

PreschoolsNSW

Education for Life



WHAT IS A PRESCHOOL?

PRESCHOOLS ARE WARM AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY HUBS, WHERE CONNECTIONS ARE MADE AND RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILT.

Preschools are licensed by Community Services under the Children's Services Regulation 2004 as a children's service.

Many preschools operate between 9am to 3pm, some operate between 8am to 4pm, or morning and/or afternoon sessions, from Monday to Friday.

Some services enrol in varying attendance patterns. Children benefit from at least two days per week at preschool.

The majority of preschools operate in line with public school terms and close during school holidays.

Preschools must follow minimum staffing levels set by the NSW Government. Some choose to provide a higher proportion of staff:

- one staff member for every eight children aged between two to three years
- one staff member for every ten children between three to six years.

Many preschools (but not all) employ at least one university-qualified teacher. The numbers of other trained staff vary depending on the size of the service. All preschools must employ staff with a current, approved first aid qualification on the premises at all times when children are present. Well qualified and experienced staff are highly regarded in the preschool sector.

Preschools can be managed by community organisations, church or local government or managed by a parent committee. Some are attached to other government bodies such as schools.

NSW preschools link back to 1895, with the kindergarten movement and, therefore, have an important place within NSW communities.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL PRESCHOOL

To locate your nearest preschool visit
www.preschoolsnsw.org.au



PRESCHOOLS

Preschools (also known as kindergartens) provide an educational program in a dedicated preschool setting catering for children aged between three and five years of age.

Educational programs are provided, based on the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child. Children generally may attend a number of days per week.

Most services operate between 9am–3pm during school terms only. Some preschools offer extended hours, which consists of the preschool program plus additional care before and after the program.

There are many benefits for children and families to be gained from preschool.

A PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE:

- empowers children to think, explore, question, wonder and learn how to learn;
- supports children's intellectual and language development and communication skills;
- offers children consistent, experienced, qualified educators to support their learning and development;
- improves children's ability to think, problem solve and reason as they enter school;
- develops social and emotional maturity and the ability to relate well to peers and adults, solve conflicts, play co-operatively and be assertive;
- provides a solid platform for life-long learning and education.



PRESCHOOLS ARE:

- fun places to be, with varied, exciting experiences planned to meet the needs and interests of children;
- a context to build social connections between families and the community;
- a source of professional information that supports parenting.



COMMUNITY-BASED PRESCHOOLS

One of the great things about preschools is that they are almost always community based, managed and owned.

Community-based services are not-for-profit services, where the profit (or surplus) is re invested in the service, while for-profit and corporate services are operated with the intention of profits being returned to the owners or shareholders.

There are **two major** types of community-based not-for-profit preschools:

1. Stand alone, where the service is managed by a committee comprising parents and community members.
2. Sponsored, where a number of preschools are managed by an organisation, sometimes with advisory committees comprised of parents and community members.

The beauty of community-based preschools is that they are generally managed by the parents whose children are attending the preschool at that time, which emphasises the community investment in the service. NSW preschools employ professional teachers and educators to run the program and manage the preschool, in collaboration with parents on the management committee to meets the needs of the community.

Community-based not-for-profit preschools offer a quality educational program and a unique opportunity for community involvement.

PRESCHOOLS ARE ABOUT

We are about!

CREATIVITY

EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

COLLABORATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

READINESS FOR SCHOOL

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND INDEPENDENCE

LITERACY AND NUMERACY

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

QUALIFIED STAFF

There is consistent international evidence that children who have participated in high-quality preschool education programs gain significant long-term benefits from what has been termed the 'preschool advantage' (Farrar, et al, 2007).

These include:

- higher levels of completed education and subsequent employment;
- greater stability in relationships and lower rates of mental illness (Farrar, et al, 2007).

While the evidence indicates that all children benefit from high quality preschool education, the gains are greatest for children from disadvantaged family backgrounds (Cunha, et al, 2006; Sylva, et al, 2004).

NSW Preschools funded by Community Services receive additional funding for families that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or are low-income Health Care Card holders. This additional funding allows the service to reduce barriers to preschool access, targeting these families.

(Source: Policy Brief No 10 2008: Rethinking School Readiness)

