Our Philosophy
We believe:
Every child is unique in terms of life experience, developmental readiness and cultural heritage.

We will foster a culture built on collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty and ensure that empathy and compassion are evident in everything that we do.

We will honour children’s right to play, to assist powerful and effective learning. We aim to generate new possibilities by promoting self-expression, curiosity, wonder, amazement and fun.

We will create a beautiful, spacious place where children experience a sense of belonging and can grow and learn in safety with each other, connected and contributing to their world.

We welcome diversity and embrace the unique contribution of every child, family and professional. We endeavour to provide an environment that is inclusive and culturally safe.

We acknowledge the importance of children and families connection to community and value their voice and participation. We will work together in partnership to build better communities for children and their families to live, work and play.

We will collaborate as colleagues to generate a culture of continual reflection and renewal of high-quality practices in early childhood.

Context Statement
Located on the grounds of the Trinity Gardens P-7 School, the Early Learning Centre has its own purpose built building and outside area, very near the Centre of the school. The building offers a main play area with carpeted and wet areas, a quiet multi-purpose room, bathroom and kitchen. It is also has an air conditioner and gas heating. The building has large windows overlooking the outdoor learning area. Outside, the Early Learning Centre has its own playground equipment, sandpit and natural play spaces. There is a wide verandah with large trees for shade and a pergola covering the sandpit.

Governance
As a part of the School, the Principal and the Governing Council lead the Centre.

The Principal, with the Early Learning Centre Director oversee the day to day running of the educational programmes. The Governing Council, in consultation with the staff, is responsible for the policies. The Governing Council has an ELC sub-committee. The Early Learning Centre Advisory (ELCA) Committee is made up of between 4-6 parents of children attending the ELC. In previous years they have taken the responsibility for developing a sense of community. However the role is not limited to that and may include any aspect of ELC governance.

We call for volunteers to join our committee early in the new school year.
Staff
Rowena Tennant, Shelley Leach and Karen Worley
Peta Ware, Lisa Howell, Alison Williams and Heather Carroll

Values
Our values are respect, responsibility and learning.

Our Vision
The Trinity Gardens Children’s Centre works in partnership with families and community to realise and support best outcomes in health, learning and wellbeing for children.

The principles that are important to our work are as follows:

- The needs and interests of the child are paramount
- The child is always considered in the context of their family, carer, culture and community
- Cultural diversity is valued and respected
- Families will be engaged and supported to participate through the fostering of respectful relationships and shared decision making
- Building sustainable community capacity through the identification and utilisation of strengths and resources
- Services are provided that are responsive to the needs of children and families
- A culture of continuous improvement is informed by current research and initiatives on best practice

Eligibility

Transition
We endeavour to have transition visits every year however the number of children already at the Centre and the number needing to visit will determine when and how the visits will happen from year to year. The visits for 2014 are in the sixth, seventh and eighth week of term 4. Families will receive a letter as an invitation outlining the details of the visits.

Four Years of Age
Children are entitled to four terms of preschool education.

From 2014 children who turn 4 years old before the 1st May will start in the ELC in the January of that year. Children who turn 4 on or after 1st May will start at school the following year.

If you are considering accessing the Steiner stream at the Trinity Gardens ELC, please note that your child’s school start date influences their Preschool start date. The children who attend Education Department Centres are entitled to a maximum of 4 terms preschool education. This cannot be extended unless your child has been assessed as having learning difficulties.

ELC Improvement Plan 2014

Priorities –
The Quality Improvement Plan is published and is available for reading from the beginning of the new year. It is located on top of the lockers at the centre or on the website.
Fees
Current preschool fees: $190.00 per term
These fees are determined by the School’s Governing Council and are reviewed at various intervals. Excursion fees are in addition to the above fees.

Group Times
Blue Group
Monday 8:45am – 3:15 pm
Tuesday 8:45am – 3:15 pm
Wednesday 8:45 – 12:45 pm fortnightly

Gold Group
Wednesday 8:45 – 12:45 pm fortnightly
Thursday 8:45am – 3:15 pm
Friday 8:45am – 3:15 pm

During the early stages of a session, children are establishing the learning and friendship groups for that day. It is important to have your child at the Centre at the start of each session so that they too can participate in this vital process.

As the outside is a valued part of our learning area, the staff spend time considering the needs of the children and what equipment will enhance their learning. Consequently, the setting up of outside is just as important as the setting up inside. We ask that you respect the professionalism of the Centre staff by arriving at the Centre as the session starts so that we can deliver a quality learning program.

Daily Requirements
The children are required to bring:
- A hat
- A drink of water
- A healthy snack for recess
- A healthy lunch

Perishable foods may be stored in the fridge but please make sure that your child’s lunch box is clearly labelled.

We are allergy aware and ask that no nuts, or nut products, be included in the snacks or lunches please.

Programs/Learning
We are a play centred preschool. “The most powerful way young children learn is through play” (SACSA 2006). Play is as vital to the child’s development as nutrition, health and shelter. Play provides children with the opportunities to investigate their world and to test their knowledge, skills and understanding. They learn how to form and maintain relationships. During play, children are regularly using higher order thinking skills as they imagine, create, negotiate, problem solve and experiment.

The program is developed from professional observations and the current Education Department curriculum document The Early Years Learning Framework. The program is displayed on the notice board each week.
Weekly Events

**Book Borrowing**
Children may borrow a book for a period of two weeks. We encourage the children to have a library bag for safe storage of the books.

Borrowing procedures. The children are able to borrow 2 books at a time.

When you are ready to return them, please place them in the box on top of the lockers marked Library returns. We return them as part of our fortnightly visits.

**Extended Learning**
In order to give our children every opportunity to extend their learning we are fortunate enough to be able to access the school resources and facilities. We may:

- Work with specialist teachers and have access to their skills and knowledge – the Resource Centre teacher and the Italian teachers
- Work with an older class on a vast range of learning activities. They become our friends and mentors
- Work in the Resource Centre with its extensive library of fiction and non-fiction books, math equipment, IT equipment and bank of computers where we can all access a computer at the one time
- Borrow equipment to enhance our science program
- Participate in lunchtime play with the older students in our yard

These experiences help promote an authentic transition between Early Learning Centre and school.

**Routines and Responsibilities**
The beginning and end of each day is held inside the building so that staff can monitor the arrival and departure of children. We therefore require that your child is delivered to the inside of the Centre at the beginning of a session and that they are picked up from inside the building at the end of the day by a responsible person.

Please talk to a staff member if you are considering asking an older sibling to collect your child at the end of the day, for safety reasons please advise us if someone “new” is going to collect your child. The information can be entered into the Communication Book located on top of the lockers.

**Absences**
You are required to notify us if your child is going to be or has been absent. We are required by the Department to provide a reason (illness, family, medical) for any absences. Your cooperation would be appreciated. There are forms available on the lockers for Intended Absences (holidays, appointments). Please complete a form and return to the Centre if you know your child is going to be absent from the kindy.

**Sun Smart**
“No hat, no play” is our Sun Smart School policy. Children are required to wear a hat to play beyond the verandah from Week 6 Term 3 until Week 5 Term 2 inclusive. In order to protect your child the hat must be either a broad brimmed or Legionnaires design.

We do not provide sunscreen but, if you supply a named bottle of sunscreen we will apply sunscreen after lunch (before we go outside). We greatly appreciate it if you could apply the morning block, if required.
Policies

Healthy Food
Your child’s health is paramount. Research is telling us that there is a strong relationship between the child’s health and his or her adult health. The Early Learning Centre therefore has a Healthy Food Policy. The children are to bring healthy foods for both recess and lunch. Some suggestions may be fresh fruit, cheese, raw vegetables (grated carrot), savoury biscuits or dried fruit and healthy sandwiches.

Illness
Please keep your child at home if they are ill. Illnesses are spread quickly if children return to the Centre too soon after they have been unwell. Even though children will often tell you they are fine to go to Kindy, you are the adult and the best one to judge the suitability of your child’s attendance.

First Aid
You will be advised via your communication pocket if your child has received minor first aid treatment.

Clothing
All children in the ELC have access to a locker large enough to accommodate a primary school sized school bag. During changeable weather conditions, families are encouraged to provide adequate clothing for variations in temperature. Educators will monitor the conditions and ensure children are appropriately dressed.

The Centre encourages families to dress children in clothing they can manage themselves – jackets and jumpers that they can take on and off themselves; pants and jeans that can be independently undone and done up for toileting.

Please choose footwear that is appropriate for children in care, such as sandals, shoes, sneakers.

We strongly encourage you to name everything your child might wear or bring to school.

Communication
Effective and efficient communication between home and the Centre is extremely important.

Every family has a Communication Pocket that we use regularly to distribute notices. The pockets hang on the wall outside on the Amherst Avenue end of the building. Please check it regularly.

Some notices require a response slip from families. The slips can be returned by placing them in the small denim ‘return slip’ bag hanging beside the heater, outside the den door.

We publish our own news sheet on a regular basis and distribute the School Newsletter fortnightly. At other times, we will highlight events by putting a notice on a stand outside the door or by sending a separate notice home. These notices will be placed in the pockets hanging outside the door.

If you are unable to access these forms of communication please contact a staff member so that we can negotiate a process that will allow you to receive all the information. The Communication Book should be used to advise us of changes to drop-off and pick-up routines. The book is located on the lockers.

The staff are happy to discuss your child’s development with you. This may be before or after a session. However if you require a longer discussion, please make an appointment to see the teacher at another time. Throughout the twelve months that your child attends our centre, staff members will be publishing, for you and your child, stories of their learning when they are at the Centre. Parent Conversations are held during your child’s second term of preschool education. You will receive a Summative Report as your child moves into Reception.
Getting Involved
A positive partnership formed between a child, his/her family and the staff at the Centre is vital for each child to reach their full potential.

You can be involved in your child’s preschool education in a number of ways:

- Talk to your child about the things they do at preschool.
- Share your knowledge about your child with the Centre staff.
- Become familiar with the Early Years Learning Framework and the outcomes that we are developing through the programme.
- Offer to share your skills and understandings about the current theme with the staff and children.
- Assist with general housekeeping of the Centre on either a regular basis or when you have the time.

There is a Volunteers Jobs Board hanging on the notice board above the lockers. The staff will list any odd jobs that need doing on the board. If you feel that you would like to or could do one of the tasks please see one of the staff who will be able to help you to help us.

School Enrolment
If you have not yet enrolled at a school please do so as soon as possible. If you are considering Trinity Gardens School please contact the school office for information and an enrolment form.
Vision

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