

Peak Hill Pre-School Kindergarten Inc.



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Parent Information Handbook

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Welcome and Introduction	3
Philosophy	4
Programming	6
Available sessions	7
Preschool Staff	8
Fees	9
Your child's day	10
What your child needs	12
Helping your child settle in	13
Policies and procedures	15
Family Involvement/ management Committee	19
Preschool usefals	20

WELCOME

Introduction:

The Peak Hill Preschool Kindergarten was established in 1966. The Preschool operates from the premises of the Peak Hill Uniting Church in two large preschool rooms with age appropriate facilities. The Preschool caters for children 2-5 years and is approved for 19 places per day, operating from Tuesday to Friday. The Preschool receives funding from the NSW State Government through the Department of Education. To become an Approved Provider, the Preschool must meet the requirements of The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

The Preschool is a community based non-profit incorporated organisation and is managed by a voluntary committee elected annually from parents and interested persons. The Management Committee must hold five meetings during each preschool year. Parents are encouraged to become a member of the Management Committee or to attend committee meetings to offer opinions and ideas. Parents are eligible to vote once they become a member of the incorporated body (all families pay a membership fee when enrolling their child which entitles them to immediate voting rights).

Peak Hill Preschool aims to provide children with high quality care and education. Positive and stimulating experiences are provided fostering all aspects of early childhood development. The goal of the Preschool is to support each family's efforts to help their children to become happy and self-sufficient members of the community.

Fundamental to the ongoing success to the Peak Hill Preschool is continual communication between the Preschool staff, Management Committee, families who utilise the Preschool and the wider community. In order to provide a

service which suits you and your child's needs, the staff are more than happy to discuss any queries that you may have.

Peak Hill Preschool

Vision

To take a holistic approach to education so that all the children in our care will experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

Philosophy

Peak Hill Preschool (PHPS) embraces the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) vision for learning:

Belonging...knowing where and with whom you belong. We acknowledge children's significant relationships with others and give them opportunities to explore their own identity.

Being....recognising the significance of the here and now in children's lives. We aim to provide the children with experiences that are tailored to suit their current abilities, skills, strengths and interests. We strive to help children understand their ever changing world.

Becoming....reflecting the 'process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow, emphasising learning to participate fully and actively in society' (DEEWR, 2009 p. 7). We aim to empower children with the knowledge, experiences and skills they need to succeed in the wider world.

At PHPS, we believe in the importance of positive partnerships with families, cultural groups and the community.

Children:

PHPS is committed to children by respecting their unique qualities, interests, strengths and abilities. Curriculum decisions will uphold all children's right to have their culture and identity acknowledged and valued. We understand the importance of play in a child's learning and development. We provide quality provisions, open-ended experiences and intentional teaching to enable children to engage actively with people, objects and representations. Our aim is to develop in children a strong sense of wellbeing which is supported by educators who are attuned to their thoughts and feelings.

Families:

PHPS is committed to families by acknowledging that they are the 'children's first and most influential teachers' (DEEWR, 2009 p. 12). We aim to provide a welcoming and nurturing environment 'where all children and families are respected and actively encouraged to collaborate with educators about curriculum decisions' (DEEWR, 2009 p. 12).

Community:

PHPS is committed to building effective partnerships between children, parents, educators, the management committee and encouraging, strengthening and fostering links to our local and wider community.

Educators:

PHPS is committed to strengthening staff collaboration and teamwork by valuing and respecting their skills, talents and interests and seeking ways to develop their professional knowledge and early childhood pedagogy. We are co-learners with the children, families and community whilst valuing the 'continuity and richness of local knowledge shared by community members, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders' (DEEWR, 2009 p. 13). We aim to form secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with each individual. We are committed to gathering and analysing information about each child as part of an 'ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning' (DEEWR, 2009 p. 17).

At PHPS, the Early Years Learning Framework is the essential basis of our practice and is enhanced in particular by the 5 EYLF learning outcomes:

- 1. Children have a strong sense of identity.***
- 2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world.***
- 3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.***
- 4. Children are confident and involved learners.***
- 5. Children are effective communicators.***

At Peak Hill Preschool, we believe that childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the journey of life.

Revised 28/02/13.

Reference: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming –the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra: Author.

Programming

The program is designed to meet the individual needs and interests of each child. Peak Hill Preschool is guided by the Learning Outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The program embraces the vision for learning of the EYLF document which strives to empower children with the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to succeed.

Educators make observations of all the children's learning and development, keeping records of how they are progressing and using this information in further planning. Therefore, daily activities and routine styles reflect needs of the children that the educators have identified as a result of the ongoing observation process. The daily program and day book are displayed in the playroom and children's individual files (portfolios) are available for parents and family members of that child to view at any time.

A wide range of individual/family needs are incorporated into the programming including religious, cultural and medical/developmental considerations:

Preschool will encourage your child to:

- ☺ Use their fine and gross motor skills – develop their pencil grip and scissor skills, use and control small objects, run, hop, jump, skip and balance;
- ☺ Be creative with paint, glue, using scissors and recycled materials and experiment with a variety of mediums such as paint, clay, dough etc.
- ☺ Look at maths through problem solving, size/shape recognition, colour, weighing and balancing. Learn new language skills through discovering books and text, discussions, pictures, rhyming words, social interactions and stories;
- ☺ Look at nature, the garden, the seasons and weather. Learn about the benefits of recycling, caring for the environment and sustainability;

- ☺ Sing, dance, use rhythm, play musical instruments, engage in drama activities and move to music;
- ☺ Learn to trust, respect and co-operate with other adults and children.

Part of the professional expertise of the educators is identification of areas of need and referral of children/families to agencies where appropriate, for example - speech pathologists and occupational therapists' referrals.

In conjunction with the preschool program, there are several associated organisations that provide services for children attending the preschool, these include speech therapist, hearing screening, StEPS vision screening and NSW Community Health dental screening.

Available Sessions

The Preschool currently operates four days per week, i.e. Tuesday to Friday during school terms.

Sessions are from 9.00am to 3.00pm. Children must be 2 – 5 years of age.

In 2019, 2-year-old children will be able to attend preschool for **one day a week only**, on a day specified by the preschool. This is due to a change in funding by the NSW Department of Education in 2014 and also to a change in the educator to child ratio changing as of the 1st January, 2016. The preschool receives no funding for 2-year-old children to attend preschool.

Priority of access guidelines, as set by the NSW Department of Education, are as follows:

- children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school
- children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31 July and from low income and/or Aboriginal families
- children with English Language needs
- children with disabilities
- children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).

(There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above).

The above children will have priority of access over 2 year old children and 3 year old children who do fall into one the above categories if places are required.

By special arrangement, school buses bring some children living outside the town limits to the Preschool and pick-up in the afternoon. This needs to be arranged with the bus operator.

Please adhere to the operation times, i.e. 9.00 – 3.00, giving consideration to daily staff programming prior to and after Pre-School, e.g. room preparation and cleanup. Early arrival or late departure fees are applicable if these times are not adhered to (refer to Fees Policy and Fees section of Handbook).

Preschool Staff

The current Peak Hill Preschool Director holds a degree qualification – Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood & Primary). Each service must appoint an Educational Leader with suitable experience to mentor and support other educators. Other staff members must hold a minimum qualification of Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (previously known as Children’s Services). Currently, Peak Hill Preschool has two educators with early childhood teaching degrees, a diploma qualified educator, and an educator who holds a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care. It is a requirement that there is a person on site at all times who holds a current first aid certificate and approved asthma and anaphylaxis training.

Overall, our preschool staff bring a wide range of experience to the service, which combine to provide a broad spectrum of expertise and talents within the Preschool. Current staff members are:

Director/Teacher:	Narelle Elias
Educational Leader:	Narelle Elias
Early childhood Teacher:	Leanne Hurst
Educator (Diploma in ECEC)	Donna McKenzie

Aboriginal Educational Worker/Cert. III:

Alex Sharah

Administration officer:

Bernadette Aiken

Please refer to our Policy folder for more detailed information on specific policies, procedures, and goals for the preschool, children, staff and parents.

Preschool Fees

Fees are set and reviewed annually by the Management Committee. Fees are kept to a minimum to ensure affordability for all families.

Fees must be paid per term for each session in which your child is enrolled, irrespective of attendance. **No child can start a new term if fees are outstanding.**

Fees can be paid using cash, cheque or direct deposit. Please notify the Director if you wish to pay by direct deposit and remember to use your family name as a reference so we can identify the payment. We are also registered with Centrelink for Centrepay – a free direct bill-paying service which Centrelink offers to customers from their Centrelink payments. Please see the Director to obtain a Centrepay form if you wish to use this service.

Reduced fees – The Start Strong funding provided by the NSW Department of Education aims at reducing fees for families with children in the year before school; families with a current Health Care card or for Aboriginal children from 3 to 5 years of age. Please see separate Fees Schedule sheet.

(Maintenance, resource and fundraising levies are no longer charged as of 2019).

Incorporation fee – \$1.00 + GST per family to join; \$2 + GST per family per year.

Early/Late Fee – please be aware that should you arrive more than 15 minutes before your child's session or more than 15 minutes late after your child's session has ended, an Early/Late fee may apply at a rate of \$15 for the first 15 minutes, and \$1 a minute for any time thereafter.

Cancellation of enrolment – the Director must be given two weeks notice if a child's enrolment is to be cancelled, otherwise two weeks fees will be charged in lieu of attendance.

Absences – please inform the Preschool if your child is going to be absent to assist staff in their preparation for the day. Enrolment may lapse after 4 weeks of unexplained absence.

Your Child's Day

Signing in and out

On the days of operation at the preschool, the 'magnetic door lock' is on at all times. Families must ring the door buzzer to notify the staff that you have arrived. The magnetic system is in place to protect staff and children at all times.

As you accompany your child to their room, please sign-in in the folder next to your child's name. As well as your signature, you will need to write in the time of arrival and who is expected to be collecting your child. When collecting your child you will again need to record the time and your signature prior to departing with your child. Please ensure that staff is made aware of your child's arrival and departure.

Bringing/collecting your child (please see Authority to collect policy)

The only persons allowed to collect your child from the preschool are the authorised parents or other authorised adults, recorded on your child's enrolment form. These people must be 16 years and over.

The staff are not permitted to allow your child to leave with any other person unless the preschool has been given prior notification. If someone not previously sighted by the staff arrives to collect your child, photo identification

(e.g. Drivers Licence) will be requested, photocopied and kept on file for our records.

Our main concern at all times is the safety and well being of your child.

Bus travel

Parents must make their own arrangements with bus drivers to have their children travel by bus. **Please note:** Bus drivers are not required to carry pre-schoolers and they are not paid for this service – they travel any extra distance at their own expense. Please recognise the favour your bus driver is doing for you. Preschool children travelling by bus are not covered by insurance, therefore parents must accept full responsibility and liability and must complete a Bus Travel Permission Note in the enrolment form. Preschool staff are not responsible for any child until the child is inside the preschool gate. A staff member meets the children at the roadside when their bus arrives in the morning and waits with the children until their buses collect them in the afternoon. Written instructions are to be provided to staff when a change to usual bus arrangements has been made. **Only children who live outside of the town limits are to travel by bus.**

Children's belongings

Your child will have a hook/picture on which to put their bag. Please ensure all your child/ren's belongings are clearly labelled with their names. This includes school bags, lunch boxes and water bottles.

Routines

The daily routine the children will follow is displayed in the playroom. Activities include Morning tea, Lunch time, Indoor/Outdoor play, Group time Activities (e.g. circle games, music and movement, book reading) and Rest/Quiet time. The routines are flexible depending on the interests children display in different activities.

What your child needs:

- ☺ **Backpack** -each child needs a named bag containing two changes of clothing (including underwear and socks).
- ☺ **Hats** – The preschool provides all children with sun-safe hats that meet the recommendations of the NSW Cancer Council and which are kept at the Preschool. The preschool also provides Cancer Council approved sunscreen. If your child requires a special sunscreen, parents are required to provide their own. All sunscreen is kept by staff in a safe place.
- ☺ **Fruit/Vegetables** – Children are asked to bring one piece of fruit or vegetable to preschool to share for morning tea. The piece of fruit or vegetable is placed in the basket provided as you arrive at preschool. **(IN 2019, FRUIT FOR MORNING TEA WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE PRESCHOOL through funding received).**
- ☺ **Lunch** – sandwich, fruit, water bottle, yoghurt, cheese etc. Please adhere to the Munch and Move Program and Anaphylaxis Policy by NOT sending food that is made with egg or nuts, e.g. egg or peanut

butter sandwiches, quiche, meringue, nut based chocolate spreads, store bought cakes, fast foods products, sweet cream filled or chocolate biscuits, chips, salty snack foods, chocolates or lollies, as we encourage healthy eating.

- 😊 **Water Bottles-** drink bottles are to be filled with WATER ONLY. Please do not send cordial, fizzy drinks or fruit juice in their water bottle. A small fruit juice may be sent to have with their lunch.

NOTE: Cool water is available for the children at all times.

Special Occasions – to celebrate your child’s birthday, you are welcome to bring in a cake or cup cakes to share with the children.

Important things to remember:

1. All belongings to be clearly labelled with child’s full name
2. Morning tea and lunch are required each day.
3. Children should only bring water to drink.
4. Families are encouraged to send their children in suitable play clothes and footwear to enable them to enjoy exploratory, messy, art, craft and physical activities, both summer and winter. Involvement in such activities extends the children’s creativity, gross motor and sensory awareness skills.

Children being toilet trained may need extra changes of clothing, undies and socks. Having their own clothes helps to avoid them being stressed about wearing clothes that they are not familiar with.

Helping your child settle in

Coming to Preschool for the first time is a big step for children and parents. Children all react differently to changes. Some children and parents are uncomfortable with change and can find this initial settling period difficult to manage. The settling in process needs to be individualised for each family and it is important for us to know how you and your child are feeling during this time, because we want to be a support during this time of transition. Please talk to us so we can help you by addressing any concerns and issues.

The following points are strategies and guidelines for a happy transition:

- ☺ **1. Visit the centre with your child before commencement.** Children feel safer when they are in a familiar environment. A visit before starting will reduce the strangeness of this new, big and exciting place. Sometimes, new things are all too overwhelming for children. We can minimise this feeling by acquainting the children and parents with staff and routine. At this time the staff will give your child a tour of the premises, showing your child the following locations - toilets, playroom, the outdoor environment etc.
- ☺ **2. Be positive – it is contagious.** After the visit to the preschool discuss it with your child. Ask what they remembered and liked, point out all the fun things, talk about the friendly staff etc.
- ☺ **3. Stay and play.** For your first few times at the preschool, make sure you have enough time to stay for a while before you leave your child. Show your child that you enjoy being at the preschool and value what he/she will be doing there. Get to know your child's primary care giver and let them know about your child's routines, habits and what they enjoy. Sometimes it helps to bring a security object from home such as a special toy or blanket.
- ☺ **4. Say good-bye.** Parents are encouraged to remain at the preschool until your child is settled into an activity before you leave. Tell a staff member before you leave and they will ensure they are close by to help you both to say good-bye. **Make sure you say good-bye** and tell your child you will be back to pick them up, so your child will not lose trust in you. **Never slip away.** Once you have decided to leave keep to your decision and leave calmly and quickly. Unless you feel your child is going to cope really well, consider leaving your child for only part of day on their first day. It is better if you can leave your child for progressively longer periods of time until you feel they are ready for a whole day visit. If your child is not coping, the staff will let you know and request you pick them up before they become over anxious. If YOU are anxious, feel free to phone to see how your child has settled in and plan to return early.
- ☺ **5. Develop a routine.** Try to do the same thing when you arrive every morning. For example, greet the staff, help your child to put their bag on the hook, place their morning tea fruit in the basket and take their lunch box to the fridge. Help your child to learn self help skills by encouraging them to do these tasks for themselves. Then settle your child into an activity, say good-bye and tell them when you will return, e.g. after sleep time.
- ☺ **6. Keeping in touch.** Your child may become upset when you leave but usually can be distracted and quickly settled by staff members. Most children only cry for a few minutes and then settle into play activities. Ring

us any time to find out how your child is going. As stated above, please be assured we would contact you if your child became too distressed. We aim to make sure you and your child are comfortable and happy about coming to our preschool. Staff members will discuss your child's day with you when you return. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask – we know this can be a difficult time and we are here to help.

Above all, preschool is a fun place where children learn through play. We look forward to sharing these special early childhood experiences with you and your family.

Policies and Procedures

Particular policies are required by the Regulatory Authority and/or by the Management Committee, parents, Director and staff. These policies and procedures need to be followed to ensure a high-quality service is provided for all families.

A copy of our preschool policies is available in the Foyer. Our policies are reviewed on an ongoing basis. All policies undergo regular reviews and the policies currently under review will be available for

comment/suggested changes in the same area. Parents are invited to view the policy and contribute to the review.

Families are always encouraged to discuss any matters regarding the Preschool's policies and procedures with the Director at any time – it is vital that the preschool's program meets the needs of the community.

Complaints: If you have any concerns whatsoever please contact the Director on 6869 1655.

Accident or illness

If your child becomes ill or has an accident while attending preschool, you or your emergency contact person will be contacted. Should neither person be available and the child requires urgent care, the Director will call for an ambulance to assess your child's condition. In the case of minor accidents requiring simple first aid and loving attention, the staff will complete an accident/illness form. A copy will be provided for you to sign when you pick up your child.

Infectious diseases

The Preschool complies with the Department of Health Infectious Diseases Guidelines. **Please ask staff if you would like an infectious diseases guideline with the exclusion periods.**

To avoid cross infection amongst children, we also ask that any child who has too loose/offensive bowel motions, vomiting or a temperature (exceeding 37.5 degrees centigrade) be kept home from preschool. The exclusion should be for 24 hours after the last reaction and/or when the temperature returns to normal for 24 hours without the use of medication or paracetamol.

Immunisation

Government Legislation states that the Pre-School is required to maintain an immunisation register regarding the immunisation status of all enrolled children. To enrol in the preschool, parents must provide an ACIR Immunisation History Statement stating the child is up-to-date or on a catch up schedule (certified by the immunisation provider), or provide the Preschool with an ACIR Immunisation Medical Exemption form (certified by an immunisation provider).

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, unimmunised children may be required to stay at home for the duration of the outbreak. Please note - fees are still payable during illness or in the event of an outbreak as mentioned above.

Medication Policy

Staff members are permitted to give *Prescription Only Medications* to the children while they are at the preschool. The medication must be in its original box/container with your child's name and dosage details on the label attached by the chemist or doctor.

If your child requires *Non-Prescription medication*, the preschool will require a letter from you doctor or chemist accompanying the medication. **The letter must include:**

- ❖ Your child's name;
- ❖ Name of medication;
- ❖ Dosage details (quantity and times)
- ❖ Commencement date and finish or review date;
- ❖ Signature of doctor or chemist.

All medications must be signed into and out of the preschool's Medication Register each time they are brought to the preschool. **Medications must always be given to a staff member when filling out the medications register. Never leave medication in the child's bag under any circumstances.** Please ask a staff member for assistance.

Asthma and Anaphylaxis Action Plans:

Families enrolling at the preschool with children diagnosed with asthma and/or anaphylaxis **MUST** obtain an "Asthma Management Plan" and/or "Anaphylaxis Plan" from the Director to be completed by a doctor to ensure that the child's treatment requirements for these conditions can be followed according to parents/doctors instructions.

Hand Washing Routines

Handwashing is the most important way of controlling infections. It is requested that parents assist their children to wash their hands both when arriving at the preschool (to reduce introduction of germs), and when departing from the preschool (to prevent taking germs home). During the day the

children are constantly encouraged by the staff to wash their hands; for example, before eating, after toileting, after playing outside, and after touching nose secretions. Remember, infections can be spread by a person who shows no signs of illness. We would be most thankful for your co-operation in this matter.

Behaviour Management

When children require positive guidance with aspects of their behaviour, the staff uses strategies that are developmentally appropriate for the age of the child, taking into account individual needs and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. If you have any concerns relating to your child's behaviour please feel free to discuss these with staff.

About two year olds

- ☺ Two year olds enjoy playing alongside other children, but usually keep to themselves.
- ☺ When conflicts arise, staff need to step in to prevent aggression and teach appropriate behaviours.
- ☺ Children this age are beginning to label feelings that they recognize in themselves and others. Controlling emotions is still difficult, however, so frustration may trigger emotional meltdowns.
- ☺ Comfort objects like blankets or teddy bears help two year olds cope with new situations or strong emotions.

About three to five year olds

- ☺ Have developed some knowledge about appropriate ways of behaving. Have more self control than younger children. Have an extensive vocabulary and relatively good comprehension skills and generally understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- ☺ Staff members are aware that inappropriate behaviour results from a variety of causes: anger, frustration, boredom, attention, imitation, tiredness, excitement, jealousy, high activity and poor social skills etc. Staff will assess each case individually.
- ☺ If a child's behaviour is inappropriate he/she will be guided to another area and activity.

- ☺ The child will be told what behaviour was unacceptable and be given praise for acceptable behaviour.
- ☺ If the behaviour continues another strategy will be implemented. The child will be asked to participate in a solitary activity and can return when they are ready to behave appropriately. This strategy requires the child to take ownership of their behaviour and develop control.

Overall Behaviour Management Strategies

- ☺ Children learn best through experiences – unpleasant as well as pleasant – and if the consequences are not too dangerous, it may be desirable to let children simply experience the consequence of their behaviour. Staff will always be present and the child's safety and well being will be paramount. Staff will intervene if a child is endangered or endangering peers/staff.
- ☺ Reinforcing positive behaviour is a very powerful way of causing it to continue. Sometimes it is more powerful to ignore inappropriate behaviour to ensure it does not continue. Behaviour is reinforced when children gain the adults attention (be if positive attention or negative attention).
- ☺ When a problem arises staff will always discuss it with each child at an appropriate level. Children will be encouraged to discuss how they felt and how it made another child feel. The children will be encouraged to seek their own solutions by the staff asking questions like – “What could we do?” and “What else could we do?”
- ☺ Staff may need to redirect a child to another activity to prevent another child being endangered.
- ☺ To minimise problems, staff will plan activities which are developmentally appropriate and based on children's needs. Staff will offer activities which are challenging and provide an opportunity for children to succeed. Staff will provide a positive model and ensure children are fully aware of our expectations.

Maintain Up-to-date Records

Any changes to the information on the child's enrolment forms need to be communicated to the preschool so that staff and management are aware of Director to update enrolment information.

Peak Hill Preschool is a Non-Smoking Environment – Please adhere to this policy at the Preschool and in the grounds.

Family Involvement

All families are welcome to share some time with their child during their stay at the Preschool. If you have a special talent that you would like to share with the children or if you would just like to spend time reading a story, engaging with them while they play or helping with fruit time, we would love to hear from you.

Management Committee

Parent Management Committee/General Involvement

As explained previously, you may find that involvement on the Management Committee would enable you to help promote the Preschool in a direction that you see as beneficial to your children and the children of Peak Hill and the wider community. However, if you are not a Committee member you are always welcome to share your opinions and comments through the suggestion box in the foyer, via email or talking to the director, staff or committee member in person.

Preschool Usefuls....

- Aluminium pie dishes
- Bark
- Birthday and greeting cards
- Boxes: that have not contained products with nuts or eggs.
- Cardboard scraps
- Cloth scraps
- Corrugated paper
- Feathers
- Lace
- Lids
- Matchboxes
- Overlocking threads
- Paper plates
- Pine cones
- Plastic containers
- Raffia
- Shoe boxes
- Timber scraps – soft wood
- Ice cream containers
- Wrapping paper
- Cellophane
- Yoghurt containers
- Bottle tops
- Calendars
- Corks
- Cotton reels
- Felt
- Wool scraps
- Leather scraps
- Magazines
- Net bags
- Paper doyleys
- Paper serviettes
- Pipe cleaners
- Tinsel
- Stockings
- String
- Wallpaper

*If you have any of these
spare items around
your house, they would
be well used at
preschool for our art
and craft activities.
Thanks*