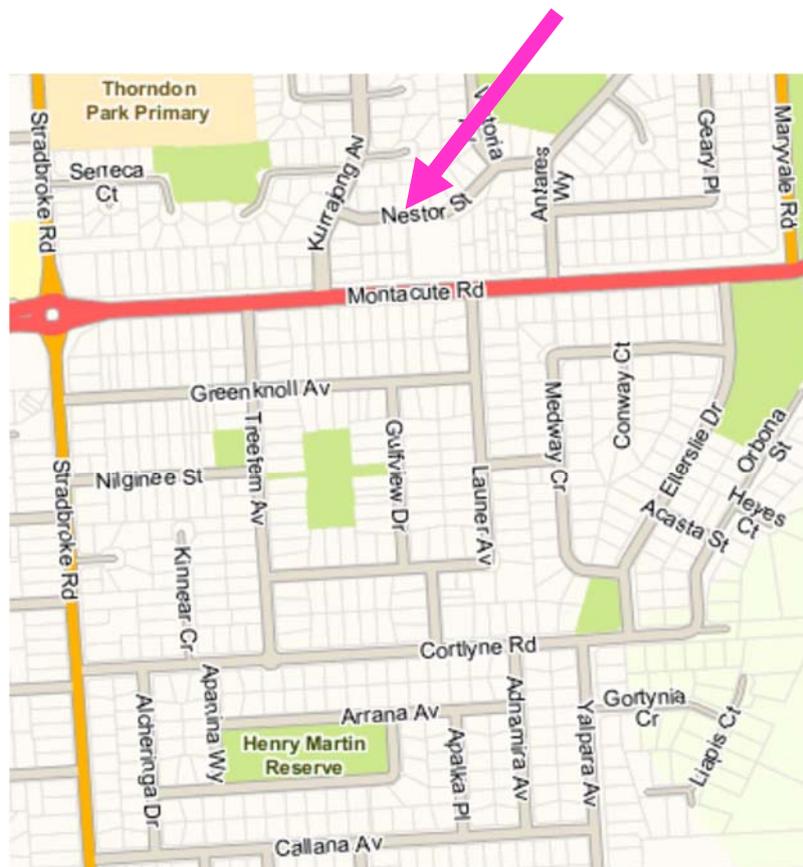




Thorndon Park Kindergarten

Information Handbook



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development

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www.thorndonkgn.sa.edu.au

Welcome to Thorndon Park Kindergarten

We welcome you and your child to our kindergarten and look forward to working together to support your child's learning.



We provide activities and experiences that assist your child to develop into a confident,

enthusiastic, responsible, respectful, resourceful and

inquisitive person who sees him or herself as a successful learner now and into the future.

VISION

Thorndon Park Kindergarten is a partnership of parents, caregivers and staff committed to developing the knowledge, skills, dispositions and values necessary to empower children to become independent, optimistic learners and respectful, responsible citizens.

CORE VALUES

The staff, Governing Council, families and children share a common understanding of the following values. They are implicit in relationships and underpin decision making at Thorndon Park Kindergarten.

- **Respect** – *We value all people and treat everyone with care, honesty, consideration and equity.*
- **Optimism** - *We promote confidence and resilience to empower children to meet the challenges of a changing world.*
- **Inquiry** – *We value the expression of different viewpoints, which allows people to openly explore and discuss their ideas and feelings, encouraging greater understanding, reflection and continuous improvement.*
- **Excellence** – *we believe in striving for continual improvement and sustained quality across all aspects of the learning environment.*
- **Creativity** – *we encourage imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness.*

STAFF

Director

Maggie Cooper

Teacher

Sue Ricketts

Early Childhood Workers

**Chris Peake-Weber, Esther Crocker, Bec Brannan,
Kate Sherrah**

KINDERGARTEN SERVICES

Kindergarten Program

Children commence kindergarten in the year prior to starting school. The Same Start Date Policy has been introduced by the SA Government. All children who turn 4 between May 1st, 2016 and April 30th, 2017 will commence kindergarten in the week beginning 30th January, 2017. These are children with a date of birth between and including 1st May, 2012 and 30th April, 2013.

Children with a date of birth between and including 1st May, 2013 and 30th April 2014 will commence kindergarten in the week beginning 29th January, 2018.



Session Times

Session times at Thorndon Park Kindergarten consist of two full days of kindergarten from 8.40am until 3.30pm . The children come in two separate groups, attending either on Monday and Tuesday or on Wednesday and Thursday.

Each child is also entitled to 2 Full Day Friday sessions during each term. Details of the dates will be provided at the beginning of each term.

Transition Visits

Each child is invited to attend 2 Playgroup style visits at the end of the year prior to starting kindergarten. Children attend with their parents and get to explore their learning environment together. They get to meet members of the staff team and have a general orientation to kindergarten. The visits are held on Friday mornings.

Parents are invited to a Parent Information Evening during Term 3 and will receive details of arrangements for these visits on that evening.

Playgroup

There is no Playgroup currently operating at Thorndon Park Kindergarten.



FEES

Thorndon Park Kindergarten is a DECD kindergarten, meaning that the Department currently funds 3 staff wages, bilingual and support programs, preventative and breakdown maintenance and a contribution towards utilities.

Parent Fees Fund all resources and materials used in the program, grounds and building works, cleaning, the supply of electricity, water and gas, and additional human resources. An amenities fee is requested from all parents to meet the costs involved in running the educational program at this kindergarten.

The amount of fees are determined by the Governing Council. An account will be placed in your child's pocket at the beginning of each term. Please pay as promptly as possible.

Payments can be made via the internet. Please ensure that you place your child's name in the reference section so that we can trace the payment. It is also possible to pay using cash or cheque. Place correct money or cheque in a named fees envelope and placed in the locked box next to the heater.

Fees are :

Sessional Kindergarten	\$125 per term (\$12.50 per week) +
Fundraising Levy	\$25 per term
Total for full time kindergarten	\$150 per term (\$15 per week)

Your child will need a kindergarten bag with:

DAILY REQUIREMENTS

- ◆ **A sunhat (broad brimmed or legionnaire style)**
- ◆ **A drink bottle containing water**
- ◆ **A change of clothes**
- ◆ **2 healthy snacks**
- ◆ **Lunch**

Children place their lunch in the lunch trolley and their water bottle in a container on arrival at kindy. Snacks remain in the children's bags. This is to ensure that lunch is not eaten at the wrong time. It is not possible to heat up food. Please place a freezer brick in your child's lunchbox.

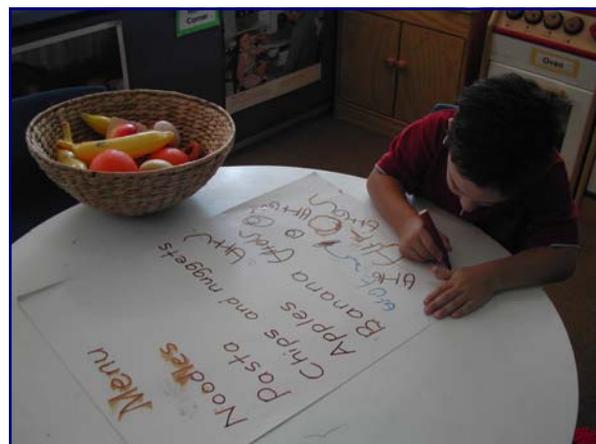
The Kindergarten encourages healthy eating habits.

Please do not send sweet, fatty or "junk" foods, cordial or fruit boxes or **any foods containing nuts**. Water is always available. (Please refer to the Healthy Food Policy).

Children eat their snack together at the end of small group time. They are able to add a sticker to our snack chart if they have eaten a fresh piece of fruit or vegetable..

Clothing

Please send your child dressed in comfortable, practical, easy to manage play clothes. Include a change of clothes in case they are needed. Thongs, crocs, rubber boots and slip on shoes are unsafe for active play. Please name any clothing which may be taken off. eg hats, shoes and jackets



CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Kindergarten is a bridge between home and school, where the curriculum and environment are designed to be flexible as well as structured, familiar yet challenging, a place where there is plenty of time to pursue interests, practice, discover, have fun and learn with staff whose specialty is early childhood education.

Children at kindergarten learn:

- To become, perhaps for the first time, a member of a community.
- To be confident in a challenging but safe and nurturing environment.
- To develop trusting, respectful relationships with a range of people known and new.
- To mix with others so they feel good about themselves and others.
- To challenge themselves: to be more explorative, imaginative, and inventive.
- To speak, write and communicate effectively in a variety of situations.
- To focus, plan, organise, persist, solve problems, negotiate, and celebrate achievement.
- To work and play effectively in a more formal environment.
- To value other cultures; the differences and similarities between people.
- The importance of the natural environment and how to care for it.
- To value and take care of their bodies through good hygiene, being SunSmart, physical activity and healthy eating.
- To be a more competent user of technology.



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Staff at this Kindergarten:

- ◆ Provide a creative, challenging play-based curriculum that fosters a love of learning and develops the knowledge, skills, dispositions and values of all children.
- ◆ develop an inclusive learning community with an integral culture of respect for self, others and the environment.
- ◆ work in a collaborative partnership with Parents and Caregivers to meet the needs of all children and families through consultative decision making and active involvement.
- ◆ provide and maintain a safe, caring, learning environment.

Staff are supported to develop and maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning.

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy underpins everyday practice and decision making and is used to set directions, build commitment and align actions with the centres goals and outcomes for all the children and families who use our centre.

It is a collaborative document:

- o based on our beliefs about best practice early childhood education and those of our kindergarten community
- o that reflects the principles that underpin the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and the Early Years Learning Framework
- o Grounded in current and individually appropriate theories of child development.

We believe children;

- o develop a sense of belonging when relationships with the centre staff are caring, supportive and culturally respectful
- o develop through recognisable stages but that each individual progresses at their own rate
- o are better prepared for later, more formal academic learning by developing a strong foundation in the early years through a play-based curriculum
- o are more likely to become resilient and adaptable, learn to experiment, persist, take appropriate risks when their achievements and strengths are celebrated
- o learn best when meaningful and relevant learning experiences are planned that extend and challenge them and where they see the connections to their own life
- o Need opportunities to develop creativity, imagination, a sense of wonder, decision-making skills, self-confidence, awareness of and consideration for others, play skills, friendships and independence.

We believe families and the community;

- o should feel welcome and valued
- o should have opportunities for equal access and participation
- o have the right to open, honest and respectful communication and appropriate information
- o are partners in education where reciprocal, respectful, ethical and equitable relationships lead to better outcomes for children and families
- o can best support children's transition to school when they work together
- o should have opportunities for participation and engagement with all aspects of the centre's curriculum and operation, including reviews of centre philosophy, policies and procedures
- o have a right to privacy and confidentiality.

We believe the curriculum;

- reflects that child protection, social justice and the wellbeing of children are paramount
- prioritises time to build relationships as the key to learning
- is designed to maximise learning by using the children's strengths and interests, in addition to introducing new and challenging ideas and experiences that develop children's knowledge, abilities and values
- provides materials and resources that are carefully chosen with consideration given to skills, interests, and developmental and cultural appropriateness
- reflects high expectations for learning and a cycle of rigorous planning, documenting and evaluation
- should actively develop understanding about ecologically sustainable practices
- should reflect the diverse nature of our community
- provides opportunities for children to contribute, make decisions and influence their environment by planning and developing learning opportunities of their choice
- Is planned to include structured or explicit teaching and learning opportunities.

We believe in educators who;

- are respectful, ethical and inclusive in their relationships with children and families
- develop trust in children through calm, warm and responsive relationships
- collaborate effectively with other service providers to enhance children's learning and well-being
- reflect on the best practice needed to educate young children now and into the future and who are committed to continuous improvement through ongoing and specialist Training and Development and performance reviews
- are committed to the full participation of children with special needs through demonstrated, transparent and inclusive policies and procedures
- work collaboratively with the site leader and each other to promote and maintain a culture of excellence, learning and mutual support
- work with children and families to plan, develop and construct meaningful, developmentally and culturally appropriate learning opportunities
- are highly qualified, caring, approachable and passionate about teaching and learning with young children
- are open and responsive in their communication with families to enable staff and parents to work on strengths or weaknesses together to maximise outcomes for children

It is always our goal to do what we believe.

Philosophies are however, evolving documents that respond to the changing world in which we live. If you would like to comment on or contribute to further review of this statement, please speak to Maggie.

PLANNING FOR LEARNING

This is a complex process based on:

- ⇒ An understanding that children learn best when it is **meaningful**
- ⇒ That we all **learn best when we are interested**, when it means something to us, when we see the point of learning and when it rewards us in some way.
- ⇒ **Knowing a child well** when planning meaningful and relevant learning experiences that **extend children's interests**, where they see the **connections to their own life**, and which **promote success** at having improved or developed in knowledge and ability.
- ◆ **The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia** is the curriculum document that guides our planning. It provides broad direction for educators to facilitate children's learning with provision for the following five Learning Outcomes:
 - ◆ Children have a strong sense of Identity
 - ◆ Children are connected with and contribute to their world
 - ◆ Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
 - ◆ Children are confident and involved learners
 - ◆ Children are effective communicators.

Play-Based Curriculum

This deeply-held philosophy of early childhood education is **based on years of research and best practice throughout the world**. Results show that children are better prepared for later, more formal academic learning by developing a strong foundation in the early years through an **experiential, interactive, structured play-based curriculum**.

HOW DO WE STRUCTURE A PLAY-BASED CURRICULUM?

Structured play is a powerful learning tool.

A curriculum that is both planned and spontaneous is developed based on observations, records, photos, work samples and discussions with parents, families, speech therapists and support staff such as bi-lingual workers. These people all help to ensure that every child's needs are met.

A play based curriculum means:

- ◆ Materials and resources are **carefully chosen** with consideration given to skills, interests, and developmental and cultural appropriateness.
- ◆ The environment is set up with **areas that challenge**, that are familiar and homely, that encourage discovery, creativity, exploration, independence, persistence and social interaction.
- ◆ **Small and large groups are organised with experiences** appropriate to young children not yet at school but learning some of the structures of a more formal learning environment.
- ◆ Throughout the session teachers **work with individuals** and groups of children who have a wide range of abilities and needs, where time to **build relationships and support to take risks with new learning** are often the key to learning.
- ◆ A **balance of interrelated experiences** and activities are **planned** fortnightly, termly and **spontaneously**. These are **designed to maximise learning** by using the children's interests, in addition to introducing **new and challenging ideas** and experiences that develop children's knowledge, abilities and values in areas they may know little about or perhaps are reluctant to try.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING TO PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

Initial Parent Questionnaire

When starting kindergarten we ask parents to tell us about their child, what other activities they do or if they go to child care, and what parents would like their child to learn, through a questionnaire. This information enables us to understand what they already know and need help with, so we can plan appropriate learning experiences.

Learning Record / Individual Portfolio / Individual Learning Plan

When we **observe and record information** about children, their learning is described against a list of broad, long-term key accomplishments called **Learning Outcomes**. This information, recorded in their Learning Record and their on-going Individual Portfolio, is used to plan for the individual needs of your child and to develop an Individual Learning Plan.

Statement of Learning

A **Statement of Learning is written on their progress for you at the end of their time at kindergarten**. A copy is also sent on to your nominated school and provides them with details on which to base their initial planning for a successful transition.

Progress Discussions

Parents are offered an formal opportunity during their child's second term at kindergarten to discuss their progress. Observations at preschool are shared and your views or concerns discussed. This helps us to learn more about what your child is doing at home and to work consistently together in planning next steps. If parents have concerns they are encouraged to request a discussion at any time.

Basic skills and concepts check

We assess children's progress across a range of skills, knowledge and abilities including literacy, numeracy, colour, size, shape, quantity, coordination, thinking skills, fine motor control, physical skills and other key competencies.

Current Curriculum Information

Planning for individual children is incorporated into planning for group learning outcomes in fortnightly programs. The **current program** and other curriculum information with examples of children's work and photos are **displayed in the entrance area** and **throughout the kindergarten**. We hope you will use this for discussions with your child or to follow up on topics of interest at home, or to contribute to our program by sharing information or things of interest. You are also encouraged to look through their **portfolio** together encouraging them to comment on their learning to you.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement in the management and daily activities is much appreciated and vital in the operation of this community preschool.

Parents and care-providers can be involved by:

- Talking with your child about their learning
- Joining the Governing Council (see information below)
- Helping with activities, games and reading books during session time.
- Cooking with the children.
- Sharing resources to extend the kindergarten curriculum. ie. occupations, talents, hobbies or interests
- Participating in working bees.
- Recycling or cutting up materials for art construction
- Attending Open nights, parent meetings and social functions.
- Helping with the washing roster.
- Reading newsletters and notice boards.
- Assisting with changing library books.
- Caring for kindergarten pets during the holidays.
- Assisting with excursions.

Governing Council Membership

The Governing Council meets twice a term and is responsible for :

- Planning with staff to set priorities and strategic directions important for this community and targeting funds to be used to achieve this goal.
- Authorising the use of kindergarten finances.
- Developing and maintaining the kindergarten facilities
- Raising funds needed over the state government grants received

Membership comprises of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, the Director , Teacher and Committee Members. All meetings are open and parents are welcome to attend. If you are **interested in joining** or would like more information please speak to a staff member.

Parental Responsibilities

- Parents are requested to respect session times when bringing and collecting your child. Staff prefer prior arrangement is made should it be necessary to arrive early, as they are setting up activities and not able to supervise children.
- Should an emergency arise that may make you late, please phone the kindergarten so that the staff can reassure your child.
- Accompany your child safely into the kindergarten building every day and greet a staff member who will mark the daily roll.
- If your child is to be collected by a person other than yourself please advise staff and record the person's name in the folder on the kitchen bench.
- Check your **note pocket** regularly and discourage children from collecting notes.
- Please **notify changes** to your: home address and telephone number; mobile; work number; your child's medical records; and any relevant family circumstances
- **All information provided to the kindergarten is confidential.**

OTHER SERVICES

Children's Library

Children are encouraged to borrow books from our library. Each child is provided with **information on how to borrow** soon after starting kindergarten. Please take good care of the borrowed books and inform staff of any damages or losses. A special library bag is a good idea.

Emergency Care

This is available to help families deal with those situations where occasional help is needed to care for a child. Prior notice is required where possible. Fees will be charged for care. If session numbers allow, it is also possible for children to swap sessions for that week.

Preschool Support Services & Early Intervention Program

DECD Early Childhood Support Services, based at the DECD Felixstow Education Office, offer professional services in speech pathology, social work, special education and psychology to support children to access the curriculum at the centre. This service is free of charge, however it is not intended to provide on-going therapeutic sessions but rather assessments and advice to staff and parents and support transitions to school. If you have concerns about your child's development or would like more information speak with the director. The preschool also contributes significant funding to our **Early Intervention Program** for children needing extra support.

Health

Contact us if your child is absent for more than a day. **Notify us immediately if your child has an infectious disease , head lice etc.** Precautions against the spreading of colds, infections and contagious diseases are necessary as some children may have significant health issues that may be compromised. Good hand washing practices are encouraged to stop the spread of bacteria.

First Aid

Basic first aid will be provided promptly by staff who are all trained regularly as part of their duty of care. An ambulance will be called immediately as required. You or your emergency contacts will be contacted concerning any serious injuries. A record is kept of any minor treatment given and you will receive a copy in your note pocket.

Medication & Health Support Plans

A **Health Support Plan** is required for significant medical issues, first aid needs and severe allergies. If your child requires staff to administer preventative or ongoing medication, a **Health Care Support Plan, completed and** signed by a medical practitioner is required. Any medication must be stored in the kitchen and not left in your child's bag. Should your child be taking any medication at home please inform the staff as side effects such as drowsiness or hypoactivity could affect their safety at kindergarten.

Health Screenings & Dental Checks

Once every term a Child and Youth Health nurse visits Thorndon Park Kindergarten to conduct health checks on children. The health checks are for children 4 years and 3 months or older and include an assessment of hearing, vision and developmental checks. Staff will speak to parents and make appointments prior to the nurse's visit. Priority is given to children about to start school.

Dental checkups are available at Campbelltown School Dental Clinic Ph 83364319

SCHOOL TRANSITION

To promote your child's continuity of learning and a positive, supported transition to school we encourage parents to complete school enrolment forms early.

Schools will then:-

- inform you of the times for their transition visits
- Have reception teachers visit our centre to meet children in their own setting.

A copy of your child's Statement of Learning is sent to the school informing them of your child's strengths, interests and abilities. If your child has additional learning needs, specific meetings will be arranged at the kindergarten with you, leaders from the school and any other relevant staff involved, to work out a special transition needs or extended transition visits.



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN and ANNUAL REPORT

Parents and staff work in partnership to develop, within broad government and departmental frameworks and directions, the strategic direction for the preschool and ensure the allocation of funds and resources pertinent to the vision and needs of our particular kindergarten community.

The **current Quality Improvement Plan** is on display on top of the lockers in the entrance area and a copy can be obtained on request.

The Director is required to report regularly to the Governing Council on achievements and progress related to these objectives and in the **Preschool Annual Report** to DECD and the centre community. DECD regional officers meet regularly with the Director to also support and discuss this progress as part of the Director's performance management and accountability process.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

We believe:

Behaviour is part of a cycle: We think – we feel – we behave

We all have the right to feel safe.

We can help ourselves by talking to people we trust.

A respectful environment facilitates the rights of children and teachers to learn and teach.

A partnership between staff, children and their families is crucial. We share the responsibility for modelling appropriate behaviours and sharing relevant information with each other.

Early behaviour intervention is effective in preventing and minimizing the development and long term effects of ongoing challenging behaviours.

Strategies must address the needs of individual children, including those with disabilities, developmental delay, gifted development and children with special emotional needs.

Encouraged Behaviours	Discouraged Behaviours
Language that encourages others	Name calling, teasing
Actions / words that include others	Excluding others
Giving, sharing and taking turns	Threatening others
Positive attitude	Hitting, kicking, pinching, biting, spitting, pushing
Caring, kindness and consideration	Throwing objects inappropriately
Safe / constructive play	Disrespecting others work or property
Working together cooperatively	Ignoring adult or peers requests and following through with actions.
Taking responsibility for own behaviour	Avoiding or disrespecting group norms
Being polite	Manipulating
Self control	Deliberate withdrawal and refusal to participate
Listening to others	
Using appropriate social language	Using racist, sexist or abusive language

Strategies used to maximise positive behaviours:

- The timetable is designed to allow children long periods of uninterrupted play to explore equipment and the environment.
- Children are encouraged to choose the activities they would like to be involved in.
- Staff focus on and acknowledge positive behaviour and language.
- Behaviour expectations are continuously modelled and reinforced.
- An atmosphere of respect, acceptance, and trust is created by treating each member of the community (children, families and staff) as a valued individual.

Strategies to minimise challenging behaviours

- A gesture or expression may be a starting point, eg. “Stop” in sign language.
- Planned ignoring to reduce behaviours that are purely attention seeking but not dangerous may be the optimum strategy to use.
- Verbal warning – stating clearly the nature of inappropriate behaviour and what is required.

- 2nd verbal warning and redirection to another learning area.
 - Children will be given a choice of two activities to aid them to gain control of their actions.
- Thinking Time** – removal of child to a thinking space. Thinking space can be any space dependent upon the factors within the circumstances at the time. It is not behind closed doors and can be inside or outside.
- the child is supervised.
 - When the child's emotional anxiety is reduced and they are able to think in a more rational manner, discuss the incident acknowledging their thoughts and feelings. Talk with the child about different ways of behaving and / or solving problems by modelling to the child the words and actions they need to use. The child practices these words and actions back to the adult and is assisted to re-engage in the learning activity.
 - Find opportunities to give positive reinforcement.
- Please note * It is sometimes necessary to restrain and / or redirect a child by holding. Staff are trained to do this with care, consideration and respect. This strategy is implemented when all other actions have been used, in line with directions outlined in Protective Practices for Staff in their Interaction with Children & Young People, 2011.
 - When a child exhibits ongoing problem behaviours, which threaten his/her own or others safety, educators will seek advice from DECD Support Services.

Informing children/developing their understanding

Children will be reminded of rules and guidelines during group times and individually as the need arises.

To promote ownership and each child's understanding of the need for a safe, respectful environment, children will assist with the development of a behaviour code relevant to themselves as individuals and members of a group.

Consulting and informing parents

All families will be given a copy of the site behaviour code in their information pack.

If children exhibit challenging behaviour staff will discuss appropriate behaviour strategies with the parent.

Informing staff

All staff including relief staff will be given a copy of the Behaviour Code and where necessary the needs of child/ren with challenging behaviour will be discussed to ensure consistency in behaviour management.

Distressed children

Refer to Protective Practices Policy

Consulting and informing parents

All families will be given a copy of the site behaviour code in their information pack.

If children exhibit challenging behaviour staff will discuss appropriate behaviour strategies with the parent.

How staff can help support the Site Behaviour Code

- Be consistent in approach to behaviour management and follow the code.
- Discuss concerns about children with behaviour you find challenging.
- Attend relevant professional development
- Contribute to the annual review of the Site Behaviour Code.

Reviewing the Site Behaviour Code

This document will be reviewed annually or to meet the individual needs of a child.

EARLY WRITING

If teaching your child to write letters or their name, the following is the standard script taught in South Australian schools. All letters start from the top (see arrows). Although it is initially easier for children, it is best to not teach children how to write their name in upper case letters only, e.g. encourage "Joseph" rather than "JOSEPH". Remember children need to go through the normal stages of "scribbling" and "pretend writing" and lots of physical development before they are ready to begin formal letter writing. Always use your child's interest level as a guide. At this stage, learning should be fun! More information is available on early literacy learning from the preschool.

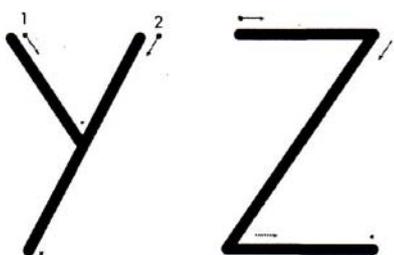
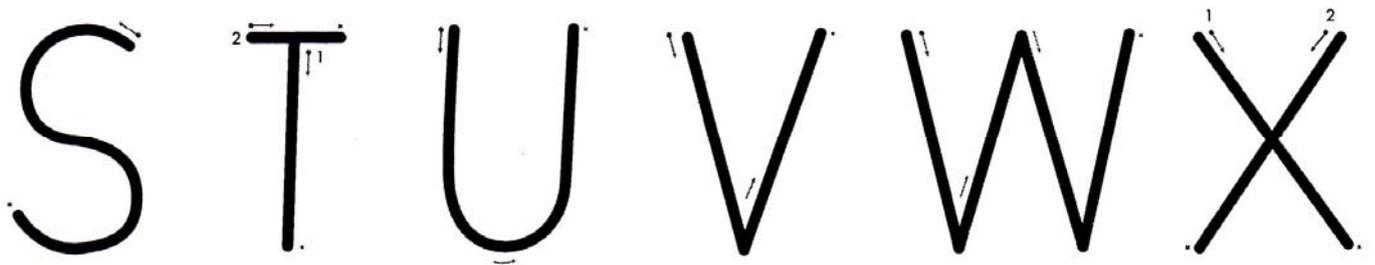
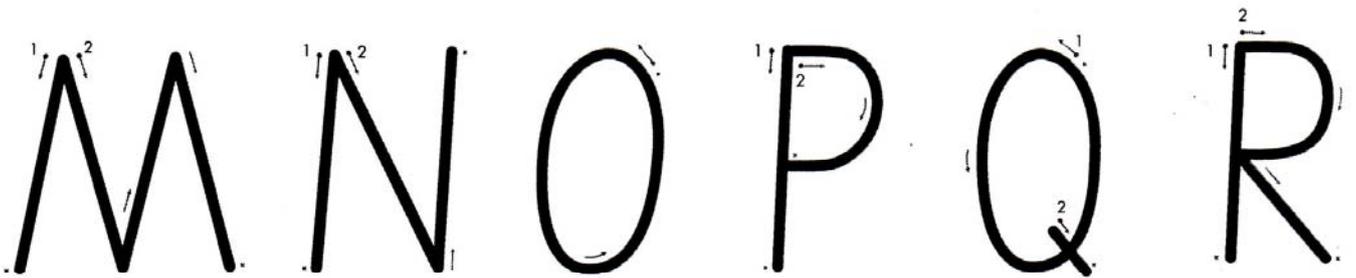
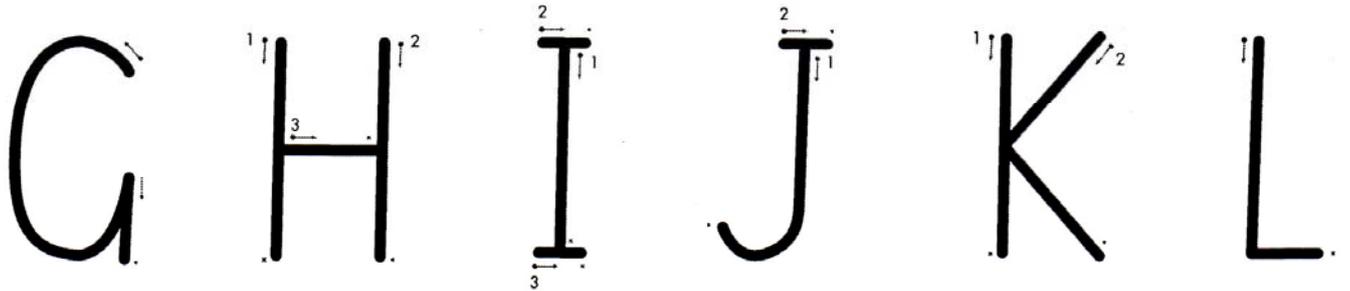
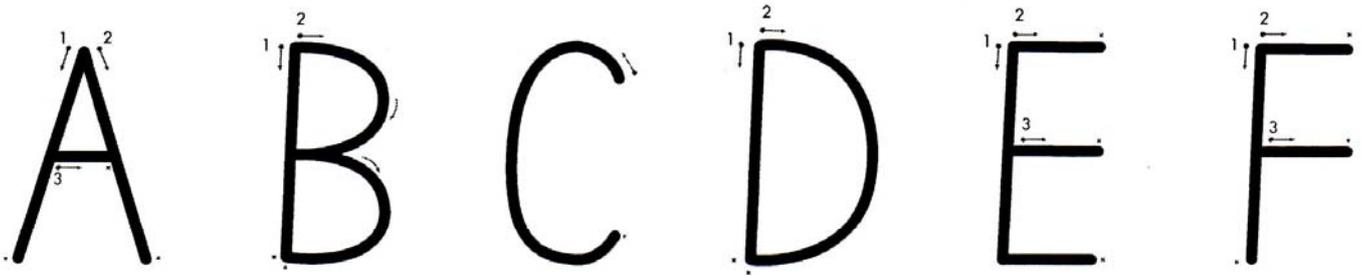
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All capital letters start at the **TOP**.