





CANBERRA PRESCHOOL SOCIETY

The Canberra Preschool Society (CPS) is the peak community entity for early childhood education in the ACT. The Society provides guidance and support to affiliated Preschool Parent Associations (PPAs) and the general community on preschool day-to-day administration, parent participation policy, liaison with the government, training of volunteers and through the support and provision of an award-winning financial management software package for volunteer treasurers.

The vision of the CPS is **to be a strong, effective voice of the parents of preschool children in the ACT**, and its beliefs are that preschools:

-  offer parents an economical choice in a quality early childhood education;
-  offer a community-based transition into formal schooling for all children in the ACT;
-  provide parents with an opportunity to build and strengthen community networks; and
-  provide early access to qualified early childhood educators and development specialists.

The CPS plays a special role in the communication between the two groups responsible for establishing and maintaining Canberra Preschools; the Preschool Parent Association and the ACT Department of Education and Training.

The CPS is the group that brings together representatives from all PPAs in the ACT through its general meetings and represents the preschool community at forums that affect preschool education delivery, content and outcomes.



MORE INFORMATION

Your PPA can be contacted through the preschool itself or via your amalgamated primary school. Additionally, you are welcome to contact any of the following for more details.

CPS website

www.canberrapreschools.org — complete with a discussion forum where you can interact with preschool parents, teachers and others from the ACT and all over the world.

CPS office

You can contact the CPS through the website or by email, telephone or the regular post. Office hours are 9 am to 2 pm Monday to Friday and the office is closed during school holidays.

Office location: Pearce Preschool
1 Pendred Street
Pearce

Postal address: Canberra Preschool Society
PO Box 59
Mawson ACT 2607

Telephone: 02 6286 2527

Email: cps@orac.net.au

Department of Education and Training

Early childhood education in the ACT is administered by the Department of Education and Training. The Department's website (www.det.act.gov.au) provides links and contact information, or you can phone 02 6207 5111.

Welcome to preschool 2008

An information guide from the Canberra Preschool Society



The CPS is a strong effective voice of parents of preschool children in the ACT. We work together to promote choice and opportunity in preschool education.



PRESCHOOL IN THE ACT

Welcome to preschool and the start of your child's journey through a quality community early childhood education. Families and educators all have a vital role to play in this exciting journey.




In the ACT, preschool is a non-compulsory, sessional introduction to schooling - which a government primary school jointly operates with parents. From 2009, parents will also be able to choose enrolment in a specialist early childhood school.

There is an authentic partnership that exists between the Preschool Parents' Association and the ACT Department of Education and Training.

The Preschool Parents' Association (PPA) provides for the preschool program:

-  teaching resources and consumables
-  day-to-day operational management.

The ACT Department of Education provide:

-  fully qualified early childhood teachers
-  purpose built buildings located in the suburbs
-  maintenance of the facility

Children learn in a number of different ways and each at a vastly different pace. The preschool program is specifically designed to cater for these differences and utilises both structured and unstructured play. The teacher's experience and training provides opportunity for each child to develop self-confidence and the fundamental life skills of teamwork and group interaction.

Preschoolers engage in play-based learning - math, science, reading, writing, social studies, music and art. This program is resource-intensive and promotes learning as fun, exciting and challenging.



ACT preschool education is based in an emergent curriculum — one that acknowledges that young children are developing in several areas or domains simultaneously. Early brain development research indicates that social-emotional development and cognitive development are interwoven and interdependent with each other.

THE PRESCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The partnerships between the PPA, the teachers and Principal of the school, the Department of Education and Training, and the community is vital to the effective operation of the preschool program. As the parent of a preschooler, you also play an important role in this partnership.

Every preschool in the ACT has a Preschool Parents' Association (PPA).

Each PPA:

-  is an *incorporated association*, a non-profit body with its own legal status that is managed by a committee elected by the members; and
-  is governed by a Constitution, which sets out the rules of the PPA and the forms of membership.

Generally, there are two types of members: parents of children enrolled at the preschool; and others with an interest in their local preschool community who have joined as 'independent' members — for example, parents of children within the early years band at the amalgamated government primary school.

The membership of a PPA usually turns over at the start of each year as the parents of the new preschool class join in the Annual General Meeting (AGM). At this AGM, elections take place to elect a new management committee for the year, consisting of executive officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) and other committee members as stipulated by the Constitution.

All parents who have a child enrolled at preschool are eligible to be members of the PPA. Participation in the voluntary management of the PPA has multiple benefits for parents including social interaction, developing new skills, increased knowledge of children and early childhood, self-confidence and personal development.

THE ROLE OF A PPA

Fundraising and voluntary contributions

The PPA manage the operational budget of the preschool, covering costs associated with classroom support, excursions, petty cash, both contents insurance and personal accident insurance for PPA members and their immediate families whilst participating in preschool events, and affiliation fees to the CPS. These funds are derived from voluntary contributions from parents and fundraising activities run by the PPA.

Curriculum involvement

PPAs assist the teachers of the preschool in the delivery of the education program, through voluntary help (in-school activities, excursions, etc.) and also the provision of educational resources and equipment.

Building community relationships

As an effective manager of the preschool, the PPA raises community awareness of the school and of early childhood education as a whole. Parents, children and the community all share the benefits of a strong interaction between the PPA and the wider community.

