



**Emmaus
Christian
School**

Preschool Parent Handbook 2019

HB 1-0

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Extended Day Preschool Parent Handbook

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Vision/Purpose

Emmaus exists to partner with parents, in providing a Christ-centred, Biblically-grounded and academically-rigorous education, which enables students to grow in wisdom and character, to the glory of God.

Values

1. Caring for Others

At Emmaus, we value, care for and respect each other because we are all made in the image of God. We partner with parents to care for and develop the whole person- body, soul and spirit. We foster a sense of belonging, celebrate one another's achievements and choose to be grateful for our school and each other. We are a community that learns in a fun, creative, encouraging and generous environment.

2. Striving for Mastery

At Emmaus, we encourage students to strive for excellence in all aspects of life: in study, work, and in relationships with God and with people. We believe God equips every person with gifts and abilities. We seek to instil in our students a strong desire to apply their utmost to what they do, an attribute that will long outlive their school years. Students are encouraged to master and apply academic and life skills in order to make the most of their opportunities in later life. Our goal is to equip students with the necessary skills and understanding to make wise and Godly choices, and to live resilient, fulfilled, and productive lives.

3. Equipping for Service

At Emmaus, our motivation for service is the love that Christ has shown us: his life of servant leadership is the example we seek to follow. Staff at Emmaus model integrity, accountability and the value of excellence in our work. We strive to equip students with both the desire and the skills to make a difference in the lives of others. We aim to grow students who are rich in Godly wisdom and noble character, and find their security in the love of Christ.



Statement of Faith

Families are expected to respect our Christian perspective.

One Creator God

The Lord God is one - Father, Son & Holy Spirit. He fulfils His purposes in creation, revelation, redemption, judgment, and the coming of His Kingdom, calling people to be united with Himself and with each other in love.

Because God is the creator of all, 'sacred' and 'secular' domains of learning cannot be separated. Since humanity's purpose is to glorify God, all learning should be directed to that end, seeking to enthrone God as the creator and rightful king in the way we teach, learn, speak and act.

Humanity and the Fall

God made humanity, both men and women, in His own image, giving all people immeasurable dignity and worth. Our rebellion against God sees us disconnected from Him, falling short of His glory and deserving of judgement. Our sin taints all areas of life and learning, damaging individuals and communities. It ensures the futility of all human endeavour and learning that is divorced from the knowledge of God.

Jesus

Yet God the Father has shown his love for us by giving Jesus Christ, His Son, for us. Fully human and fully God, born of the virgin, Mary, having lived a sinless life, Jesus willingly died in our place as a sacrifice for our sin. He rose victorious over every evil and against all sin, sickness and death. He was taken up to be with God, His Father, and will return one day in glory and power.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's presence in the world, who leads people to repent and turn to God and makes the life and work of Christ real in the hearts of those who trust in Him. He is present in every Christian's life, illuminating their minds to understand Scripture, giving spiritual gifts freely, and producing evidence of His presence - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control - to be used in the service of God and others

The Bible

The Bible was written by people, inspired by God and has ever since been protected by God. It is our highest authority in all matters of faith and practice and illumines all learning and every dimension of human life.

The Church

The local and global networks of people who follow Christ in Christian groups and denominations comprise the Church: a new humanity, the family of God and Christ's body on earth. Through the Church we are shepherded towards ongoing transformation into Christ's likeness.

Christ commissioned His followers to spread the news of God's plan to everyone, teaching them how to find and follow Him. He commands us to love God with all our heart, mind and strength, and to love others through service, reconciliation, and the provision of liberty to all who are oppressed and broken-hearted, until Jesus comes again.



Statement of Christian Faith (continued)

As the exclusive and all-powerful saviour, we believe that Jesus is the key to life's purpose and meaning, and is the unsurpassed model for human flourishing.

The Family

Along with the Church, families are a precious gift to the world, as the primary community in which parents are to teach their children how to love, serve, worship and grow in character.

Families are formed and sustained through the gift of marriage, an institution that is to be honoured, whether or not we are called into it ourselves. The Bible's teaching, as upheld throughout the history of the Christian Church, is that marriage is the relationship between one man and one woman, entered into for life to the exclusion of all others, and is the proper context within which God's good gift of sexuality is to be enjoyed.

A Christian

A Christian is someone who responds to God's grace by being '*born again*' into a new life of trust and obedience to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. This journey is not entered into alone, but in community with other believers through shared worship, fellowship, and service in the Church.

PRESCHOOL HOURS OF OPERATION

Preschool operates from 8:30am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday.

Arrival

Parents are required to bring their child into the Preschool and sign them in on the iPads in the foyer. Please ensure that your child washes their hands on arrival (a hygiene and infection control requirement) and then help them place their drink bottle, morning tea and lunch in the appropriate containers and apply sunscreen to your child. Please also ensure a staff member is aware that your child has arrived.

Each child is provided with a storage locker. Learning to look after one's own possessions is an important skill for school and parents play a vital part in teaching the routine to the children. Please help and guide your child with the objective of training them to be independent.

If you have the opportunity, we encourage you to stay for a while to spend some time playing with your child, joining in the activities they choose either indoors or outdoors.

A quick chat with other parents and staff also creates community, something we value very highly.

Departure

The Attendance Sheet needs to be signed when you collect your child. Please also let a member of staff know when your child leaves.

Staff, greatly appreciate punctuality in picking up children from the Preschool—this enables us to begin preparing for another great day for the children!

If you realise that you will be unavoidably late, please call the Preschool to let us know.



Emmaus Christian School's policy for frequent late pick-up of children applies to the Preschool—late fees can be charged.

Parents are asked to supervise their children (including siblings) when arriving and departing. We do not allow unsupervised play indoors or outdoors after pick-up time.

Authorising Other People to Deliver/Collect your Child

An "Authority for Collecting my Child" Form needs to be filled in before your child can be released to the care of another person from Preschool. Please also let the staff know when you expect the authorised person to be picking up your child.

The same form can also be used in case a parent does not wish their child to be released to the care of a certain person. Evidence of a court order may be requested by the staff.

Late Pick Up Fee

A Late Pick Up Fee of \$10.00 per child for every 10 MINUTES (or part thereof) will be charged for children picked up after 6.00pm.

Please call the EASC mobile on 0490 079 883 if you are unavoidably late.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE HOURS OF OPERATION

After School Care is provided onsite for students in Kindergarten Year 6 from 3:00pm to 6pm Monday to Friday.

Arrival

Primary school children will be collected at the 'collection point' near the front office by an educator who will then bring them to the preschool.

Departure

Please let a member of staff know when you are collecting your child. You will need to sign your children out on the Qikkids iPads. iPads are located in the foyer and a roaming iPad will be kept in the class room with the educator and children.



Late Pick Up Fee

A Late Pick Up Fee of \$10.00 per child for every 10 MINUTES (or part thereof) will be charged for children picked up after 6.00pm.

Please call the EASC mobile on 0490 079 883 if you are unavoidably late.

Bookings

Bookings are available on a Permanent or Casual basis, with a different fee for each. Please refer to the Fee Schedule for current costs.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

When helping your child select clothing for the Preschool day, the following factors should be considered:

- Outdoor play is an important and valuable part of our daily program - please ensure your child brings clothing suited for the expected weather conditions.
- Footwear — covered footwear or closed toe sandals are required for safety reasons. Bike riding is only allowed while wearing enclosed footwear.
- “Messy play” such as making mudpies, finger painting and clay has significant developmental value and is much enjoyed by Preschoolers. Although smocks are worn, some of the messy fun may show up on clothing — please send your child to preschool in “mess friendly” clothing!
- A change of clothing should be packed in your child’s bag/backpack every day. Water play is a likely activity on warmer days — a dry change of clothing will be much appreciated by your child. “Accidents” are also always a possibility throughout the Preschool years.
- Due to the nature of Preschool activities (climbing, playing, etc.) we strongly recommend that dresses, skirts and thongs not be worn.

Sun Safe Practises

- Each child will receive a “Sun Safe” hat for each child. The school will bill you \$7 for the hat at the beginning of the school year. This must be worn while playing outside. In winter when the UV rating is low, children may choose not to wear hats. This allows the children to benefit from Vitamin D from the sun’s rays.
- During Terms 1 and 4 when the UV rating is very high, we maximise our use of the well shaded areas in our playground during outdoor play.
- Also during Terms 1 and 4, we ask parents to provide a roll-on tube of sunscreen for their child. These will be kept in Preschool in the sunscreen box which is brought out in the morning for parents to assist children in applying and for children to reapply at lunch time.



COMMUNICATION

We use the following methods to communicate information and messages to our parent community:

Email

- a Term calendar will be emailed at the beginning of each Term with more specific information being sent one or two weeks before the event takes place. We also use email to communicate other important information about the preschool, please check your emails from preschool regularly.

Your Child's "Pocket"

- each child has their own "Pocket". Art works, fundraising information, Book Club Brochures and some notes will be placed in your child's pocket. Please check your child's pocket at the end of each Preschool day.

The Preschool Noticeboard

- (placed next to the entry) will display messages to all parents, particularly information that needs to be communicated on a daily basis—changes to routine, reminders, information that everyone needs to know immediately. Please take a moment to check the noticeboard as you arrive.

The Messages Column on the Attendance Sheet

- as you sign your child in/out, please check the messages column. If we need to communicate something to you personally, we will write in a request for you to talk with us.

CURRICULUM

Please find the Curriculum Frameworks attached as appendix A

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

It is our belief that only when we work in partnership with parents can the full potential of each child be nurtured and reached. Open communication and dialogue are essential for this to take place and highly valued by us.

Parents are invited to share with the staff any ideas, concerns, comments or complaints so that we can improve the way our Preschool serves the children and their families.

Please bring to our attention any problems, complaints and grievances you may have about the way we operate or interact with you or your child. We are here to serve our Preschool Community and are willing to listen. Most issues can be dealt with quickly and effectively if we are aware of the problem.

If issues are not resolved to your satisfaction through the more informal channels, we ask parents with a formal complaint to follow these guidelines:

1. Please approach the Preschool Director with your complaint
2. If the matter remains unresolved, an interview with the Principal of Emmaus Christian School can be requested



3. If no resolution has been reached after the first two steps have been taken, the matter will be referred to the North Canberra Christian Education Association
4. The Government appointed “overseer” for our Service is the Children’s Education and Care Assurance. They will receive and investigate complaints about the Preschool but ask that direct negotiation with the Preschool precedes an approach to them.

Contact Details for the Children’s Education and Care Assurance: Phone: 02 62077581

PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH TO BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

“Brave Talk”

- is a concept used throughout Emmaus Christian School — it describes when children choose to use words to resolve conflicts, or when they react to a situation with words instead of raw emotions.

Examples of this are:

- If a child hurts another child or takes away their toy, they respond with, “Please don’t do that.” etc., rather than hitting back or snatching back.
- “Brave Talk” is also when a child chooses to say sorry for hurting another (whether it was an accident or not) — it is brave to say sorry!
- If a child is scared by another child’s play (especially dramatic play, eg. a lion), they can tell the other child it scares them so that child can respond to this.

Alongside “Brave Talk”, in preschool we also use the ‘Problem Solving Approach to Conflict Resolution’.

As children grow more confident in using words to express their feelings and resolve conflicts, the staff seek to facilitate and help children define the problem, talk to each other about it and to work out a solution. The use of these approaches allows us to turn conflicts into wonderful learning opportunities that lead to child-made solutions, enriched relationships and the growth of children’s social-emotional competence.

DELIVERY AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Parking

Cars should travel ONE WAY ONLY in the School’s main car park and should always give way to pedestrians. When dropping off or collecting children, cars should enter from Davenport Street ONLY, taking either the first turn right into the back row of car bays, or the second turn right into the front rows of car bays. All cars should travel ONE WAY ONLY and exit on to Bancroft Street. Please do not drive in a loop within the car park - if you are unsuccessful in finding a car park upon your first entry, please exit onto Bancroft Street and enter again from Davenport Street.

Please observe line markings, ‘Disabled Zone’ and ‘Set Down/Pick Up Only’ signs. Please travel slowly, and take extreme care when reversing in the car park.



FOOD AND NUTRITION

Nut Aware Environment

In order to protect the children with nut related allergies, we request that no food items containing nuts be brought to Preschool. This includes products such as peanut butter, Nutella, fruit/nut muesli bars or chocolate or any other products that have nuts listed as an ingredient. This does not include products that contain the warning “may contain traces of nuts”.

Our nut aware policy also applies to food brought in for celebrating birthdays, community and social events.

Morning Tea and Lunch

Parents are asked to provide their child with a healthy snack packed into a clearly labelled container for Morning Tea. Please pack your child's morning tea in one container and lunch in another container as we store them separately.

A water bottle with your child's name on it is also needed. Please note that we discourage pre-packaged drinks (fruit juice poppers, etc) and juice — in warmer weather we encourage children to drink a sufficient amount of water and refilling of drink bottles is often necessary.

Healthy Eating

There is a growing awareness of the importance of developing healthy eating habits early in life — good nutrition is essential for health and wellbeing and has multiple benefits for learning and behaviour of children. Thus we encourage healthy choices for Morning Tea and Lunch:

- Fruit (apples, bananas, grapes, pears, oranges, strawberries)
- Vegetables (celery, snow peas, carrot)
- Dried fruit, sultanas
- Cheese
- Healthy, nutritious sandwiches
- Savoury biscuits such as Rice Crackers

Litter-free Lunch

Becoming independent in looking after one's own needs is a developmental goal we encourage the children to reach. To help your child develop this important skill, we ask parents to pack lunches and morning teas in a manner that will allow them to access their food independently and without stress. Glad Wrap is often tricky for little fingers and is not recommended.

Birthdays

To celebrate your child's special day, we welcome parents bringing a small treat to share with classmates. It has been our experience that the children are very happy with something as simple as a slice of watermelon with most children also enjoying individual cupcakes or muffins.



Our food related activities in preschool are all planned to promote healthy eating habits and we'd like to ask parents to partner with us in this when bringing in birthday treats. At certain times of the year we celebrate birthdays very frequently, sometimes every week (even two in one day!) and sweet treats can easily add up to too many in a short space of time.

Please take note of the preschool's long standing policy of no lollies or sweets for birthday celebrations.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Immunisation

Parents are encouraged to keep their children's immunisation is up to date. A copy of your child's immunisation record is required at the time of admission.

On admission, parents are also asked to provide details of their child's development, medical record, allergies and any special needs. Accurate information is essential as is updating information as necessary in order to care for the children the best way possible.

Sick Children

The health and wellbeing of all the children in our care is of utmost importance. This means we are required to take measures to minimise the spread of infectious disease:

- Children who have an infectious disease such as measles, mumps, chicken pox etc. must not attend Preschool for the specified exclusion period as set by the Health Department. Parents are requested to immediately notify the Director of any infectious diseases contracted by their child.
- Medical certificates are necessary for re-admission to Emmaus Christian Preschool in some circumstances.
- The staff at Emmaus Christian Preschool (in consultation with the Director) reserve the right to exclude a child from attendance if, in their opinion it appears that the child has a disease contagious to the other children.
- Parents will be asked to collect their child if in the opinion of the staff, the child is obviously sick and should not be attending Preschool. If parents can't be contacted, other authorised persons on the Admissions Form or Authority to Collect my Child form will be called and asked to collect the child.
- If a child is sent home unwell, they should not return to Preschool until they have fully recovered or are no longer infectious.
- If a child has commenced a course of antibiotics, they must be kept at home for at least 24 hours so the medication has had time to take effect.
- Children who are unwell before leaving home should not be brought to Preschool. Rest at home is often the best way to recover from illness.

Common Illnesses — Exclusions*

The following are the required exclusion periods for some of the most common illnesses in Preschool age children:

- Conjunctivitis — excluded until discharge from eyes ceases
- Gastroenteritis — excluded for 24 hours after diarrhoea or vomiting ceases



- Influenza and influenza-like illness — excluded until well
- Vomiting — excluded for 24 hours after vomiting ceases
(* Source — ACT Health guidelines 2014. Please consult the poster on our parent noticeboard for a full list of exclusions for infectious diseases.)

Injuries at Preschool

- Minor injuries will be treated at preschool and afterwards by staff holding a first aid certification. When treating sick or injured children, staff will follow recommended procedures for the safety of themselves and the children
- Incident reports will be written for head injuries or injuries that, in the opinion of staff, may need treatment from a medical professional or for example for a decent scrape

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency or accident where the staff believes medical attention should be sought, parents or nominated emergency contacts will be notified to collect the child as soon as possible. In the event that parents or emergency contacts cannot be contacted, staff, in consultation with the Director, has the authority to call an ambulance. A staff member will accompany the injured child to hospital and remain with the child until parents arrive.

Medication

Parents/guardians must fill out and sign an **Authority to Administer Medication form** if their child needs to take medication while at Emmaus Christian Preschool and/or After School Care.

The form includes details of the:

- name of the medication
- dosage to be administered
- frequency of dosage

Medication must be handed to a staff member and have a clear label with all the above details on it as well as the child's name.

Under no circumstances is medication to be left in a child's bag or in a place accessible to children. We will store medication requiring refrigeration in our child proof fridge.

Emergency Medication

Staff at Emmaus Christian Preschool cannot administer emergency medication including paracetamol to children. Where children are in need of such medication, parents will be called to collect their child. In a situation where a child has severe allergies and there is an action plan, their medication will be administered as per their action plan in the event of an emergency such as an anaphylactic reaction.

Management of medical conditions

If your child has been diagnosed with a medical condition such as asthma, anaphylaxis or a food allergy (or any other ongoing medical condition that may present management needs), please discuss this with the preschool staff. Together we will work on a Medical Risk minimisation plan and this can be updated if there are any changes. We have a detailed "Dealing with Medical Conditions" policy (available on request) that includes guidelines for



management of asthma, anaphylaxis and food allergies—by following the recommended practices, preschool staff and parents can partner together to meet the needs that the medical condition presents.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Early Learning Centre will operate between 08:30 and 6:00 Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of each year. The Centre is closed on Public holidays. If you do not book into the holiday program you will not be charged for the holiday, just the in term weeks.

Emmaus is only able to offer full day rates, however children are not required to attend the full day if this does not suit the family.

Vacation Care

Bookings are essential, additional fees apply.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

See POLICY: GEN 3-5 Code of Conduct – Parents, Visitors & Volunteers (on the school website)

As part of our desire to promote a healthy, supportive school community where we treat one another with respect and kindness, we ask parents, visitors and volunteer to follow this code of conduct.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Involvement Program (PIP)

See Policy: GEN 3-4 Parent Involvement Program Policy for full details (on the school website)

This is a school wide policy to encourage parent involvement, a sense of community and contribute towards our goal of keeping the fees as low as possible.

Preschool families are expected to contribute 10 hours per annum. For families that have children in Primary/Secondary as well, 25 hours per year applies.

PIP points can be gained through being a parent helper in Preschool, helping with excursions, contributing at Working Bees, covering books. We have a roster for laundry and gardening and run many fundraising activities that rely on parent volunteers.

Earning PIP points is also an opportunity to become involved in the life of the wider school community. Parents may choose to pay a levy in lieu of involvement in PIP.



Parent Helpers

Direct involvement in our daily program as a parent helper is one of the most valuable ways parents can contribute to their child's education at Preschool. Parents will:

- gain a better understanding of their child;
- observe how the children interact socially;
- get to know their child's friends in Preschool;
- develop an understanding of how our program operates;
- affirm your child by your interest in their school life and experiences

Parent help/involvement is much appreciated and welcome anytime. You can put your name on the roster or just decide to stay for a while. Sharing a special skill or volunteering to complete a craft project with the children adds another dimension to our program. Younger siblings are also welcome with their parents and gain a lot from the participating in the daily life of our Preschool.

Parents who come on excursions will need a Working with Vulnerable People card. WWVP

REST TIME/SLEEP TIME

Children who need a sleep can have a sleep on the preschool beds in the Music Room. Children who do not need a sleep will have a slow/rest period of the day where we Read stories for about 20-30 minutes. This quiet time of reading may progress to doing puzzles and allows children to "wind down" for a while.

TREASURES FROM HOME

Children often like to bring a favourite toy to preschool to play with during the day. It has been our experience that unfortunately these highly valued treasures often get lost, even broken and can lead to disputes with other children who would also like to play with these special toys.

We ask parents to help us by explaining to their children the reasons why they cannot bring their special toy to preschool. However, if your child needs to have a familiar and much loved object as a comforter, this, of course, can be brought to Preschool.

Bringing photos of holidays and family events or art and craft work your child would like to show to the class create important connections between home and school and are most welcome. These often provide inspiration for us all and lead to great discussions and engaging activities. These treasures can be shown to classmates at an informal news time where your child can talk about their special item.



Appendix A

Curriculum Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was instituted as the national curriculum framework for all Early Years Education and Care providers (including preschools) at the beginning of 2012.

The Emmaus After School Care will use the My Time Our Place (MTOP) framework to guide curriculum planning.

At Emmaus Christian Preschool, we have been delighted to embrace the wide view of early learning embedded in the EYLF, finding our existing curriculum perspectives compatible with the new framework:

Curriculum encompasses all the interactions, experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development.

It is best to consider our curriculum as a statement of learning intentions in the early years and as such it expresses:

- The learning outcomes we aim for
- The methods and processes we aim to use to facilitate the desired learning

Learning Outcomes

The five Learning Outcomes of the EYLF capture “the integrated and complex learning and development of all children” in the preschool years.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing



Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

Methods and Processes:

A key consideration in how we aim to facilitate the desired learning is to emphasise the fundamentally important role played by the Principles and Practises that the EYLF is based on.

Our Curriculum includes a significant and important part of Intentional Teaching strategies and goals – this includes a lot of what most people are familiar with in terms of curriculum for literacy and numeracy for example.

While we believe that this more structured approach to learning can be usefully employed for certain skills and knowledge, we believe that the principles that underpin all the practises we use are even more crucial to creating an environment for learning in which all children can thrive.

Therefore, we believe that the key understandings expressed in the EYLF about Principles and Practises are essential for an integrated, interconnected and holistic approach to teaching and learning.

Principles (the underlying values):

Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships:

We believe that positive interactions with the children will support the development of a strong sense of wellbeing—this is essential for effective learning.

Partnerships with families:

Partnering together with families will maximise learning opportunities for children.

High expectations and equity for all children:

We are committed to help every child in our care to succeed, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities.



Respect for diversity:

We are interested to learn about and reflect the practices, values and beliefs of families. We value children's different capacities and abilities and respect differences in families' home lives.

Ongoing learning and reflective practice:

As educators, we engage in reflective practice with the intention of gathering information and gaining insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning.

Practices (how we teach):**Holistic approach:**

A holistic approach to teaching and learning recognises the connectedness of mind, body and spirit. We are committed to paying attention to children's physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well as cognitive aspects of their learning.

Being responsive to children:

We are interested in and respond to all children's strengths, abilities and interests. Our program planning builds on children's strengths, skills and knowledge to ensure their motivation and engagement in learning.

Learning through play

- Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine.
- When children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings.
- Play provides a supportive environment where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking.
- Play can expand children's thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn. In these ways play can promote positive dispositions towards learning.
- Children's immersion in their play illustrates how play enables them to simply enjoy being.

As educators we take on many roles in play with children and use a range of strategies to support learning:

- Engaging in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking.
- Providing a balance between child led, child initiated and educator supported learning.
- Creating learning environments that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct.

Intentional teaching in early childhood is characterised by:

- Recognising that learning occurs in social contexts and that interactions and conversations are vitally important for learning.
- Promoting children's learning through worthwhile and challenging experiences and interactions that foster high-level thinking skills.
- Using strategies such as modelling and demonstrating, open questioning, speculating, explaining, engaging in shared thinking and problem solving to extend children's thinking and learning.



- Educators moving flexibly in and out of different roles and drawing on different strategies as the context changes.

Learning Environments

Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. In setting up the learning environment, we aim to cater for different learning capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions.

Outdoor learning spaces offer a vast array of possibilities not available indoors. Play spaces in natural environments include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements from nature. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education.

Continuity in learning:

Children bring family and community ways of being, belonging and becoming to the preschool setting. By building on these experiences, we help all children to feel secure, confident and included and to experience continuity in how to be and how to learn.

Assessing learning to support children in achieving learning outcomes:

- All children demonstrate their learning in different ways. We use approaches to assessment that are culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive to the physical and intellectual capabilities of each child. These approaches will acknowledge each child's abilities and strengths, and allow them to demonstrate competence.
- By using ongoing assessment processes that include a diverse array of methods, we aim to capture the different pathways that children take in their learning.
- These assessment processes do not focus exclusively on the endpoints of children's learning; they give equal consideration to the 'distance-travelled' by individual children and recognise and celebrate not only the giant leaps that children take in their learning but the small steps as well.
- Over time these assessment methods help us to reflect on how children have developed, how they have engaged with increasingly complex ideas and participated in increasingly sophisticated learning experiences

Major Influences on our Curriculum

The EYLF provides us with the "big picture" of our curriculum, the overarching ideas of how learning and teaching take place. For the detail of how we work towards the learning outcomes of the EYLF, we draw inspiration from the following curriculum approaches:

Enquiry - Exploratory Based Learning

Emergent Learning perspectives help us in effectively responding to children's interests and ideas by being attuned to children's interests, ideas and cultural background through careful observation; analysing and interpreting the motivations and learning embedded in what we observe; and using this knowledge to plan ways to make the learning wider, deeper and longer.



The Spiral Curriculum:

This perspective (from Claire Warden) we find very helpful as one method of collaborating with children to make their learning wider, deeper and longer: the educator observes a learning opportunity arising from children's interests and ideas, most commonly expressed through their play; the educator widens the learning already happening by getting involved in the play and learning, collaborating with the children and providing appropriate input. This could be new materials, changes to the learning environment, new ideas and knowledge, a question to ponder; children incorporate the educators 'provocations' into their play and learning and use it as inspiration for new ideas, interests and investigations. This is an open-ended process where children are free to make full use of their creativity; and the spiral comes full circle - the educator observes the fresh new, often delightfully surprising directions that the learning and play take and notices new opportunities to widen, deepen and extend the learning.

Educator Initiated Curriculum—Key components

It is important to note that we always aim for an integrated, interconnected and holistic approach to learning and teaching and consequently the skills, knowledge and dispositions we aim to teach are embedded in all of our activities in Preschool.

As much as possible, all the following components of our curriculum are delivered with this holistic approach, even when presented in teacher directed activities such as large and small group times.

Early Language and Literacy

In the Preschool years, children continue to develop the foundational literacy skills that are the essential starting points for success in learning to read and write in the early Primary school years.

The most important foundational skills are developed through children's everyday interactions and communication. Educators and parents enhance this development by:

- Listening to children, engaging them in conversations where children talk about personally meaningful experiences
- Encouraging children to describe objects, events and relations
- Participating in children's play, listening and conversing with children.
- Reading stories, poems and rhymes to children, making up rhymes together.

The following foundational skills are developed at least partly through explicit instruction and modelling:

- Phonological awareness – the general ability to attend to language's sounds as distinct from its meaning. This includes:
 - Initial awareness of speech sounds and rhythms
 - Rhyme awareness
 - Alliteration awareness
- Phonemic awareness: the ability to recognise spoken words as a sequence of distinct sounds
 - Comprehension – understanding the meaning of spoken and written language
 - Print awareness – understanding how print is organised and used in reading and writing.
 - Alphabet knowledge – understanding that there is a systematic relationship between letters and sounds.
 - Beginning writing – developing the fine motor skills that enable emergent 'writing' and an understanding of the conventions of writing



We use the following resources at Emmaus Christian Preschool as a basis for planned language and literacy experiences:

- “Foundations of Literacy” by Sue Palmer
- “Growing Readers Early Literacy Curriculum” by HighScope
- “Write From the Start” – a prewriting skills development program
- “Reading Eggs” – an online early reading program that complements the SoundsWrite learning and is used in conjunction with in the second half of the Prekinder year
- “Milo’s Birthday Surprise” – Little Learners Love Literacy resources

Early Numeracy

For our planned experiences designed to enhance the development of mathematical concepts, we use the Numbers Plus Preschool Mathematics Curriculum by HighScope. This consists of small group experiences focusing on:

- Number Sense and Operations
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Algebra
- Data Analysis

Science

“Early science development is a natural process by which young children make sense of the world and everything in it that works.” As they explore their world, they observe, classify, experiment, predict, draw conclusions and communicate ideas – these are all “components of the preschool scientific method”

The preschool learning environment and activities offer rich and varied opportunities for learning of both the scientific method and foundational science concepts. As educators we facilitate this learning by joining in the children’s play and:

- Observing and wondering together
- Providing materials that extend the opportunities for children to continue and expand their scientific enquiries. For example, providing pipes for children that show an interest in using water in the sandpit.
- Using appropriate questioning to help children predict and draw conclusions

In small group settings, we also introduce children to materials and activities designed to draw their attention to specific science concepts. These more structured activities provide beginning points for further enquiry and learning that children can continue in their play.

Music

The music programme focuses on enjoyment, developing skills in rhythm and beat, learning how to start and stop movement, developing a repertoire of songs both well-known and new, beginning to sing in tune, and basic percussion and rhythm reading skills.



The school reserves the right to amend the contents as necessary.

School Office hours:

- During term - Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6:00pm
- During holidays – Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6:00pm

