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Highland Grove Preschool Information Booklet

Introduction

Welcome to Highland Grove Preschool. We hope that your time with us will be a happy and rewarding one, for both yourself and your child. This booklet contains information about goals, policies, philosophy and procedures to help you and your child make a smooth transition into the preschool environment.

Highland Grove Preschool is privately owned by Chris & Kylie Wade. Kylie began her career at Highland Grove in 1988, after completing University with a Diploma in Early Childhood Education. Kylie was employed by the previous owners as Teacher and Director until leaving teaching to have her first son.

Since purchasing the centre in 1998, Chris and Kylie have had their second son, and Kylie works alongside the enthusiastic and dedicated team of childcare professionals, as a "Teaching Director". Chris is a licensed builder and can often be seen maintaining the Preschool.

Centre Information

Address; 8 Teal Close, Green Point NSW 2251.

Phone and Fax number; (02)43676935.

Email address; highlandgrove@ozemail.com.au

Alternatively; info@highlandgrove.com.au

Website; www.highlandgrove.com.au

CRN; 555011592A

ABN; 31207822712

Philosophy

At Highland Grove Preschool we strive to create a peaceful, caring environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and friendship prevails. Our approach to early childhood development is of a holistic nature. We are concerned for the social, emotional, physical, cognitive and language development of each child.

The staff provide an environment that is warm and nurturing, appealing to the eye and conducive for individual, small and large group activities. Each child is a unique individual with varying backgrounds, needs and abilities and the staff aim to provide activities which acknowledge the children's backgrounds and interest and extend their abilities. The staff engage the children in stimulating experiences, allowing them to explore, investigate and create. Our approach to learning is individual and supportive, encouraging the natural inquisitive nature of children as they learn the skills to discover, predict and preserve.

Highland Grove works in conjunction with the local school communities to support a smooth transition to school for each child and their family. Networking between our centre, schools, Early Intervention settings and a variety of professionals and community groups is on-going.

At Highland Grove we encourage and foster family involvement by developing partnerships through open communication, consultation and the sharing of information. Our centre enjoys a supportive relationship with the wider community, respecting and celebrating its diversity.

Our centre is collaborative in its approach to staff. Each member of the team is respected and valued. Highland Grove is supportive of staff development and is committed to remaining up to date with current practice, maintaining long term staff and advocating for the wider field of early childhood education.

Relationships are the key at Highland Grove, amongst the children, families, management and staff. By valuing each and every person, our centre ensures that the setting is approachable, reliable and secure.

General Goals

- To develop independence by encouraging and guiding happy separation from parents, self help skills and positive relationships with others.
- For children to develop skilful use of their bodies, both directed and spontaneous, by revisiting, challenging and extending their fine and gross motor skills.
- To build positive relationships with their peers, family and the wider community.
- To become aware of their own thoughts, feelings and begin to achieve empathy and insight into the feelings and concerns of others.
- To begin to understand that there are consequences for actions, to respect the rights of others and to develop skills to participate as a member of a group.
- To express their feelings and ideas through speech, play, movement, music, drama and art.
- To become skilled and competent in activities that the child sees as valuable, to foster a positive self concept.
- To observe, question and organise their thinking about the world through information, tools and equipment and to encourage problem solving.
- To become eager for new experiences and confident in their ability to meet them.
- To develop skills and concepts, providing readiness for reading, writing and numeracy.
- Enjoy an aesthetically pleasing environment.

About Our Centre

Highland Grove is open from 8.30-4.30 pm, Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the year and closed for four weeks at Christmas and all Public Holidays. We do not close for the school holidays in April, July and October and fees are still to be paid as usual whether your child does or does not attend (see Absent Diary). Two weeks notice must be given to the Director prior to the termination of attendance. There is an enrolment fee which is non refundable but which will be used for upgrading or purchasing equipment. We are licensed by the NSW Department of Community Services, our nearest branch being Gosford.

Accreditation

The Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) is a Commonwealth Government initiative linked to Child Care Benefit approval for Centre Based Long Day Care Centres. (Highland Grove Preschool comes under this grouping.) The QIAS is administered by the National Accreditation Council Inc. (NCAC).

Highland Grove Preschool and all other centres participating in the QIAS are required to achieve and maintain the quality standards for Accreditation. These standards are set out in the "Quality Practices Guide". The centre staff, management and families must progress through a five step process, set out below, every 2.5 years.

Step.1. REGISTRATION

The centre registers with the NCAC and pays an initial registration fee and an annual registration fee to participate in the QIAS.

Step. 2. SELF STUDY AND CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT

On a regular and cyclical basis, the centre makes a self assessment of the quality of its practice by consulting with all centre staff, management and families. The centre evaluates the quality of its practice for each of the principles against standards outlined in the Quality Practices Guide. The result of this process becomes the centres "Continuing Improvement Plan". At specific times when Highland Grove's "Self Study Report" is due our ratings for each principle (decided by our families, staff and management) and our "Continuing Improvement Plan" for each of the 7 quality areas are summarized into our Self-Study Report and it is submitted to the NCAC.

Step.3. VALIDATION

An experienced and qualified Validator is selected and trained by the NCAC to visit our centre to evaluate our quality practices. When a Validator is selected the NCAC will send Highland Grove the Validation Surveys which must be completed by the Director, staff and families during the few weeks prior to the two day visit.

Accreditation Policy Continued

Step. 4. MODERATION

The process of Moderation helps to ensure that all centres participating in the QIAS are treated consistently on a national basis. All paperwork completed throughout the current cycle is reviewed by the Moderator and a Profile is correlated for the NCAC to finalize its decision.

Step.5. ACCREDITATION DECISION

The Accreditation Decision is the final step in the QIAS. To be Accredited we must achieve a rating of Satisfactory or higher in all 7 Quality areas on the Profile. The Certificate of Accreditation will be displayed in the centre foyer.

The documents to be used for the Accreditation process will be available for management, staff and family perusal throughout the year.

Information and up-dates for families, as well as examples of how the preschool is meeting each principle will be displayed in folders, on the notice board, in newsletters and passed on verbally throughout the Accreditation process.

A "Suggestion Box" is provided, welcoming comments and suggestions by parents/staff. Parent input will also be sought through discussions, surveys, photos and written reviews.

Preschool Fees

Fees are payable for each day your child is enrolled to attend, including days that they are absent due to sickness, family occasions or holidays.

Highland Grove preschool does not charge for Public Holidays.

The Director or office Manager requires two weeks notice of intention to leave or change days.

Highland Grove charges a bond of one weeks full fees, which is payable on enrolment. This will be refunded to you provided that two weeks notice is given when you leave the centre.

An Enrolment Fee of \$50.00 is also payable on enrolment. This fee is non-refundable and includes a HGP broad brimmed hat and t-shirt on enrolment.

The daily fee for both rooms is \$60.00 per day.

Methods of fee payment are cash (please hand to Director or Office Manger), cheque, EFTPOS (no credit accounts) and Direct Deposit.

It would be appreciated if all fees could be kept up to date. Families are welcome to pay their fees in the manner that best suits them, whether that be weekly, fortnightly or monthly, providing that fees are paid in advance and not in arrears. Please do not hesitate to come and see the Director or Office Manager if you experiencing any difficulties meeting your fee commitments, so that a suitable arrangement can be made and to avoid putting your child's enrolment in jeopardy.

Highland Grove issues a monthly statement at the beginning of the month for fees the current months fees and any outstanding. This statement and all receipts will be placed into the Family Communication Pockets upon processing. A receipt includes the child's full name, date/s of care, date of payment, amount paid and absences, in accordance with the government Child Care Management System.

Late Fee Policy

Highland Grove Preschool is licensed to care for children between the hours of 8.30am and 4.30pm. This means that all children must be collected and off the premises by 4.30. We understand that there may be occasions where circumstances beyond your control may prevent you from arriving on time to collect your child and assure you there will always be two staff available to care for your child (as per our D.O.C.S regulations); however this will incur a late fee.

The late fee charged is \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes and part thereof, followed by a fee of \$8.00 for each five minutes, or part thereof following, and is in line with paying overtime for staff to remain to supervise your child. Should this occur, you will be advised in writing and this charge will be included on your account and payable with your next fee payment.

Absent Diary

The "Absent Diary" applies to days absent as a result of illness, holidays or occasional days where a **minimum of 24 hours notice has been given to the office**. Families requiring an extra day may "buy" the day if it is available in the appropriate playroom.

- All days absent need to be paid for in advance, as stated in our Fee Policy.
- Credits for days sold will be processed in arrears.
- All preschool days for which your child is enrolled are to be paid for regardless of any absences. Credits for sold days will be included in the following month statement.
- Absence days sold will also automatically adjust any approved absence days recorded for the purposes of Child Care Benefit
- Absent days will not be advertised on the whiteboard so please check with the office for availability of extra days.
- Allocation of days can only be done by management via the office and not by private arrangement between families.
- Children with additional needs, such as a severe allergy, or those linked to an "Inclusion Worker", will need to discuss purchasing an extra day with the Director as it may impact on the daily running of the centre.

Child Care Benefit

Child Care Benefit is available to all families. Please check with the Family Assistance Office for information required to complete an assessment.

Some important points to know about CCB:

- A **50 hour per week limit** for working parents, parents studying or registered as looking for work.
- A **24 hour per week** limit for families with one or more non-working parent, or parent that does not fit into the above category.

Leave Entitlement for Child Care Benefit

Child Care Benefit will be payable for 42 days each child is absent from Preschool per Financial Year (July to June). We will assist you in keeping a tally by providing a monthly statement detailing how many absences your child has had for the current financial year. This information is also included on your fees receipt. If your child attends another centre it is your responsibility to keep a total tally of absences.

Child Care Benefit will not be paid for any absences after these 42 days, unless they are an APPROVED ABSENCE DAY.

Approved Absence Days are not included in the 42 day absence limit.

Some of the approved absences include: - illness with a medical certificate, non-immunization, parent R.D.O.s and Public Holidays.

For further information please contact your nearest Family Assistance Office. Phone: 136150.

Child Care Tax Rebate (C.C.T.R)

Child Care Tax Rebate can be paid quarterly or annually. This payment covers 50% of out-of-pocket child care expenses for approved child care, with a rebate of up to \$7,500.00 (indexed) per child per year, for eligible families. For more information please contact the Family assistance Office.

Orientation Procedure

The centre has an orientation procedure for parents, caregivers and children. The majority of the new enrolments occur at the start of a year, with the children starting preschool in late January. Occasionally we do have midyear enrolments and use the waitlist to fill this position. These families receive an individual orientation. As we use the contact phone numbers and address families provide us when they fill in the waitlist application, it is important to notify us if these change.

Enrolments for January positions in either the Starlight Room (3-4 year olds) or the Moonbeam Room (4-5 year olds) begin in the September of the year prior to the children starting. The Director uses the waitlist and contacts families by phone to offer a position. At this point the family indicates their preferred day/s of attendance and the Director confirms this position.

Within the next 3 to 4 weeks the family receives a pack in the mail containing an enrolment letter, Enrolment Form, Getting to know your preschooler sheet and Information Booklet. The letter notifies the families of the coming Orientation events. These include a Parent Information Evening and a choice of visit dates for the preschool and their family to attend an Orientation afternoon at the preschool. Families ring in to Highland Grove to RSVP to both the evening and one of the afternoons.

The Parent Information Evening is held in November. On this night the centre management team reviews the centre policies, procedures and methods of programming.

The Orientation afternoons are held through November and early December. They are a lovely way for the children to become familiar with our preschool environment and the staff.

If families are unable to attend the planned orientation events they will be offered a visit to the centre for these purposes.

A signature is required on our Enrolment Form testifying that parents have read our Information book.

Entry to Preschool

These are government guidelines concerning priority access for our enrolments. These are as follows:-

Priority One: Children "at risk".

Priority Two: Both parents working, seeking employment or studying/training for future employment.

Priority Three: Children or parents with a disability.

Priority Four: Parents at home with more than one child below school age or single parents at home.

Groupings of Children

Children are grouped according to their age and expected year of starting school. Therefore the Moonbeam Room will have children definitely/possibly attending school the following year and the Starlight Room will have those children who will be returning to Highland Grove for at least one other year.

Health and Safety

The entire Highland Grove team of staff are alert to the health and welfare of each child at the centre. In order to maintain a safe environment for all children we ask you to ensure that gates are kept shut and sharp toys, glass jars, bottles and ropes are not to be brought into the pre-school. Please always enter and exit the pre-school through the front door, unless it is raining in which case the back gateway may be used. There are always several staff members with current First Aid on the premises. There is an emergency plan in case of accidents - the parents will be notified or the emergency contact contacted. All details of accidents will be recorded. Please ensure that all contact numbers are current. If necessary, an injured child will be accompanied to the hospital until the arrival of a parent or emergency contact. Parents are required to nominate a Doctor and Dentist to meet D.O.C.S regulations.

What to Bring to Preschool

- **Please clearly label all of your child's belongings**
- A labelled drink bottle with water.
- A packed lunch and morning tea (please send a healthy and nutritious lunch and keep chips, chocolates fizzy drinks etc for home.)
- A fitted cot sheet set and a cover blanket in cooler months. (Fitted sheets are required for Accreditation).
- A comforter/special sleeping toy if required (e.g. favourite teddy).
- A wide-brimmed sun hat and t-shirt if your child wears a singlet top in the summer months.
- A spare change of clothes. Please send children in clothing they can handle easily to achieve independent toileting
- Children wear aprons for messy activities but can't stay clean all the time. Make sure your child wears old play clothes so they can participate without fear of spoiling their good clothes.
- Children should wear shoes or sandals, not thongs, for their own safety on climbing equipment etc.
- It is advisable to discourage your child from bringing their own precious toys to Preschool as they may be broken or lost.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very important in a child's life and we like to make them as enjoyable as possible. Please send along a cake (or cup cakes are always wonderful) on your child's birthday so they can celebrate with friends. Whether your cake is homemade or shop bought, please include a list of ingredients to assist us with allergies. (Shops and bakeries are getting used to this now). If you do not want your child to participate in birthdays or other celebrations due to religious or other reasons please notify staff.

Arrival and Departure of Your Preschooler

Please begin your child's day by helping them to place their lunch, hat and bag in their lockers. [Locker names are on the sign in sheets]. When you are ready to leave, say goodbye to your child and ensure that a clear hand over to a staff member has been made. Staff will support and comfort your child when saying goodbye. If your child is upset when you leave do not hesitate to phone us if you are feeling anxious. We will always phone you if your child is not showing signs of settling down.

All children need to be brought into the playrooms and collected from the centre by a **responsible adult** over 16 years of age.

- Children must be signed in and out of the centre each day for Child Care Benefit and Licensing Guidelines.
- A list of adults authorised to collect your child is provided by you at the time of enrolment, or indicated to us on your sign on sheet in the morning when dropping off your child. Please let us know if this person changes as staff will strictly adhere to this.
- When a parent needs to phone through the day to nominate a pickup person, we may ask to see photo identification (such as a drivers licence) to ensure the safety of the child.
- Highland Grove staff enjoy using the morning drop off and afternoon pickup times as a chance to chat with parents and carers. Please make an appointment should you wish to discuss anything concerning your child at length or in private.
- Staff will attempt to ensure that a child's usual pattern of eating and sleeping is not changed too quickly. Children are not made to sleep, however younger children are encouraged to relax and enjoy a "quiet time".
- All children need to be collected from the centre by 4.30pm. Where children have not been collected parents will be contacted first followed by emergency contacts. A late fee may apply if your preschooler is collected after our licensed closing time.

Settling Into Preschool

Going to pre-school is usually the first step a young child takes to join a large group outside the home environment. No matter how much the child is looking forward to this it is a big adjustment for them.

Children will react to this in a variety of ways and some children take longer than others to settle into a new environment. Children normally settle well within the first ten minutes of the day, but rest assured we would not allow your child to remain seriously distressed for the whole day.

Try to settle your child by joining and watching their activities. Ensure a staff member is there to receive and if necessary comfort your child. When you say goodbye, mention you will be back to collect your child in the afternoon and please leave when you say you are going to.

Never try to leave without saying goodbye in the hope of avoiding tears, as this can undermine your child's sense of trust.

Remember that, whatever the reason your child is attending preschool, socialisation is an essential part of your child's development. At Highland Grove you can be assured that your child will be in a safe, friendly and caring environment in which to grow and learn.

Centre Policies

Immunisation Policy

In relation to the Public Health Act, 1992, Directors of Child Care Centres have certain responsibilities. Parents enrolling children into a centre must provide a record of the child's immunization status. Parents are given an individual reminder of this requirement in writing. If no documentation arrives at the centre it is possible that we will treat the child as not immunized.

Records are also required to be kept at preschool of any additional immunizations your child has during the time they are enrolled at H.G.P. These records are to be in the form of an Immunisation History Statement. (These may include chicken pox, meningococcal or the compulsory 4 year immunization -DTPa, MMR and Polio). We are happy to photocopy the original of these documents for you here at Highland Grove.

Information concerning the current vaccine register required for infants and children and the local vaccination clinics will be available for families on display in our foyer. A poster is completed in each room with stickers for each preschooler who has had their 4 year old immunization.

In the event of an outbreak of a notifiable disease (one that is part of the vaccine register) the centre is required to contact our closest Public Health Unit, which is Central Coast Public Health Unit on 43494845 and notify families via our white communication board.

To be eligible to receive Child Care Benefit children must be immunised, have a letter from their doctor as to why they are not so or declare themselves a Conscientious Objector through the Family Assistance Office.

Information about current and relevant immunization available for child care professionals is provided to the staff and discussed at staff meetings. Individual records of staff immunizations are kept in each staff members file.

Sun Protection Policy

The aim of the policy is to develop:

Positive attitudes towards skin protection, lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer, personal responsibility for and decision-making about skin protection, awareness of the need for environmental changes in child care centres to reduce the level of exposure to the sun.

IMPLEMENTATION

When outdoors at Highland Grove Preschool all children will wear sunsmart clothing including hats and t.shirts. Hats will be broad brimmed or legionnaire style and will cover face, neck, ears and the crown of the head. T.shirts will be worn at all times and children who wear mid-drifts or singlet tops are asked to bring a t.shirt to cover their shoulders during outdoor play times. The preschool will supply extra hats and t.shirts to children without adequate sun protection.

Highland Grove staff will apply SPF 30+ broad spectrum sunscreen (we use The Cancer Council brand) to children 20 minutes prior to outdoor play sessions. The children will be encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under adult supervision. Children who suffer from allergies may bring their own sunscreen.

Staff will be positive role models and wear hats, appropriate clothing and sunscreen. They will model skin protection behavior by using shaded areas of the playground.

Outdoor play will be minimized between 11.am and 3.00pm where possible. Activities and learning experiences will be offered in shaded areas of the playground and on the verandah and will be moved as the shade moves throughout the day. Shaded areas may be increased by using additional shelters and structures. Staff will regularly review and monitor the quality and conditions of all shade options.

Sun protection education is an intrinsic part of the program. Sun protection practices and procedures are incorporated regularly into the learning program through dramatic and role play, songs, stories, discussions etc

Information on sun protection will be shared and made available through newsletters, brochures, DVDs, etc.

Sickness Policy

Infections spread quickly in large groups and we are unable to provide the special care a sick child requires. Parents are asked to please keep their child at home if they have any of the following:

A temperature, diarrhea, vomiting, chicken pox, diphtheria, measles, mumps, ring worm, head lice, excessive discharge from eyes, ears or nose, conjunctivitis, severe skin rash/ infection, infectious hepatitis, rubella, cold sores and impetigo.

A 'Recommended period of Exclusion' poster is displayed in the centre foyer and provided for families in a handout early each year.

If a child develops an illness during the day they will be kept as separate as possible from the other children until a parent or emergency contact person is able to collect them. The staff on the child's playroom will notify the Director before contacting the child's family. If the child is suffering from a temperature and the family has completed the appropriate part of the Enrolment Form, paracetamol can be administered by the staff if the child's temperature exceeds 38 C. This is to assist the child as they wait for their caregiver or parent to collect them. Should a parent contacted fail to collect their child after contact has been made, emergency contacts provided on the child's Enrolment form, will be phoned to collect the child.

A record of staff and child illnesses will be kept in our "Illness Register" to track possible cross infections occurring at the centre. Staff who are ill will remain at home. If they become ill during the day they will be replaced by one of our regular casual staff members. If there is an outbreak of head lice in the centre the bikes will be temporarily removed from our playground, thus removing helmets from use for the time of the outbreak.

Medication Forms are provided at the sign on sheets for parents or care givers to complete if staff are required to administer medication. Please see our Medication Policy.

Food and Nutrition Policy

Highland Grove Preschool is required to meet Food Standards Australia's guidelines specifying that all food provided by the centre and eaten at our preschool is within the guidelines of good nutrition. We require that parents send a nutritious lunch for their child. We strongly discourage chips, chocolate, rollups, lollies, fizzy drinks etc. A sandwich, fruit and yogurt, as an example, is recommended as an ideal lunch for preschool. Crispbreads, fruit or veggie sticks are some healthy examples of morning tea.

The families provide most of the food required during our day; however Highland Grove does provide Afternoon Tea from 2.00pm as part of our progressive Afternoon Table Activities. Our daily menu includes platters of fresh seasonal fruit, cheese and savory crackers. The drinks provided are milk, and water.

Records of children's allergies, taken from Enrolment Forms, will be displayed in each room and in the kitchen. At any time when enrolments include a child suffering from Anaphylaxis to nuts the centre will be a total "Nut Free Zone" for the entire week. Allergies to other foods will be managed by not making those foods available to those children on the day/s they attend. Families will be given as much notice as possible when foods are excluded and reminders, such as notes in lunch boxes and stickers on sign-on sheets and/or lunch boxes, will be provided.

Staff perform daily checks of lunch boxes on the days a child with anaphylaxis attends. These daily checks are recorded and filed. An Action Plan for each anaphylactic child will be displayed by the preschool phone, including all relevant emergency information. Staff will take part in regular, appropriate training.

Staff ensure that all children's hands are washed before they eat or drink. Staff supervise and sit with the children during their meal times and ensure that children do not share lunches. Uneaten lunches will be sent home. The Staff encourages and talks to the children about their healthy lunch boxes.

Families are asked to place morning tea and lunch items which are perishable in the clearly labeled room baskets in the preschool fridge. Please label each item with the child's name and the date using the

markers in the playrooms or attached to the fridge. The staff will support this with reminders to families of this procedure.

Water is available throughout the day, including outdoor playtimes. The staff will remind children to have drinks throughout the day and drinking water is included as part of some transition times, such as when the children come in from outside playtimes.

The children discuss healthy eating regularly as part of their program; they are encouraged to make choices about "sometimes" food and "everyday" food. Cooking is included in the program, giving the children the opportunity to explore their senses and perhaps gain new experiences.

Updates and opportunities to review our Nutrition Policy will occur regularly. The centre will provide helpful information relating to good nutrition to assist families and staff. These include "The Good Bite" staff and parent Newsletters, posters and in service training.

Access and Custody Policy

Parents, whether married or otherwise, have joint legal responsibilities for their children unless there is a Court Order determining otherwise. As our staff need to be clear about who has legal responsibility, we require a copy of any access order issued by the court and updates to this if any changes are made. This is a requirement of our State Licensing Regulations. In a case where someone other than the primary carer attempts to collect the child every effort will be made to contact the primary carer to notify them of the other party's arrival at the centre and their intentions.

Medication Policy

Staff are unable to administer medication without parent authority. A medication slip is located beside the Sign on Sheets. Parents must fill in the slip if they require staff to administer medication and hand the slip to a staff member with the medication. Only prescribed medication or medication accompanied by a doctor's letter will be administered. No prescription

Medication Policy continued;

medication will be administered unless the child's name is printed on the label.

All medicine must arrive at preschool in its own bottle – medication in separate jars, medicine cups, syringes etc cannot be administered. All medication will be kept in a locked box in the fridge unless otherwise instructed on the label. Alternately, in a locked box in the high cupboard of the kitchen.

The administering of medication is the responsibility of the full time staff member on each room to oversee. The Medication Form will be signed by two staff members i.e. one who administers medication and one who witnesses administration and dosage.

The medication slip (signed by the parent in the morning) is filed into the Medication Folder on top of the microwave oven at the same time as the medication is returned to the parent to go home.

In the event of a child's temperature exceeding 38°C, and when the permission slip on the child's Enrolment Form has been signed by a parent, two staff members will administer preschool's own children's paracetamol (kept in locked box on preschool premises for these occasions) whilst the child waits to be collected.

Medication Procedure

1. Parent completes Medication Form. (These are kept in the back section of the folder with the sign on sheets).
2. The Medication Form and child's medication are kept together in one of the locked Medication Boxes in the kitchen.
3. Medication is administered by the full-time staff member from the child's room. (In the case of that staff member's absence, by the next most regularly attending staff member).
4. A second staff member witnesses correct medication and dosage given and signs form.
5. Medication and Medication Form is returned to the Medication Box.
6. As the child departs centre, medication is taken from the box by a member of staff and returned to the parent. Medication Form is filed (by the month) into the Medication Folder.

Family Involvement and Communication Policy

Communication between families and the preschool is imperative to our program and the running of the centre. Methods of communication include Newsletters, Daily Program Sheets (these highlight activities enjoyed and learning outcomes achieved throughout that day and have a space for written family input) sleep and lunch charts, Medication, Accident and Change of Clothes Forms, whiteboard and family communication pockets. Most important are the daily discussions with families on arrival and departure at preschool. These are an invaluable resource for providing the regular sharing of information vital for a partnership between preschool and families.

Longer interviews can be organized with teachers by appointment to discuss any concerns or queries.

A Portfolio is kept for each child and a Developmental Child Profile is sent home twice a year.

Special events and functions will be run throughout the year to involve families in our preschool. These are an annual "Father (or special guy!) Evening, a "Red Nose Disco" for the whole family (to raise money for S.I.D.S), an Orientation Night and may also include Market Evenings, parenting courses and guest speakers, such as Dr John Irvine.

We welcome parent's comments in any area. Highland Grove encourages family members to speak with us at any time if there is any input they can share to further enrich our centre.

Procedure for Grievances or Complaints

If a parent or caregiver has a concern or complaint this should be discussed with either centre Director, out of the presence of children. A parent complaint form can be completed and kept on file. The Director will follow up the complaint and return to the parent with an explanation or conclusion. All complaints will be kept confidential.

D.O.C.S will be notified of the complaint, unless the complaint is of an obviously trivial nature. D.O.C.S will also be notified of the action taken in response to the complaint as soon as reasonably practical.

Inclusion Policy

The staff keep detailed developmental records on all children and respond to their individual needs. Close attention will be given to observing and recording children's development so that children needing extra support or assessment can be clearly identified.

Parents are always asked permission before any extra assessment is sought. Staff work co-operatively with families and other professionals (such as Speech and Occupational therapists and/or Early Intervention Staff) to form a Developmental and Inclusion Support Plan for the individual child.

An "Inclusion Support Scheme" (ISS) is available for children who have an on-going need for a high level of support in a Child Care environment. This scheme follows a set of guidelines and can access an additional worker to support the staff in the Inclusion of the child into the preschool program.

Highland Grove Preschool values each child's individuality and difference, interactions are always respectful and responsive to each child and meet individual needs. The inclusion of children with additional needs encourages positive attitudes for the entire community within our preschool. The staff model positive interactions and encourage empathy amongst the preschool community and the staff's knowledge of each child is always taken into consideration.

Positive Guidance Policy

Positive early relationships and opportunities to be curious and explore, lead children to develop confidence, emotional control, the ability to get along with others and to cope with stress.

AIM

To have a centre policy regarding positive behaviour management which encourages children to develop an awareness of co-operation, enhances their self esteem and encourages their ability to interact with others.

IMPLEMENTATION

- ☺ The staff use a positive approach when guiding children.
- ☺ The children are involved in the setting of limits and explanations are offered as to why a certain type of behaviour is unacceptable. i.e. The safety of others.
- ☺ The staff's guidance encourages each child's individuality and confidence and never lowers their self esteem.
- ☺ The children are presented with clear alternatives to help them develop the ability to make decisions and direct themselves.
- ☺ The staff gently remove a child whose behavior is disruptive without physical force, until such time as the child has settled down and is able to return to the group situation.
- ☺ The language used by the staff is clear, positive, and developmentally appropriate.
- ☺ The staff have age appropriate expectations for the child in their care.
- ☺ The staff show consideration and sensitivity to children's backgrounds and current home situations.
- ☺ The staff discuss with families the centre's Guidance Policy and seek their assistance for positive outcomes.
- ☺ The staff encourage other children to show empathy for others experiencing difficulties.
- ☺ The centre staff participates in positive guidance training through staff meetings and in-servicing.
- ☺ The centre provides families with information regarding positive parenting. These include reading materials, attending support groups and regular conversations with staff.

Creative and Expressive Arts Policy

Our program focuses on the creative process of Arts and Crafts and the expressive process of drama and music. The emphasis is on providing stimulating activities where the process is an interesting learning experience for all the children.

Children have the opportunity to explore the creative and expressive arts through free play sessions, both indoor and outdoor. Opportunities are also provided for the children to participate in teacher directed art, craft, drama and music experiences. These experiences are directed by qualified early childhood educators and professionals.

Children will be exposed to a variety of music types, including songs from other cultures and music that is modern and classical. Children will have the opportunity to explore music, both in the instrumental form and verbal form, such as singing and chanting. These experiences provide children the opportunity to develop a sense of self and assist in language and listening skills.

The exploration of art and craft activities provides opportunities for each child to explore a process from beginning to end, building on their ability to problem solve and predict outcomes and to extend upon their imagination and creativity.

The arts foster curiosity, risk taking, adaptability, co-operation and imagination. By providing a program rich in expressive and creative arts we are valuing broad cultural diversity and highlighting social harmony.

Visitors to the centre throughout the year will include musicians, puppeteers, dancers and visitors from other cultures.

Children will be exposed to a variety of types of music, including songs from other cultures and music that is modern and classical.

The staff, management, families and children will enjoy participating in providing an aesthetically appealing environment together.

Programming and Evaluation Policy

Highland Grove Preschool's program is written daily and is based on the qualified and experienced staff's knowledge of child development, the children's interests and input from the centre's families. Underpinning the cycle of observation, planning follow up activities and reflecting on the outcomes, is the centre's philosophy and goals.

The content of the curriculum comes from written observations made of the children's interests, needs, skills and parent input. Parents are encouraged to share their family interests or experiences by writing directly onto our program or chatting to one of the members of staff. This input is then included as part of our daily program.

Room goals are written early in the year, in conjunction with the staff, children and families. Evaluation of these goals occurs throughout the year and these goals are considered when individual goals are set for each child.

A Developmental Profile is written at the first half of each year. The staff use information provided by families and their knowledge of the child to write goals for each child and give a brief description of the child's progress.

Portfolios are maintained for each child. Each child's Portfolio includes written observations, samples of their work, photographic documentation and the developmental profiles.

A Developmental Profile is completed at the end of the year, reflecting on the goals previously set for the child and documenting the child's development.

The children participate in projects throughout the year. These are a result of the children indicating a specific area of interest and involve exploration and research of a topic. The steps of the projects are documented for the children and their families to reflect upon and enjoy. These will often be located on the walls of our playrooms or in display folders around the centre.

Our daily program is on display in each room, next to the sign on sheets, and a photocopy is available for families to take home daily. The program is

Programming and Evaluation Policy continued;

accompanied by a computer slide show of photos reflecting the days experiences and books and resources on display which were used throughout the day.

Children' creativity and self expression are encouraged through a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities, music and movement groups, language and story times, dramatic play, arts and crafts, poetry, finger plays and songs.

Fine and gross motor skills are strengthened; maths and science concepts and natural aspects of our environment are explored.

Language development is encouraged through staff modeling correct language and a variety of opportunities for children to express themselves.

School readiness is approached holistically. The child's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development is all supported and each child's independence is strengthened. Staff provide a wide variety of activities designed to enhance a child's auditory, visual and tactile senses.

Further Policies

Further policies are available for your inspection and are located on display in each classroom.

Highland Grove's policies are reviewed annually and all policies in this Handbook have been reviewed in the past 12 months.

Notes

Staffing

Personnel at the preschool have appropriate qualifications and experience in meeting the needs of the young children in their care. Our ratio of trained staff/child is higher than required by D.O.C.S as is our amount of staff each day and this is reflected in our quality program.

Photographs and qualifications of our team are located outside the office.

Staff profiles and Qualifications- 2008

- **Kylie Wade** : Owner / Director (Diploma of Education /Early Childhood)
- **Michelle Purtell**: Co- Director (Bachelor of Education /Early childhood)
- **Karen Dumas** : Office Manager (Diploma of Business Management)
- **Sarah Monck** : Full Time Early Childhood Teacher (Bach. Of Teaching/ Early Childhood and Post Graduate Certificate in Special Needs)
- **Lesley Coleman** : Full Time Early Childhood Teacher (Bach. Of Teaching/ Early Childhood)
- **Tanya Collett**_: Part Time Team Teacher (Childcare Certificate)
- **Kim Yewdall**_: Part Time Team Teacher (Cert. of Childcare Studies)
- **Vicki Martin** : Part Time Child Care Assistant
- **Sharyn Roach** : Part Time Child Care Assistant
- **Rebekka Carroll** : Cert 3. In Child Studies completing a Diploma of Children's Services via traineeship
- **Tina Verschoor** : Trainee completing her Cert. 3 in Child studies
- **Jo Davison** : Part Time Child Care Assistant

Also part of our team are;

- **Cathy George**: Cert. 3 in Child Studies working in an "Inclusion Worker" position
- **Sheryle Berman** : Child Care Assistant working in a casual position.
- **Katherine Thomson** : Diploma of Child Studies, studying Bach. of Ed.
- **Rebecca Lambert** : Casual child care worker.
- **Amelia Rule** : Casual worker, completing her Early Childhood degree.

