain vigilant during your stay. If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan.



Some informative, helpful website:

www.education.nsw.gov.au

www.munchandmove.com.au

www.kidsmatter.edu.au

www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.mindmatters.edu.au

www.dadvise.org.au

www.healthyfamilies.org.au

www.betterhealth.nsw.gov.au

www.familyviolenceservices.com.au

www.napcan.org.au

www.heartlychildren.org

www.kidsafe.com.au

Gateway Health ~ Positive Parenting Telephone service 1800 880 660

RESCUS4KIDS have developed a free online learning e-learning for parents. This is a great initiative that can be accessed by anyone. You can find it at: www.cprtrainingforparents.org.au