



# Illawarra Children's Services

*Western Suburbs Child Care Centre*

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Western Suburbs Children's Centre we have established a preschool program as part of our curriculum. We want our graduating children to start big school confident, curious and excited about learning.

The transition to school phase can be a complex time for families, and we believe it is important to have processes set in place, so that children and parents are able to feel positive about the next step.

Our program is sensitive to each child's needs, and we hope you will talk to us along the way if you have any questions about your child's progress. Ultimately, our 'play-based learning' focus remains. By this I mean we are committed to allowing children to learn through play and discovery, emergent exploration and natural social interaction.

Throughout the day we incorporate school readiness skills into our curriculum in a fun, playful way. We aim to help children feel good about their own abilities as well as their individual capacity to learn. We want our children's burgeoning self confidence to exist alongside their strong desire to learn.

We incorporate key learning and school readiness skills by allowing our children to:

- Practise listening by incorporating comprehension exercises and offering opportunities to follow directions
- Learn literacy and numeracy skills through fun, integrated creative arts programs (music, dance, visual arts, poetry and performance)
- Learn by encouraging children to write their name, recognise letters and numbers and understand book conventions.
- Practise speaking by helping your child find their voice via taking messages and talking in front of a group.
- Practise being part of a larger group dynamic, through sharing, collaborating on projects and turn taking.
- Develop social skills by; making friends, coping with cliques, coping with discipline, nurturing friendships.
- Develop attention spans by focusing attention, sticking with tasks and developing ideas as well as persisting and trying.
- Learn independent toileting, dressing and caring for belongings.
- Develop fine motor skills - pencil grip, cutting, threading and buttoning, gardening, wood work, clay work and sculpture.
- Develop gross motor skills - through coordination, balance, strength building, throwing, ball skills, running, bike riding etc



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We want our children to be emotionally ready when they start school and we teach children about the importance of being good and kind friends as well as capable learners. We teach problem solving skills and encourage tenacity in learning.

At Western Suburbs Children's Centre we also help children and parents with the transition to 'big school' by including the following strategies in our program (in the lead up to graduation):

- We form relationships with local primary schools
- We hold 'lunch box days'
- We talk about big school in a positive way
- We invite kindergarten children 'back' to talk about their experiences at big school
- We allow children to experience a 'classroom' environment
- We allow children to experience 'conforming with the requests of educators'
- We develop positive attitudes to school through regular opportunities to dispel myths and discuss concerns

I hope our program helps you and your child in your journey from early childhood centre to big school. At Western Suburbs Children's Centre we believe this educational groundwork will create children who are curious, thirsty for knowledge and most importantly, keen to take that next step. Please feel free to talk to me and my staff at anytime about your child's progress or our school readiness program.

*Ruth Leo*

Director, and the team at Western Suburbs Child Care Centre