<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to the distance education preschool</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The broader the base the higher the peak” – supervisors and teachers working together</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The preschool</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learning continuum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool is based on play</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up the preschool work area</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cycle of preschool work</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to do when units arrive</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching your child learn and letting us know</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making an Audacity message</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational ideas</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome to the distance education preschool

For many, the preschool year is both the first time children and parents have had any contact with an educational institution and with distance education. As teachers we are mindful of this and it is our endeavour to consider and accommodate your special circumstances whatever they may be. Our experience tells us that no two families or children themselves are the same. We therefore do all we can to provide the best possible learning environment for your child. In distance education, as it is with children in face to face preschools, a joint effort and open communication between parents and teachers is essential to creating and enriching the child’s learning. As a supervisor, you are our eyes and ears and so we value your partnership and we look forward to working closely with you and your child throughout the year.

We recommend that this booklet is stored close to your work area so it can be referred to as needed. If a topic has not been covered, or you have hints that may be useful to others, please let us know.

We are looking forward to working with you and your child and know it will be an enjoyable time for everyone. Your enthusiasm will assist your child to have a positive attitude towards school.

Each teacher has their own telephone number and email address. These will be provided to you in early in the year once classes are finalised.

The school’s contact details are:
- Phone (02) 5804 7000
- Fax (02 6884 0777

Dressing up and role playing
Dubbo School of Distance Education Preschool Program

The Preschool program that we provide at Dubbo School of Distance Education has been developed using the new Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. The Framework’s vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming. Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.

Being is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just ‘be’- time to play, try new things and have fun.

Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

Our preschool also aims to provide children with a solid and broad foundation of planned and sequenced learning experiences in order to allow them to reach their full potential in future years. As in life’s experiences, developmental experiences cannot be categorised but are broadly classified into five areas.

It is recommended that in line with other preschool children throughout NSW, your preschooler be involved in this program for 12-15 hours per week. It is up to each family to organise a time for preschool activities which best fits in with the rest of their weekly routines.

**Communication**
- Talking & Listening
- Reading & Writing
- Dramatic Play

**Physical Skills**
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Health Routines
- Safety Practices

**Creativity**
- Art & Craft
- Music

**Intellectual**
- Organising
- Problem Solving
- Using our Senses
- Developing mathematically in number, measurement and space.

**Social and Emotional**
- Having a Positive Self Image
- Learning Independence
- Working as a Group
- Behaving Appropriately
- Being Responsible
Preschool distance education is all about supervisors and teachers working together for children through a sequenced program of play-based activities.
The Preschool

Preschool is:
- a child-centred, play-based year of learning. It is very ‘hands-on’ as children learn best when using their hands
- listening to stories and talking about them
- fun! It is playing with others, playing by yourself, playing with all manner of things and even playing in the mud!

Preschool is not:
- the early Kindergarten curriculum
- heavily structured
- learning to read, write or do maths in a formal way.
In the year before school the child develops:

- cognitive (thinking) skills
- physical skills
- social and emotional skills
- communication skill
- creative skills.

This leads to the school years and more formal learning of:

- computer skills
- reading/writing/speaking/listening
- personal development/health/sport
- creative and visual arts
- science and technologies
- problem solving.

Which leads to the years after school where learning continues and takes the form of:

- budgeting
- hobbies
- occupations
- successful parenting
- sports
- informed decision making
- life skills
- community awareness.

Early learning is an important and age-appropriate part of our life long quest!
Preschool is based on play

Why play?

Your child’s individual program is based on play and is aimed to develop your child’s creativity, curiosity, skills and knowledge.

Play is a vital component to the learning process of all children. It is their way of learning about themselves and exploring the world around them.

Play is essential for a child’s physical, social, emotional, communicative and intellectual development.

Play allows a child to freely explore the world around them. It provides a spontaneous and safe outlet for feelings, e.g. acting out new situations such as a new brother/sister in the household, a flood, a bushfire, a hospital experience etc. Through play the child is allowed to act out feelings and situations that may otherwise be unacceptable. Play allows for physical release. It uses surplus energy and develops and strengthens large and small muscles.

All children pass through the same stages of play. The length of time in each stage will depend on each individual so ages are given only as a guide.

Solitary play – 0 to 2½ years
The child is:
- absorbed in his/her own play and activities
- not really interested in playing with others or their wellbeing.

Parallel play – 2½ to 4 years
The child:
- engages in solitary play adjacent to another child’s play
- demonstrates, passing interest in the other child’s play
- occasionally engages in joint play.

Co-operative play – 4 years +
The child begins to engage in group play where small or larger groups of children actively play together.

Did you realise that a substantial part of your child’s learning takes place during 0 to 5 years of age?
Setting up the preschool work area

Things to consider

- Where will your preschooler work?
- If possible, set up a special workplace for preschool activities.

- What is needed in this work area?
  - Floor space that can be cleaned easily
  - Storage space – cupboards, shelves
  - Display areas
  - Comfortable furniture
  - Quiet library area – a corner with bookcase and cushions is ideal
  - A “useful box” – a collection of bits and pieces that can be used as the need arises, e.g. material scraps, feathers, magazines, boxes, cylinder rolls, cotton reels etc.
  - CD player
  - Equipment sent by school
  - Your own toys
  - School calendar to mark relevant dates

The cycle of preschool work

You must return to us before we can return to you.

For your child to gain the most benefit from the preschool program, work needs to be returned on a regular basis. Preschool work is cyclical. While you are working on one unit of your child’s program, the next unit is being prepared to be sent to you.

This booklet has been included in your first unit of work – Unit 1. After your first week of work with this unit, we ask that you return to us your first weeks evaluation, some work samples and relevant forms. You will then continue to work on this unit for another 3 weeks.

Meanwhile, once we have received your first weeks’ evaluation, we will begin to program and pack your next unit of work so that it arrives at your place to begin work when you finish Unit 1. This will be a six week unit and will contain both a programmed unit of work and equipment. However do remember to utilise your own books and equipment as well as those sent from school.

On your program sheet will be anticipated start and finish dates for each unit. It is a good idea to use the school calendar to mark the dates that units of work (either in boxes or packs) are to be started and returned to school. If you are unable to return your work by the date as indicated, please discuss this with your teacher so the program can be adjusted to meet your specific needs.

Remember it is a requirement of the Preschool to return work on a regular basis. Failure to do so will bring your enrolment under review.
What to do when units arrive

When your units (in either boxes or packs) arrive, open them by yourself so that you can check and familiarise yourself with the contents and read the enclosed information. Is there anything that needs your immediate attention?

The arrival of a new unit does not mean you return the unit you are working on. This unit needs to be finished before the new one is started, as the child’s program is sequential. Put the new unit away until you have completed the unit you are working on.

We recommend that you wait until it is time to start the unit before allowing your child to go through the contents of the boxes or packs. However when it is time to start the unit, share it with your child. Together you can listen to the message and look through the equipment.

An important message!!

Preschool is an important stage of your child’s education.

It is necessary that your preschooler has time alone with you. This means the other family members must have things to do while you work with your preschooler.

How you organise this depends largely on the age and interests of your children. Try and make it clear to your other family members that this is the preschooler’s lesson time and that they will have their own time later.
Watching your child learn and letting us know

Feedback is the lifeline
While you can watch your child work through programmed (and unprogrammed) activities, the teacher cannot. Unless you tell us, we cannot know if there are other circumstances, which have affected the way your child is working. These may include the birth of a baby in the family, sickness, hectic work routine, late nights, shearing, overload etc. Therefore, your feedback is vital and will help us program appropriately.

You can tell us what is happening by:
- writing comments on the program sheet next to each listed activity
- writing a short letter
- speaking on the Audacity program and emailing the message to your teacher
- speaking on the phone
- faxing or emailing.

We don’t expect your child will like everything and we would appreciate your honest feedback on all aspects of your child’s preschool program.

Some points to consider when informing us of your progress include:
- the time spent on an activity
- the child’s attitude
- use of materials
- how much help your child needed
- what you helped with
- language used while doing the activity.

Developing gross and fine motor skills
Making an Audacity Message

Your teacher will use a program called Audacity. You will be sent the Audacity Program at the beginning of the year to install on your computer. If you don't have access to a computer don't worry, your teacher will make other arrangements. The Audacity program is a great way that both you and your teacher can communicate using email.

Things that you may like to put on your Audacity Message.

- **You and your child talking together** – telling news, talking about the work completed or even about a book.
- How the unit went, comments about programmed activities, any interruptions to routine that may have affected preschool activities, anything coming up that we may need to know about.
- A goodbye (to let us know the message is finished).

Organisational ideas

These ideas are designed to make it easier for you to organise and store preschool materials. They also give your child the opportunity to be responsible, to work independently as they get out the materials they need, use them and clear them away when finished.

**Home resources and storage tips**

Make up a week’s supply of paste, paint and play dough and store in an airtight container (e.g. Tupperware jug with lid, ice-cream container) in the fridge. Great time saver as well as being easy for your child to access.

Store collage materials in separate containers such as margarine, yoghurt and milk containers. You may wish to label them, not only with words, but also by sticking an example of what it is, e.g. macaroni on the label. Labelling and the use of containers gives the child valuable sorting and matching experience when putting in new supplies.

Squeeze bottles, such as those you get shampoo and/or sauce in, can be handy for keeping glue in. This saves on messy glue brushes.

Egg cartons are a great way to store little items such as drawing pins, buttons and paper clips.

If you are handy with a sewing machine, maybe you can make a set of pockets to be used to store various odds and ends.

An easy set of pigeon holes can be created out of milk containers. These can be stuck together and laid on their sides. Even two litre bottles can be used if the top part is removed.

To avoid losing small pieces equipment, encourage your child to only play with them on a spread out sheet or blanket.

A handy and accessible way to store string is to put the ball of string into a margarine container, cut a hole in the lid, thread it through and if you need any just pull it out through the hole.

Store scissors on a hook in a safe place, or put a hole in the top of a can and place the pointed end of the scissors in this when you wish to store them.

Provide a strong stapler and solid tape dispenser for your child’s use. This will help develop skills in using such equipment, and also in working independently.

For storing dress-up clothes, an old port or large painted box is handy. Paining the box seems to strengthen it.

Paper is best stored in an appropriate sized box in an easily accessible place for your preschooler.
Organising activities that are messy

By securing a piece of plastic or newspaper over your table or the easel makes it easier for your child to clean up after painting or using other messy materials.

Keep a bowl of soapy water and cloth handy and encourage your child to use them to wipe up any spills etc. as they happen and to wipe down tables when finished.

An easy way to dry paintings, collage, etc. is to peg them onto a clothes line or portable clothes airer.

A quick way to make a smock to protect your child's clothes when they are painting is to use a man's shirt put on backwards. The sleeves may be cut to a manageable length. Put elastic through the cuffs for a neat fit.

A good way to display your child's work is to secure a line across the room and peg their work to this. Work can also be pinned to a sheet of material and displayed in a prominent place. Don't forget the great display potential of the kitchen fridge.

For outside sand and water play, an old laundry basket or milk crate can be handy for storing the necessary equipment.

Onion and orange bags come in handy not only when storing awkward things but they also provide a great way to wash gear.

Reading

Try to encourage your child to read books in a special area, such as a book corner, as it not only encourages a good attitude towards reading, but also assists in keeping the books in good condition as they are away from paints, glue, scissors etc.

An old washing up drainer comes in handy when storing and displaying books – just prop them up as you would the dinner plates.

A set of pockets made from durable material or strong plastic (or both) is fabulous for storing as well as displaying books.

A painted cardboard box is also a useful way of storing library books.

Encourage the use of the library bag for storage of books from the school. This makes it easier to: carry them; keep track of them; and keep them in good condition.

A blackboard or whiteboard can be handy in keeping track of the books borrowed from the school. As soon as they arrive write the name and the due date up on the board and when returning them you will know what to send. Remember to wipe the items from the board when you have returned them.

For a change to your preschool program, try setting up the painting, play dough or collage activities outside underneath a shady tree. This small change can often renew your child's interest in the activity.
Painting

Sorting

Playing
Visiting the school

If you are visiting Dubbo at any time, your child’s teacher would love to see you and your child. Please ring a couple of days beforehand so we can expect you.

The map on this page will help you find us.