



# Ainslie School

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## Preschool Term 3 Letter, 2024

Welcome to Term 3.

We hope you enjoyed a restful time with your family and friends over the holiday break. The Preschool team is excited to see the children back at school, ready to begin their second semester of learning together.

### **Reporting and Feedback**

Ending last term with child-led conferences across the preschools was a highlight. How lovely it was to have families in and around the learning environment. Through this process we heard some common questions, which formed the basis of our parent forum for the term. Some philosophy we shared is included below.

### **Purposeful Play**

Purposeful play is key to the approach of Ainslie School. It is necessary for learning and development. The Early Years Learning Framework guides preschool practice across our system. It's principles and outcomes reflect the importance of play.

*“Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world.” (Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. P6)*

Preschool is a special place where children can pursue personal interests. Children come with their own knowledge and experiences and are capable and confident learners. Our role as educators is to understand the play from the children's point of view, why they have chosen this play and why it might be important to them. We consider what children may be drawn to and why, and what they might be trying to accomplish. Educators have a collaborative presence rather than a leading role in children's play. Our work involves recording and reflecting on the play with an open mind. The curriculum is born from and follows the interest of the children. This is where structured play and learning opportunities arise.

*“When we grab hold of children's play to wrestle it into a “teachable moment,” we dishonour their sovereignty as thinkers.” (From Teaching to Thinking. Pelo, A and Carter, M. pp167)*

### **Development of Social Skills**

Belonging is not simply fitting in. We don't expect the child to change themselves to gain acceptance. Belonging is being accepted for who we are. Younger children select friends based on who they play with most often...who is nearby. By 3 to 4 children choose friends who match their developmental level, sometimes gender or social circle and temperament. This is the beginning of a true reciprocal friendship. Children don't need a large number of friends, rather friendships of high quality. These are friendships that affirm their self-esteem. We can't force friendships, but if we give children warm support, they are more likely to develop mutual harmonious friendships and to receive high levels of peer support. When children experience empathy, they learn how to give it, and how to regulate their emotions. This gives them a strong base for development of social skills.



### **The Role of the Education Team?**

- We give attention to each child, every day and keep responses consistent, so children can trust and come to us for help.
- We support recognition of names of peers through songs and games as children are more willing to play with someone they know.
- We demonstrate acceptance and treat disruptive behaviours as opportunities for learning. Positive and strength-based comments help us to recruit peer support through modelling.
- We instigate cooperative activities that require group effort including collaborative artwork and group games without elimination.
- We curate a learning environment with equipment and spaces for multiple children.

### **Community Walks**

Walking in the neighbourhood connects children to their community, and to nature and encourages physical activity. Local walks provide authentic opportunities to learn about the environment and sustainability, engage with community and develop an awareness of Aboriginal heritage and culture as children develop an understanding of 'place'.



Our children will often take a visual diary and drawing tools on these walks, to record learning journeys and observations.

When in the community, each child will take a small backpack with lunch and a drink bottle. We often spend long periods of the day, playing, picnicking and observing once we reach the destination. Dates and times for community walks will be shared on Seesaw pages and daily notice boards at the preschool gates.

Please remember to stay informed of school events by reading the weekly newsletter for Ainslie School, the Altiora.

Sue Corrigan, Fiona Callan, Justine Fuller, Cathy Piani, Ari Guthy and Dominique Webb