

WELLBEING

- Strong learning dispositions (“learning muscles”) such as persistence, curiosity, resourcefulness and risk-taking.
- Growing independence to self-manage by having lots of time to self-direct play & learning, by not being rushed when learning to manage materials (such as school bags and shoes) and time to choose to be with others or alone.
- Strong sense of being a successful learner through joyful, playful learning all day.

The preschool setting is set up to best support the 4-5 year old’s learning and development. The indoor and outdoor spaces allow for highly engaging play all day long – essential for oral language, wellbeing, learning dispositions and motor development. Children are able to move between indoor and outdoor learning experiences, managing themselves and their learning. The outdoor environments in preschools have been designed with the child’s high movement needs in mind – there are many opportunities to run, skip, jump, roll, climb, swing and stretch all day.



The lower child : adult ratios in a preschool are there for a reason. The educators are expertly trained to understand the highly intellectual work of play and know how to support and extend learning through play. They have specialised training and ongoing professional learning in child development and so understand the whole child: how the emotional, social, physical, cognitive and creative sides all work together.

Lower ratios mean children have more 1:1 attention from these highly-trained educators. They know that working in a smaller group engages more children, helps them to develop their oral language and independence and supports children’s wellbeing as they make the big transition from home to kindy each day. It also means children’s interests are easier to tap into for extending learning because it is not one educator trying to get to know 25 individual and unique children.

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Why is the Kindergarten year so important for a 4-5 year old's development?

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Pre-schoolers come in all shapes, sizes and interests, but their typical development has a few things in common. A preschool setting (also known as Kindergarten in SA) is the best learning environment to provide for these developmental needs.

The learning and development that happens during a year in preschool is essential for your child's future wellbeing and learning at school. It is often called the 'foundation' for later academic success and provides a rich environment to foster intellectual development. The analogy of the foundations of a house is a good fit. Without a solid foundation, the walls of the house will crack and even collapse. Rapid brain development happens in early childhood, and much of this brain development is dependent upon the body moving. That's why your child is so active! Their brain is growing.

Some of the most important learning for your 4-5 year old is:

WELLBEING

- The gradual transition from secure attachments of family and familiar friends to unfamiliar situations and people – by feeling supported and not rushed.
- Learning to express and manage emotions by having attentive adults available to support them through managing their big feelings.



SOCIAL LEARNING

- Learning how to be in group situations by experiencing small group interactions with an attentive adult.
- Learning how to cooperate, negotiate and collaborate through opportunities to play with others all throughout the day.

MOVING

- Moving in order to develop a strong core and motor coordination. This is one of the most important jobs for the 4 and 5 year old. They need to move A LOT.
- The brain requires movement to most fully develop in early childhood
- ACTIVE learning is essential in early childhood for learning to 'stick'. Rote learning only gets to the short term memory.



ORAL LANGUAGE

- Developing oral language through many opportunities to talk with peers during play
- Developing vocabulary, conversation skills and deepen their thinking by engaging in extended reciprocal conversations with adults and peers.