



# Preschool Field Officer Service Newsletter Term Four 2020

To contact the PSFO Team: Tel: 9742 8199

Email: [psfo.service@wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:psfo.service@wyndham.vic.gov.au)

## PSFO TEAM UPDATE

Hello Wyndham Educators

After an incredibly difficult year for everyone, we are here – Term 4, 2020 - it has been a year like no other in our lifetime.

We were hopeful that Coronavirus cases continued to decline, that children could get back to Early childhood programmes and school, and that our business and family life may see some normality in the very near future. Finally we have seen this happen!

We must always be hopeful; *“a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen, a feeling of trust, it’s strength is the strength of the person’s desire.”*

We have reflected on our hopes and hopes of what others might be, especially as our children return to services. We hope that all children re-settle into their classrooms, make and build on trusting connections and positive relationships with their Teachers, Educators & peers. We hope that small problems can be resolved, and resilience is built to overcome personal barriers. We hope that play and playfulness, building safety and security and meeting children’s individual needs is at the top of our agenda. We are hopeful that our Early childhood classrooms reflect children’s different learning styles and cultural backgrounds. We hope that we continue to reflect, question, plan and act on our practices to ensure our curriculum matches the needs and development of all children. We hope that we can show empathy, understanding and kindness to all, that we can warm others hearts with our virtual hugs and contemplate how to just **‘BE’**, in the space, in the present, in relationships, in time and yourself.

As our Preschool Field Officer programme has continued to operate on a remote basis for most of this year, we are hopeful that we can get back on site to services very soon to continue our collaborative work with our community and Educators. We are hopeful that Teachers and Educators will continue to feel supported, knowledgeable and confident in their ability to provide inclusive and responsive Early childhood curriculums.

As we have talked with Teachers and Educators during remote PSFO Service – we are hopeful that some of our discussion points and strategies will be implemented successfully in the classroom. The PSFO/Educator Professional Conversations have been an opportunity for local Early childhood staff to come together to share their learnings and experiences. During these conversations, the PSFO has provided some practical tips to support inclusive practices. The PSFO service has continued to provide phone and online consultations to Educators seeking support for both individual and groups of children. Some children have remained at remote learning in their own homes, and the PSFO has been able to support in home goals and strategies for families alongside the child’s Teacher. We will continue to offer this service until we can get back on site to our Early childhood services.

When we do return to onsite visits, we will be following your COVID Safe Plan that you have in place as well as Wyndham City Council’s COVID Safe Plan. We will seek feedback from you prior to us visiting to ensure we can support you in a COVID safe way.

Please continue to submit Support Requests to our service, we can’t wait to get back out on site, sit alongside our gorgeous pre-schooler children and work with our amazing Educators in our community.

PSFO Team



*(Emily Dickinson)*



# SCHOOL TRANSITION

## **Wow. What a year!**

What a great job we have all done, to get this far. We all deserve a 'pat on the back', that is for sure. Wyndham Educators report there have been some challenges but, there have also been some benefits. One thing we could all agree on though - it certainly has been a learning curve in so many ways.

It's hard to believe that we are at the stage of the year where we are ramping up towards school transition. This cohort of children will certainly require some careful considerations. Transition is a time where it can be tricky enough, without adding in supporting children, families and schools during a Pandemic!

Discussions around how we can best support transition have been occurring more and more amongst the Early Childhood Sector.

One thing that is imperative is that we remember that transition is not a 'one size fits all approach', especially given the current times. That is, each child and family have been affected differently as a result of Covid19. Changing work responsibilities, unable to access services, supervision of children, work hours changing, job loss, loss of family members, inability to see loved ones, the list goes on.

Some children and families have even benefited as a result - some children have been attending kinder as we know and benefiting from more 1:1 attention at kinder, or at home. Depending on how resilient the child or family is, has also had a huge impact on how things have been tracking for some.

Recently, some Wyndham educators attended a DET session on 'The Importance of Transition to School in a Time of COVID'.

For those who were unable to attend, some of the key considerations outlined in these sessions are below. Additionally, Louise Dorrat also has written a timely article with a similar theme and some of these ideas are shared below:

### **Working in Partnership with Schools and Families**

- Focus on getting as many families as possible to enrol in their local school if they have not already. Enrolments are down, DET reports.
- The recommendation is for schools to focus on social emotional development and play-based learning next year. This is often an area that we excel in, in Early Childhood Education.
- Play-based learning, may not be something each school is doing and maybe not understood fully or perhaps even valued at times... How can we promote the sharing of our evidence-based practice within our local catchment? How can we share what we are doing in these areas, with our children, so that the schools may use these pedagogical principles? Yes, it's a challenge – but an interesting concept to consider.
- Consider ways we can share what teaching social emotional development and play based learning looks like, with our families. How can we share this with families prior to transition so that they may have their capacity built in order to support their child prior to entering school and beyond?
- Schools are aware there are more families who are experiencing vulnerability – encourage the sharing of information and communication where possible between the schools and families. Empower your families to advocate for themselves, where possible.
- DET recommended a focus on social and emotional development and play based learning in term four in kindergartens.
- Consider how to engage with the local schools if you haven't already begun. Yes, visits may not be possible – how else may you communicate effectively e.g. online meetings/phone calls etc.
- Find ways of supporting the schools to provide videos, photos and social stories to the children attending of their school grounds and facilities particularly the playground, classroom and bathroom.
- Can we increase our use of social stories about school transition, including sharing these with the families e.g. via email or print copies? Some prep teachers may be unfamiliar with social stories – could you share a model of this, so that these may be implemented at school?

- Suggest letters between the children and their buddies if this could work in your context.
- The prep/foundation teachers could share picture stories and so on virtually, to begin developing a relationship with the children attending.

Many services have been receiving questions from families regarding access to a second year of kindergarten following coronavirus (COVID-19) related disruptions this year. The process and requirements for a second year of funded kindergarten are unchanged.

A second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten should only be considered where the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program and environment for the child given their developmental status, and that the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

Requests for a second year of funded kindergarten should not be based on missed on-site or learning from home program time.

Resources include:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kindersecondyear.aspx>

#### References:

<https://www.abc.net.au/abckids/early-education/school-readiness-during-a-pandemic/12679484>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kindersecondyear.aspx>

Transition Workshop - DET Importance of transition to school in a time of COVID – September 2020.

*Ready schools + Ready families + Ready early childhood services +  
Ready communities =*

**READY CHILDREN**

**(Dockett and Perry, 2014)**



#### **Do you have any children with one Area of 'Significant Delay'**

Have you remembered to refer the family to the Brotherhood of St Laurence? Remember NDIS support does not stop at the end of Kindergarten.

Early Childhood Early Intervention:

<https://ndis.bsl.org.au/early-childhood-early-intervention/>

Referral form: <https://ndis.bsl.org.au/early-childhood-early-intervention/referral-form/>

#### RESOURCES

**Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit**

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/professionals/learning/Transition-to-School-Resource-Kit.pdf>

**School Readiness During a Pandemic – Louise Dorrat**

<https://www.abc.net.au/abckids/early-education/school-readiness-during-a-pandemic/12679484>

**Does my child need a second year of kinder?**

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/kindergarten-second-year.aspx>

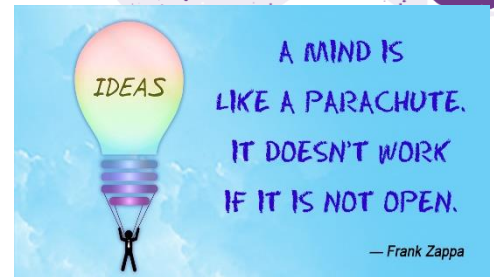
**Getting ready for primary school – Easy English - DET**

[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/learningneeds/Getting%20ready%20for%20primary%20school%20\\_accessible.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/learningneeds/Getting%20ready%20for%20primary%20school%20_accessible.pdf)

## Websites, Clips and Visuals ....

### **Have a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and the family wish to go to Western Autistic?**

The child requires a multidisciplinary assessment – that is, an assessment made by not only the Paediatrician, but also the Psychologist and Speech Pathologist. The child could still attend a special school, such as Warringa if the school completes a cognitive assessment and the child scores 70 or below (considered an intellectual disability).



### **All Play Learn**

Resources for children, parents and educators in the early childhood education and care setting, to support with disabilities and developmental challenges.

<https://allplaylearn.org.au/early/>

Transitions are almost always signs of growth, but they can bring feelings of loss. To get somewhere new, we may have to leave somewhere else behind.

Fred Rogers

© 2013 Rogers

### **Children with Disability or Developmental Delay starting next year?**

A program support group (PSG) brings together key people to support the inclusion of children with disability or developmental delay, or complex medical needs, from the time of enrolment at kindergarten until they move to school. It is organised and run by the early childhood teacher (DET)

For more information on the role of this group, the benefits and so on, see:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/pages/psg.aspx>

### **Have a child with Disability or Developmental Delay and they already are with therapists?**

Support the family to provide this information to the school – and possibly make them a copy to hand directly to the prep/foundation teacher next year. Sometimes these reports aren't known about at first by the teachers, as they are usually locked in the filing cabinets in the school office! Empower your families to open up these conversations with their new teacher 😊

## **Resources**

**COVID-19: Practical tips for early years teaching and learning - Dr Deborah Price**

<https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/covid-19-practical-tips-for-early-years-teaching-and-learning>

### **Autism and Inclusion in Kindergarten**

#### **Information Booklets – Great for Educators and Families!**

This practical guide for early childhood teachers is linked to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Inside there's information about autism in young children and strategies for creating an inclusive learning environment.

<https://www.amaze.org.au/support/resources/downloadable-resources/#booklets>

"GREAT THINGS NEVER CAME FROM YOUR COMFORT ZONE."



**PSFO RESOURCES** — Due to the risk of COVID-19 remaining on surfaces for unknown periods of time, we have decided to cease our lending library until further notice. The PSFO's will continue to recommend useful resources that you may wish to purchase at your services

# PSFO/EDUCATOR Professional Conversation Sessions - Term Four - NEW TOPICS AND DATES

Please find below a new schedule of session topics, dates and times for the PSFO/Educator Professional Conversation Sessions for Term 4. Please note there are a variety of new topics and a document providing a description of each topic has been emailed to our mailing list – please email us on [psfo.service@Wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:psfo.service@Wyndham.vic.gov.au) if you haven't seen it, want more information, or if you want to book in to any sessions.

Date	Time	Topic
Monday 26 October	9.30am	Enriching Children's Language Development PART ONE
Monday 26 October	10.30am	Pragmatic language - what is it & how can we support children's social interactions?
Tuesday 27 October	9.30am	Chit - Chat about Challenging Behaviours
Tuesday 27 October	2.00pm	Let's talk about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Wednesday 28 October	9.30am	Enriching Children's Language Development PART TWO
Wednesday 28 October	10.00am	Introduction to the Pyramid Model
Thursday 29 October	9.30am	Sharing ideas about Emotional Regulation
Thursday 29 October	1.30pm	Working as part of the Circle around the Child
Wednesday 4 November	9.00am	Developmental Red Flags for 3-4 year olds – Identifying Typical and Non-typical Development
Thursday 5 November	2.00pm	Introduction to the Pyramid Model
Friday 6 November	11.00am	Enriching Children's Language Development PART ONE
Friday 6 November	2.00pm	Working as part of the Circle around the Child
Monday 9 November	9.00am	Enriching Children's Language Development PART TWO
Monday 9 November	2.00pm	Pragmatic language - what is it & how can we support children's social interactions?
Tuesday 10 November	9.30am	Chit - Chat about Challenging Behaviours
Tuesday 10 November	1.00pm	Let's talk about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Thursday 12 November	11.30am	Sharing ideas about Emotional Regulation
Thursday 12 November	2.00pm	Working as part of the Circle around the Child
Friday 13 November	9.30am	Introduction to the Pyramid Model
Friday 13 November	1.00pm	Developmental Red Flags for 3-4 year olds – Identifying Typical and Non-typical Development
Tuesday 17 November	9.30am	Pragmatic language - what is it & how can we support children's social interactions?
Wednesday 18 November	10.00am	Enriching Children's Language Development PART ONE
Wednesday 18 November	11.00am	Working as part of the Circle around the Child
Wednesday 18 November	2.00pm	Let's talk about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Thursday 19 November	1.00pm	Chit - Chat about Challenging Behaviours
Friday 20 November	10.00am	Introduction to the Pyramid Model
Friday 20 November	1.00pm	Enriching Children's Language Development PART TWO
Monday 23 November	11.00am	Pragmatic language - what is it & how can we support children's social interactions?
Tuesday 24 November	11.00am	Sharing ideas about Emotional Regulation
Tuesday 24 November	2.00pm	Let's talk about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
Wednesday 25 November	9.00am	Developmental Red Flags for 3-4 year olds – Identifying Typical and Non-typical Development
Wednesday 25 November	10.30am	Chit - Chat about Challenging Behaviours
Wednesday 25 November	3.00pm	Working as part of the Circle around the Child
Thursday 26 November	1.30pm	Introduction to the Pyramid Model
Friday 27 November	11.00am	Developmental Red Flags for 3-4 year olds – Identifying Typical and Non-typical Development