

# Canberra Preschool Society Inc



## Who are we?

The Canberra Preschool Society (CPS) was formed in 1943 to:

“to promote knowledge of and interest in the preschool child, and also to further the establishment of a public kindergarten in Canberra.”

Taken directly from the Association’s inaugural minutes on the 7th of July 1943



## The CPS

The CPS has always (1943 - 2006) played a role in the communication between the two groups jointly responsible for establishing and maintaining ACT Preschools:

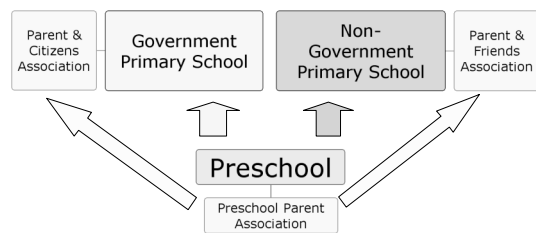
- the Preschool Parent Associations, and
- the ACT Department Education and Training.

Over the past 63 years there has been development in the delivery of a high quality of preschool education in the ACT.

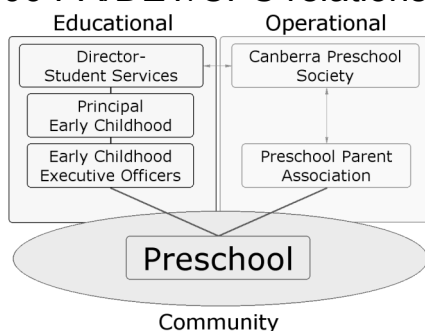
Leading to considerable complexity and numerous “understandings” and “assumptions” all of which have been based upon a “gentleman’s agreement”.



## The 2006 Preschool Context



## 2006 PA/DET/CPS relationship



## The CPS Constitutional Aims

- To promote community interest in pre-school education,
- To promote an understanding of pre-school education,
- To promote the establishment of pre-schools within the Australian Capital Territory,
- To facilitate the conduct of pre-schools within the Australian Capital Territory, and.
- To represent the views of CPS on matters affecting pre-school education in appropriate forums.



### Who belongs to the Parent Association (PA)?

In very much the same manner as there is automatic membership to the Primary School's P&C - each parent, or guardian, who has a child enrolled at a Preschool automatically becomes a member of the Parent Association.

As such, they accept the responsibilities that the first parent association undertook to fulfil when the preschool was built.



### The DET/PA roles in establishing a preschool

Historically, the establishment of Preschools lay squarely in the hands of the community. A group of interested parents would form a Parent Association, raise a stipulated amount of funds and then, in accordance to the original agreement, the PA would apply to the relevant Department for their contribution ... a building and the necessary teaching staff.

Now, Preschools have become an accepted part of each child's early childhood experience. It is, usually, the Department who plan to build a Preschool - then ... they ask the CPS to form a local Parent Association - whose role is still to raise the stipulated amount of funds and ONLY then ... can the new Preschool open.



### A Preschool community must:

- form the legal entity (the PA) that fulfils the responsibilities that were, historically, agreed upon,
  - in the case of new preschools this is often done 6 months in advance of the planned opening; and
- undertake the necessary fund-raising in order to fulfil the necessary operational responsibilities,
  - Including the registration of incorporation, provision of insurance, meeting ATO requirements (BAS etc), cleaning and the purchase of the necessary educational equipment, teaching resources, along with the operational and educational consumables (paint, paper, glue, craft materials, toilet paper, ink cartridges etc).



### What do Parent Associations do?

- As members, each parent is invited to:
- join in the planning and sharing in the work of the PA Committee - through volunteering to fill the necessary executive and other committee positions;
  - Attend and participate in all PA meetings;
  - make a financial contribution - the rate of which is jointly decided upon at a 1st term meeting of the PA;
  - take part in the activities of the PA: eg. fund raising, working bees and social occasions; and
  - actively participate in the preschool program: eg. roster duty, laundry, playing a musical instrument etc).



### What does this actually mean?

- A necessary legal entity.
- Responsible for the financial and operational conduct of the preschool:
  - including initial approval for all programming operational and financial requirements.
- Teaching resources, equipment and consumables.
- Storage
- Local parent and community communication
  - inc Preschool promotion.
- Insurance
  - \$20 million public Liability
  - Personal accident for children & families on and off the site.
- Cleaning



### What does this actually mean?

- The PA maintains, or forms, a legal entity that:
  - holds the ownership of the resources and equipment;
  - Is responsible for the day-to-day operational / financial management of the Preschool;
  - meets and operates in accordance with its own Constitutional requirements; and
  - maintains its own membership register of preschool parents (and any other interested person or group).



## What does this actually mean?

- Financial Management:
  - recommends the annual voluntary contribution rate;
  - responsible for its collection, banking, recording and receipting, in accordance with privacy requirements;
  - maintains all financial records using the specifically designed financial software;
  - responsible for submitting the BAS to the ATO on a quarterly basis; and
  - arranges for audited annual financial statements.



## What does this actually mean?

- Financial Management:
  - collects all monies and issues receipts for all revenue,
    - for example; fundraising, voluntary contributions and excursion fares;
  - prepares an annual budget in conjunction with the Teacher-in-charge and the CPS; and
  - provides and maintains a teacher's petty cash facility - intended for the purchase of miscellaneous small items for the Preschool program.



## What does this actually mean?

- Programming and excursions:
  - approves all programming operational and financial requirements,
    - this must be minuted at a general meeting BEFORE Departmental approval is sought and ratified AFTER purchase;
  - collection and banking of all monies for approved programming requirements,
    - for example: excursions, demonstrations, shows and incursions; and
  - drawing of cheques for payment of all invoices.



## What does this actually mean?

- Preschool equipment:
  - owns all preschool teaching resources, equipment and consumables required;
  - approves the purchase of all equipment and teaching resources,
    - this must be minuted at a general meeting BEFORE purchase and ratified AFTER purchase;
  - maintains an up-to-date inventory of all equipment; and
  - approves and facilitates any loans, or use, of preschool equipment to any third party:
    - playgroups, playschools, other preschools, primary schools etc.



## What does this actually mean?

- Consumables:
  - approves the purchase of all consumables: paints, paper, glue, toilet paper etc.,
    - this must be minuted at a general meeting BEFORE purchase and ratified AFTER purchase;
  - procures all equipment, resources and consumables; and
  - maintains an acceptable level of purchasing officer float as this is also for items of an incidental nature.



## What does this actually mean?

- Storage and use of Preschool space:
  - provides suitable storage for all resources and equipment;
  - provides suitable storage for PA papers and administrative documents; and
  - ensures that the utilisation of the Preschool for PA purposes (e.g.. meetings, photocopying and other administrative functions) are undertaken in consideration to the Preschool program and staff needs.



## What does this actually mean?

- **Playgroups & Playschools:**
  - approves, in consultation with the teacher, to have a playgroup operate within the preschool;
  - approves, in consultation with the teacher, to have a playschool utilise PA resources and equipment;
  - provides guidelines, written in conjunction with staff, for their use of equipment and the determination of any fees payable to cover the costs, wear & tear etc; and
  - invites Playgroup and Playschool members or any other interested Preschool community group to join and actively participate in any PA meetings.



## What does this actually mean?

- **Parent and community communication:**
  - the PA president serves as the first point of parental and community contact for the staff at all times;
  - writing, production and the distribution of a regular Preschool newsletter about PA and Preschool business,
    - this should include a copy of the Teacher's report that has been tabled at the PA General Meeting;
  - representation at CPS meetings to speak on behalf of the views of the Parent Association or to raise issues for ACT-wide discussion and resolution; and
  - participation in ACT-wide Preschool events.



## What does this actually mean?

- **Promotion of the Preschool:**
  - undertakes active promotion of the Preschool into the surrounding areas,
    - through printing flyers and conducting letter-box drops or advertising Preschool functions in surrounding shopping and/or other community centres; and
  - invites and facilitates wider community participation in Preschool functions and special events,
    - for example family BBQ's, special open days, family fun-days, discos, special speakers at general meetings, working-bees etc.



## What does this actually mean?

- **Insurance:**
  - approves and procures the insurance for:
    - all equipment and teaching resources at new for old replacement value,
    - public liability (\$20 million),
    - personal accident cover for members, their children, siblings and volunteers (grandparents etc) both on and off-site whilst undertaking Preschool activities - including fundraising activities.



## What does this actually mean?

- **Cleaning, health and hygiene:**
  - arranges, and is responsible for, the cleaning of the Preschool premises;
  - acts as the channel of communication between the staff and the contract cleaners to ensure that the cleaning is of an acceptable standard; and
  - invites and actively encourages all parents to participate in duty rosters and to undertake various day-to-day cleaning and routine tasks, e.g. fruit or resource preparation.



## The main differences between a PA and a P&C?

### PA

- Preschool is not compulsory and sessional.  
 Preschool can not legally operate without a Parent Association.  
 Before the opening of any new Preschool the PA must:
- be a legal entity that has been in operation for several months, so that they are
  - financially viable, and
  - able to provide the necessary start-up resources and equipment.

### P&C

- Primary School is compulsory and full-time.  
 P&C groups are formed after the opening of a school.



## The main differences between a PA and a P&C?

### PA

Maintain a custodial relationship with the Preschool's past and future presence in the community - regardless of where the children will attend Kindergarten (Government or Non-Government).

We run a bi-partisan membership that is open to any parent or interested community member who agrees to, and abides by, the PA Constitution.



### P&C

Work only in ACT Government schools

(taken directly from the P&C Handbook)

## The main differences between a PA and a P&C?

### PA

Legally responsible for the day to day operation of the Preschool, including the:

- financial management of contracts (cleaning and maintenance of equipment);
- provision of a comprehensive and expansive insurance policy that acknowledges the strong family presence and participation of the wider community in the Preschool;
- promotion of that preschool within the surrounding community; and
- expenditure approval for all operational aspects of the Preschool program.



### P&C

See their role as to promote parent participation in the work of Government schools, and to provide strong positive community support for the school by encouraging parents to be involved in various ways.

A limited insurance policy is undertaken.  
(taken directly from the P&C Handbook)

## The main differences between a PA and a P&C?

### PA

Through its umbrella organisation (the CPS) offers specifically designed services & training including:

- award-winning financial management software for Treasurers (TUB) that is also supported through a 24/7 helpdesk facility;
- responsive and well-targeted training for members as they undertake the Committee roles of Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers; and
- advice, mediation and resolution of operational issues.



### P&C

Have told us that most of their active and committed members were those previously involved with their Preschool Parent Association.

Therefore - they know what to do, how to get involved, and they get on with the job.

## The main differences between a PA and a P&C?

### PA

Holds ownership of all the Preschool teaching and educational resources, and approve their use for Preschool education and for use in Playschools, Playgroups, other Preschools or Primary Schools and other community purposes that support families and children in the early years.

Make decisions regarding the operation of a Preschool within the surrounding community context.

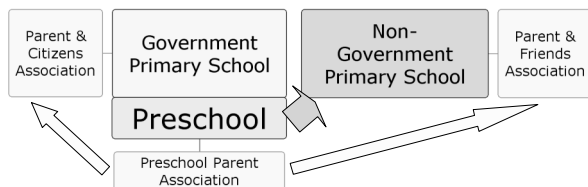


### P&C

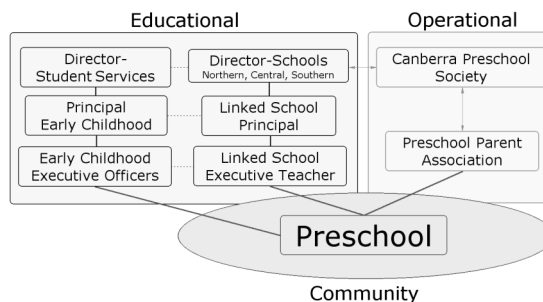
Transfer ownership of most things directly to the school.

Participate on the Primary School Board.

## The 2007 Preschool Context



## 2007 PA/DET/CPS relationship



## The future of the PA

- From their point of view - the Primary School will undertake the role of Preschool Services.
- The Primary School must support and maintain the continued presence of the Preschool Parent Association.

Without the PA - there is no legal entity responsible for the day-to-day fiscal and operational management of the existing Preschool being linked to the local Primary School.



## We see many advantages ...

- Improved relationships with the linked Primary School.
- Increased opportunities for cooperation with fundraising and joint projects.
- Development of curriculum consistency.
- The potential for sharing our excellent early childhood teaching and educational resources
- Improved understandings of common Preschool & Primary School issues.



## We see many advantages ...

- The potential for areas of duplicity in educational administration to be identified and removed.
- Greater community understanding and support of Early Childhood education and the vital role it plays in our future.
- Greater visibility of the other role that Preschool plays within the Primary School context, the CPS/PA direct contribution to the vitality and success of the Primary School's P&C.
- Extended opportunities for meaningful and satisfying school/parent partnerships.



## The future of the CPS ...

- We are in the process of reviewing our own organisational structure and processes.
- We see there is the potential to contribute to a wider School community but this must be managed sensitively and collaboratively.
- We are moving, at the CPS level, to embrace the wider context of the Early Childhood phase of child and family life.
- The CPS will be using 2007 to work collaboratively with each of our PAs towards this goal and expect to eventually become something like ...



## Partners In Early Childhood Education Inc.



## To contact the CPS

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