

2022 Preschool Q&A session – Thursday 9 December 2021

Danielle Porter – welcome, acknowledgement of country and introduced the 2022 team

Jodie Rowell – acting Principal

Stacey Naden – team leader

Maree Sweeting – preschool teacher educator

Sharni Macarounas – preschool assistant educator

Parent questions

1. Will there be an opportunity for children to come to a stay and play session before preschool starts?

Yes, you will receive an email next week with information about the optional stay and play sessions happening on Monday 24/1/22.

2. What happens at preschool drop off on the first day, and subsequent days after that?

The preschool day is 9am to 3pm. There is no after school care for preschool children.

On the first day you will arrive and bring your child to the preschool playground where there will be some activities set up for you to do with your child before saying goodbye for the day about 9:20am. The children will then start their day of getting to know Maree and Sharni, learning about the preschool environment and doing lots of playing. You can come back from 2:50pm to collect your child each day.

Please make sure you use the Check-in Canberra app at each drop off and pick up.

3. What does a typical preschool day look like?

Once all the children have arrived we start with a whole group experience about 9:20am. During this time we see who is here for the day and participate in some pre literacy or numeracy experiences as a large group.

Throughout the day the children will engage in a balanced range of child led and teacher directed structured learning opportunities, with a focus on the children's interests, strengths and focus areas.

We have 2 opportunities to eat throughout the preschool day. We have morning tea about 11am and lunch about 1pm.

At Macquarie we run a strong indoor outdoor program so children have access to both environments for large parts of the day. There is no such thing as inappropriate weather so we do go out in rain and cold weather.

4. Do the children access parts of the primary school?

Yes they are very connected to the school right from the start.

Both preschool groups go to the library once a week and have a library experience with Pamela, our librarian. Each child gets a library bag as part of the stationery pack and they take that to the library to borrow books to bring home and for reading in the classroom.

In a non Covid-19 year the preschool children also use the playground equipment regularly and from

5. Do the preschool children wear school uniform or their everyday clothes?

They wear comfortable everyday clothes that are practical for running, climbing, sandpit play etc.

The school P&C donates a sun smart hat to each preschool child at the start of the year. This hat stays at preschool for the year and is washed regularly by educators. Each group has the same colour hats; the start of week hats are green and the end of week hats are red.

6. Should all our child's food be in one lunchbox or multiple?

It is up to you and what will work best for your child. We have 2 opportunities to eat during the day. The first is morning tea about 11am where we encourage the children to eat some fresh fruit or vegetables then a snack. We have lunch about 1pm. If you would prefer to pack 2 separate containers that is fine, just please make sure your child can open and close them independently. We will of course help if needed, especially with things like a thermos if you send heated food.

7. Is there bike storage available if my child rides to preschool?

Yes there is, right inside the preschool gate.

8. What opportunities are there during the year to touch base with the teacher?

Maree and Sharni are available for brief chats each morning at drop off. Some afternoons we have meetings starting at 3:15pm so will not be available on those days for extended chats. You can always make a time to chat. The formal opportunities throughout the year are:

- Getting to know you interviews – term 1 week 3. This is a good opportunity to touch base after your child has started to settle in. At this interview we talk about how we can support your child across the year and share his/her strengths, interests and goals. Before this you will receive an information sheet to complete.
- At the end of term 2 you receive a written progress report. After this we have an opportunity for mid year parent teacher interviews.
- In term 3 we run a Learning Journey which is an opportunity for parents and carers to come in to the classroom and the children lead you through a journey of their learning so far.
- At the end of term 4 you receive a written summary report of your child's year at preschool, with the option of a parent teacher interview afterwards before the transition to kindergarten.

The preschool team are super approachable and responsive so please reach out as often as you need to. We also use email and Class Dojo to communicate with families. Class Dojo gives parents live information about what their child is doing at preschool which is often a good talking point at the end of the day to look at the photos together and share reflections of the experience.

9. Does the preschool year start on the Monday or Tuesday?

The start of week group commences on Monday 31/1/22. The end of week group starts on Thursday 3/2/22. You will have received a year long calendar in the information pack mailed out to you.

10. How do you support children who may have challenges separating from parents in the morning?

We build strong relationships from the start and will always support your child emotionally in the mornings. If there is a comfort item your child would like to bring to preschool that is ok. It could be a little teddy, something in their pocket or bag etc.

We will always let you know if your child does not settle, and alternatively will call you to let you know they have settled and engaged in the program.

11. Do the preschool children go on excursions?

Yes, we try to do at least 2 a year. They are often based on interests or things happen in the classroom. Some of the places we have previously been include:

- On the Action Bus Wash tour
- Australian National Botanical Gardens
- The Arboretum
- The Canberra Museum and Gallery
- The National Zoo and Aquarium
- The Belconnen Fresh Food Markets

Parents are usually welcome to attend excursions with us. There are occasions where younger siblings are not able to attend.