

PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET





Tuggeranong Link
Community Houses and Centres

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The Tuggeranong Link ("LINK") is a grass roots community organisation that works with the people of the Tuggeranong Valley and other local community organisations to meet current needs in your community.

The LINK supports the development of low cost, accessible, programs & activities at our houses and centres in Gilmore, Richardson, Chisholm, Isabella Plains and Bonython.

One of our main Programs is Playschool. Tuggeranong Link is the licensed proprietor of our playschool program. For your reference on display at each centre is our current licence, public liability, attending staff and their qualifications. Policy and Procedures and standards.

Our Community Houses are managed by voluntary committee members, drawn from users, program managers and the local community. Your input is always welcome, and we encourage parents to join our committee.

1. Playschool Aim

The aim of the Playschool is to create and maintain a warm, co-operative atmosphere where staff, children and parents are engaged in developing the abilities and skills of the children, through a play based programme.

The planned programme will support the development and learning of all the children by means of participation, exploration and experimentation to build on their:

- Self-confidence, a feeling of achievement and self worth.
- Positive interpersonal relationships.
- Independence.
- An acceptance of group rules.
- Development of fine and gross motor skills.
- Self-expression through speech, movement, music and art.
- An eagerness for new experiences.

Teachers will share their planning with families via visual display, newsletters and meetings.

Opportunities will be made available for staff and families to collaborate in presenting aspects of the programme.

1.1 Playschool Staffing

At Playschool, any one group will have a maximum of between 15-18 children. A teacher and assistant will supervise each group. Teachers will have a minimum qualification of a Diploma in Children's Services, a Senior First Aid Certificate and Epipen training. The assistant supports the teacher in the implementation of the programme and the day to day running of the Playschool, they will hold or will be working towards a CERT3 in Children services. All staff and relief staff have a current Working with Vulnerable People Card. To ensure continued high quality and professional standards are offered to our families; our staff attend regular workshops and training sessions to maintain and improve their skills.

In the event of one of our staff being unable to work their session; we endeavour to utilise Playschool staff from one of our other Playschools. If outside relief staff is required we ensure that they have all the required qualifications and a current Working with Vulnerable People Card.

Playschool Staff are responsible for:

- Programs for all enrolled children.
- The day-to-day running of the Playschool.
- Working with parents to ensure the best possible environment for the children.
- Reporting to governing authorities.
- Mandatory reporting

2. Licensing

ACT Playschools are licensed by **The ACT Regulatory Authority – Children’s Education and Care Assurance – Education Directorate**

This directorate sets strict standards based on the Children and Young People’s Act 2009 to which all

Playschools must adhere. These include standards regarding staffing levels and qualifications, administrative procedures, health and safety measures, the physical environment and programmed activities for the children.

This regulatory body has set our maximum number of children at 15-18 per class. We are only licensed for children from 3 years of age. We can only accept children 2 weeks prior to their 3rd birthday and only on the condition that an adult remains on the premises at all times with the child.

These standards, licencing and Policy & Procedures are available for you at all times at the front counter.

3. Families and Playschool

3.1 Communication

Teachers appreciate the opportunity to talk to parents/carers both informally and in a formal situation. If you have any concerns please do not

hesitate to make an appointment to meet with the teacher.

Playschool newsletters will be distributed regularly. All of the Playschool's have a notice board, which will display the current programme and any other relevant material.

Please keep staff informed of any changes of address, telephone numbers, medical information and emergency contact numbers.

3.2 Involvement

Any way families can contribute to the life of the Playschool is welcomed. Ways in which you can help include:

- Sharing your knowledge and expertise of craft, cooking, music, story telling etc.
- Helping with the daily programme.
- Participating in Playschool meetings.
- Joining the Tuggeranong Link Committee

Staff will make every effort to share decision-making, problem solving and organising with parents. Contributions to the programme are always welcome, although the teacher may need to use her/his professional knowledge and consider any policies before the implementation of ideas.

4. Health and Safety

4.1 Leaving and collecting your child.

Children must not be left unsupervised at the gate, or in the grounds. All children are required to be escorted into the building where parents can ensure that the Playschool unit is operating normally.

For the safety of all children, please ensure all gates are securely closed when entering and exiting the Playschool. **Please do not allow other children to leave the building without their guardian.**

Parents/Carers are to sign their children in AND out of Playschool. Sign in sheets will be displayed in the foyer. This is extremely

important as these sign in sheets are used in the case of emergency evacuations and supporting documentation for insurance and licensing requirements. A time and signature is required.

Insurance matters preclude allowing children and parents into the Playschool room before the official starting time. As such, doors to the Playschool will not be opened until the scheduled starting time.

It is important that you are on time to collect your child, as staff are involved in preparation, programme planning and administrative tasks before and after sessions, and are not available to supervise children. Late fee charges will apply to cover the costs incurred by way of wages to staff.

PLEASE NOTE: If you arrange for another person to collect your child. Written authorisation is required, and staff must be notified, unless we have written permission from the parent, a child will not be released into the care of another person. An authorisation form is available for your use.

4.2 Toilet Training

Due to our facilities it is recommended children are toilet trained. Please remember a change of clothes. If this is of concern please speak to playschool staff.

4.3 Clothing/Sunsmart

Appropriate clothing that can be easily managed by your child is important in supporting them in acquiring the necessary independent self help skills. Items such as buttons, bows, belts, clasps and buckles are difficult for little hands to confidently manipulate and undo. Practical clothing which has elasticised waist bands such as shorts, track pants and leggings make it easier for children to confidently go to the toilet without the unnecessary extra task of trying to undo 'tricky' clothing. Just in case your child does have an 'accident' please ensure you pack a spare set of clothes and underwear.

Safety is also another concern if appropriate clothing is not worn to Playschool. Many long or

flowing type clothing items such as capes and long skirts are extremely dangerous. They may hinder children from the more active play experiences (such as climbing, ball games or running) which are planned for each session.

Closed in shoes which support and protect your child's feet must be worn to playschool. Please do not send your child in shoes such as slip on sandals/scuffs, crocs, thongs and 'dress up' high heels.

Clothing suitable to the seasonal weather conditions is important to ensure that your child may engage in the activities programmed for the session eg. a warm coat/parker and a warm hat for winter.

Shoulder covered tops and a broad brimmed hat.

Playschool is approved by the Cancer Council SunSmart program which is reviewed every 3 years and adheres to a Sun Smart policy.

All clothing and other personal items should be clearly labelled with your child's name. If lost property is not claimed by the end of each term the items will be sent to local clothing charities.

4.4 Food

All children are required to bring a water bottle to Playschool. Please only put water in the bottle not cordial or juice etc.

Parents and carers are urged to provide children with a healthy lunch. Please do NOT include chocolate, lollies, chips, cake, cordial or juice in your child's lunchbox. Items such as these will be sent home with the child. Please do not bring food that needs to be prepared and cooked as we do not have the resources or facilities to cater for this.

At times there may be children attending Playschool who have life-threatening allergies, the Playschool is designated as a NUT FREE environment.

The following items are NOT to be brought into the Playschool:

- Peanut Butter.
- Nutella.
- Sesame Bars.
- Muesli bars.

- Any nut product.
- Other products may be excluded if the need arises.

Please talk to your teachers if you have any concerns regarding the above.

5. Children's Health and Welfare

Children who are ill or tired do not benefit from Playschool sessions. Please keep unwell children at home. Our staff are not qualified nurses and cannot attend to the extra needs of an unwell child. This precaution not only helps your child but also lessens the spread of disease amongst staff and the other children.

Parents/carers are to inform the teacher when a child has a contagious or infectious disease. A poster is displayed at each of the Playschools.

Teachers will notify a parent immediately if a child appears to become unwell and is deemed unable to

continue the session. Parents/carers are to collect their child as soon as possible once notified of the child's illness.

5.1 Medication

For Playschool staff to be able to administer medication to any child, parents/guardians must provide a completed, signed Permission to Administer Medication form and a letter of instruction from the child's Doctor.

As far as possible it is requested that medicine be given to the child before and after Playschool sessions.

Children with severe allergies etc must provide the Playschool with a detailed action plan provided by the child's doctor. All Epipens etc are to be handed to the teacher at the start of each session. These items will be kept in the playroom to ensure quick access. All items are to be clearly marked with the child's name. Parents/carers will be responsible for collection of medication at the end of the session.

Please note children with Asthma and/or severe allergic reactions are not able to attend Playschool if the Playschool does not hold a current Action Plan, signed by a Doctor.

5.2 Immunisation

Two copies of your child's immunisation status (available from Medicare) must be provided to the Playschool on enrolment.

If you choose not to have your child immunised, it is requested that you furnish the Playschool with a letter stating that your child has not undergone an immunisation programme. Please see playschool staff.

For the child's safety, non - immunised children will be excluded from the programme if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease.

5.3 Mandatory Reporting - Keeping children safe

Responsibility for keeping children safe from harm and providing for their long-term wellbeing falls on all adults both as family members and as members of the community. Certain professional groups including Playschool staff are mandated to report cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

6. Enrolment Information

6.1 Selection

If there are places available, children can start throughout the year, once they have turned 3. Acceptance into Playschool occurs in order of receipt of the initial enrolment form. Subsequent enrolments are subject to availability of positions.

It is recommended only that children are toilet trained before commencing. Please speak to the Playschool staff for more information.

6.2 Waiting Lists

Once all available places have been filled, children will be placed on a waiting list. When a vacancy occurs, places will be allocated according to position on the list.

Parents will be kept informed of all positions available within the Tuggeranong Link Playschool network.

If enough interest/demand is generated new playschool sessions may be created

6.3 Enrolments

Prior to enrolment, parents/carers are required to complete a confidential enrolment form and provide copies of immunisation records. In term 4 prior to the start of the New Year parents/guardians will be invited to attend an information night at which time the operation of the Playschool will be discussed.

6.4 Cancelling/Forfeiture of Playschool place

A minimum of two weeks notice is required if you intend to withdraw from the programme. Families, who are to be away for an extended period but wish to reserve a place in their absence, must continue to pay fees whilst they are away in order to do so.

If your child is going to be absent from Playschool, please notify the staff. If a child fails to attend a session on three consecutive occasions without notification to the Playschool, the Playschool has the authority to cancel the child's place in the programme. The Playschool will write to your last known address to inform you of this action. Any fees outstanding will be pursued.

7. FEES AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

Playschool receives NO government funding or financial assistance and all programmes are fully funded by the fees charged. Fees are payable in full, within the first three weeks of term.

Late payments will incur a late fee at a rate of \$20.00 for each week overdue.

Financial difficulties: to ensure you do not incur late fee charges please speak to your House manager ASAP so they may organise a payment plan with you. Please note: families must pay for every session each term and unfortunately missed sessions cannot be made up due restrictions in child numbers per class.

7.1 Holding fee

Each year parents will be asked to pay a non-refundable deposit on enrolment. This payment secures your place in the programme or on the waiting list.

Part of the deposit will be placed against the insurance levy for the year.

7.2 Late Pick Up

Parents/Carers must notify staff if they are going to be late collecting their child.

If the child remains at the Playschool for more than 15mins after the conclusion of the session and we are unable to contact you, staff will contact the person nominated by you to collect your child. If you are late picking up your child you will be charged at the rate of \$10 per 15 minutes.

8. What to Bring

- All children are required to bring their own lunch in a lunch box/s or similar container and water bottle. It is preferred that this is fruit, sandwiches or **something healthy**. Please ensure that

your child can independently access their lunch. Some children (and the teachers!!) have a lot of problems with cling wrap and some tight fitting lunchboxes.

- Bag
- **Broad brimmed hat**
- Change of clothes
- Extra pair/s of underwear
- Coat in winter
- Drink bottle
- **Closed in shoes**

All items are to be clearly labelled with child's name

Sunscreen should be applied before each session.

9. Our Playschool Program

A weekly/fortnightly program is designed by the teacher that is specifically designed for the needs and interests of the children in the Playschool session. A copy of the programme is posted on the noticeboard. Please feel free to

discuss the programme with the teacher at any time.

9.1 General

Each session will incorporate the following

- Puzzle time
- Craft, painting activities
- Fine motor skill development
- Use of manipulative/construction toys
- Play dough (or similar) play
- Gross motor activities
- Sand and/or water play
- Music and singing
- Story time
- Language and social development activities
- Lunch period
- Quiet time

9.2 Birthdays

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday at lunchtime. Parents might like to bring along a cake - please enquire about other children's dietary allergies before doing so. We do not encourage lollies to be bought to Playschool.

9.3 Special Needs Assessment

It is very important that any difficulties children are experiencing are discovered quickly and parents are made aware of the early intervention possibilities available to them.

If a teacher identifies a special need, it will be discussed with parents and our qualified staff can then assist with referral procedures as appropriate.

Likewise, if parents have any concerns please feel free to discuss them with the teacher.

10. Emergency Procedures

Children and staff will practise an emergency evacuation drill periodically throughout the year, so that children become familiar with the process. This aides in alleviating undue alarm or stress, for the children in the event of a real emergency.

If you have any concerns with this procedure please speak to the teacher.

In the event of a real emergency, parents will be notified as soon as possible and advised where to collect their children. Again, may we reiterate the importance of providing up to date contact numbers.

11. Behaviour Management Policy

Between the ages of 3 to 5 children are able to understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour,

although their judgement maybe clouded by their desires.

Children in this age group sometimes lose control and hit out. It is easy for them to become overwhelmed and behave in unacceptable ways. In the Playschool environment staff aim to work towards a situation in which children can develop their social and emotional skills in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and acknowledgement.

To encourage a child's self-control without loosing their self-esteem, staff will:

- Help children use their problem solving skills to come up with a solution they can accept.
- Avoid problems by anticipating them and have children help problem solve.
- Try to understand what is behind the child's behaviour. (May include talk with parents).

- Focus on child's behaviour; do not make general statements that judge the child. Help child understand how their actions cause a problem.
- Stop behaviour that is dangerous immediately and firmly so that children learn to respond automatically when they hear tone of voice (Calm and firm).
- Notice when children are restless and give them a way to release their energy constructively.
- Acknowledge child's feelings.

Any significant behavioural problem that arises will be discussed with the parents as soon as possible to:

- Keep parents informed.
- Ascertain whether behaviour is common to both Playschool and home.
- Determine if other factors are influencing behaviour. Co-operatively assist to overcome the problem.

12. Provisions for dealing with issues or concerns.

The Playschool encourages parents to raise any issue or concern they might have with the staff. Parents are encouraged to raise such matters as soon as possible so that the concern can be dealt with early, rather than letting it escalate into a bigger problem.

The following steps are suggested guidelines for raising concerns:

Speak to the staff directly. Most problems can be solved this way.

If you feel uncomfortable about approaching the staff directly, or in the event you feel a solution has not been reached, then please speak to the Executive officer of Tuggeranong Link. Phone 62921604 or email on tugglink@tugglink.org.au

Children's Education and Care Assurance
Complaints: 6207 7581

Email complaintsCECA@act.gov.au

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO
SHARING A FUN FILLED
LEARNING EXPERIENCE
WITH YOU AND YOUR
CHILD.**