Mt Compass Preschool Centre is a part time kindergarten, offering 4 sessions of preschool each week. We have two teaching staff and several non teaching staff. Jay Elmslie (Director) and Jen Gilligan are the teachers. Bea Stumpfich and Andrew Heggart are our support workers, and Sandra Waye our finance officer.

We are based in a rural community and our practices reflect the rural nature of our community. We hope that you and your child enjoy being a part of this community and feel comfortable in sharing matters of interest or concern with our staff.

**Preschool Children**

The term after a child turns 4 years of age they can start kindergarten and are entitled to 4 kindergarten sessions per week for 4 kindergarten terms.

**Extended Preschool**

In certain circumstances a child’s time at preschool may be extended. If this were the case, parents and staff would reach this decision jointly.

**Transition to School**

Each term the preschool group visits the Mt Compass Area School, on a discovery tour!! We check out the (empty) Reception classroom, the girl’s and boy’s toilets, the Library, the office, staffroom, sick room, and other places of interest. Each term the Reception class and class teacher visit the preschool. This builds up the children’s general knowledge and experience of school, school ‘things’ and people. It also gives us a basis to discuss school at preschool. During a child’s last term at kindergarten they attend a transition to school program. These programs are organized by the school at which the child is enrolled to commence reception. These Transition visits give children some more specific experience of the school environment they will be part on the following term.
Preschool Session Times
Our preschool times are currently under review.
At present the following sessions are offered:
morning sessions Tues, Wed and Thurs 8.40-11.25
afternoon sessions Tues and Thurs 11.45-2.30
Please check with the Director for availability of sessions.

Pre Entry Children
Pre Entry is a non funded session that can be offered by preschools. It is up to each preschool centre to determine whether it is able to offer a pre entry session. At times we are unable to offer this service due to other demands on the centre.
When we are able to offer pre entry sessions to children it occurs during the term that children turn 4 years of age. (Children must be 4 years old before the start of term to commence preschool.) Pre entry sessions usually start part way through the term. Please check with the Director to determine how this affects you. Usually children attend one morning session of kindergarten per week during pre-entry.

Centre Philosophy
Our kindergarten centre is part of the State Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS). We are situated in the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island Region. Our beliefs and practices reflect those of DECS and we are supported in developing our particular policies and programs by our Regional Office.

- Parents are the first educators of their children
- Children learn best when there is a positive partnership between parents and educators
- Each of us are life long learners
- Children need a safe, nurturing environment in which to discover and extend their skills in a variety of learning areas.
- Children are individuals and have their own personality, needs and capabilities, preschool staff strive to create learning environments and opportunities that support each individual.

The educational program offered at our kindergarten is based on the national curriculum document called Early Years Learning Framework: Being, Becoming, Belonging see later for more information about this document.

Fees
Preschools charge fees to cover some of the running costs of the program. We ask that families pay their fees promptly. If you think you may have some difficulty paying on time please talk this over with the Director so that
a payment schedule can be organized. Payments can be made through Centrelink.

Preschool
$55 per term preschool fees
$20 per term lunch care
PreEntry
$30.00 per term (this fee is variable depending on sessions offered)

All fees to be paid by week 4 of the current term.

We ask that each family provide a packet of tissues & 2 rolls of toilet paper each term to offset some of our running costs and to share the fundraising load across more families.

What to bring to Kindergarten....
Each day children bring to kindergarten
- Named bag
- Named water bottle – we have water and cups at kindergarten as well
- Spare set of clothes, including underpants
- Named hat
- A piece of fresh fruit

Children place their fruit in the named bowls provided. On Tuesdays and Thursday, children attending over lunch time need bring to kindergarten lunch in a named lunch box (as well as morning fruit).

We ask that lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays consist of a sandwich or salad, and that sandwich fillings be nutritious (that is low in sugar and fat) and some fruit. All South Australian preschools and schools have been introduced to the Eat Well Policy of DECS that explains the need for children to eat fruit and vegetables several times a day, drink water and exercise to develop good health. The Preschool is involved in the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Research Project. Through this project preschool programs are developed to promote healthy lifestyles and the preschool monitors the effectiveness of these programs.

What to leave at home......
We ask that children do not bring the following to kindergarten
- toys
- drinks other than water
- foods that are high in sugar or fat
- food packaging
Children love to bring things in from home and it sometimes helps them bridge the gap between home and kindergarten. It also provides a good prop for children to develop skills and confidence when talking to an audience. We recognize this and we encourage children to bring items of interest to kindergarten when they relate to topics under investigation at kindergarten. When we are looking at a particular topic we will send a note home requesting items to be brought from home (e.g. Hats when we look at hats; tools when we do a unit on technology, etc). At other times we ask you to ensure that children leave toys at home.

**Attendance at Kindergarten**
Kindergarten is not compulsory, however children do benefit from regular attendance as they develop confidence in routines and their learning is uninterrupted by absences. We ask that you notify staff by phone if your child is going to be away.

During the first two weeks of each term DECS gathers statistics on attendance and this is used to determine staffing. Poor attendance during these two weeks could result in less staff.

**Dropping children off at kindergarten**
When entering or leaving the kindergarten we ask that parents ensure that the gate is shut behind them. We encourage parents to be involved in their child’s kindergarten experiences and there are many ways parents can be involved. However, children often find it difficult to separate from their parents if it is not clear to the child when the parent is going to leave. Please talk to staff if you wish to discuss effective ways of separating from your child.

**Collecting children from kindergarten**
At the end of the session children usually gather on the mat for a story or group activity - we call this group time. During this time it is important that children’s concentration is not interrupted, so we ask that parents enter the kindergarten quietly and wait quietly for their child to leave the group area. Teachers say goodbye to children individually as they see the person who’s come to collect the child. It may take a little time to say good bye to all children, but your patience helps ensure the children’s safety. We don’t want to lose anyone in the rush to see Mum or Dad!

If someone different is collecting your child, please record this information on the sheet in the kitchen.

**Keeping track of the time**
Staff arrive at kindergarten before the session starts to prepare the room and themselves for the day. We, therefore, ask that you do not arrive until 8.40am. Some kindergartens have closed doors until the session starts – we choose not to shut the doors in the belief that families understand our need to prepare for the day. Likewise at the end of the day staff have many jobs to do once the children have departed, again we ask that children be collected on time.

**Keeping in touch and sharing information**

At Mt Compass Preschool we value the relationships we develop with the children in our care, and their parents and families. We believe that it is through relationships and a sense of wellbeing that your child will engage in learning experiences at preschool.

Throughout your child’s preschool year we encourage you to seek out staff to discuss your child’s time at preschool as the need arises. Sometimes this is a quick chat at the beginning or end of session, or we can make time outside preschool hours to meet. Likewise preschool staff touch base with parents to talk about how each child is going as the need arises.

In the second term of each child’s year at preschool we offer parents the opportunity to meet with preschool staff to discuss their child’s time at preschool. It is an opportunity to share our respective pictures of your child and how s/he is developing socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively both at home and at preschool. The parent/teacher meetings are held on Wednesday week 6 and/or 7 of each term, and are up to 15 minutes in duration. We ask that you help us stick to this time limit as other parents may be waiting.

We choose the second term because it gives your child the chance to ‘find their feet’, and us the chance to get to know them in the preschool environment.

There are several other ways we keep in touch with each other.

- Our regular newsletters let families know about what’s been happening at preschool and what’s coming up. You will find these posted in your child’s pocket near the front door along with other notes.
- We also have a notice board above the bag hooks, and we often put important reminders on an easel at the top of the entry ramp !!!
- Governing Council meetings are a great way to keep up with preschool curriculum, as well as events.
• Also watch out for displays around the room, these often show the children in action.
• Each child has a preschool book which helps to track their journey through the preschool year with a selection of their art and craft work, photographs and learning stories.
• We seek parent feedback each year through a DECS Parents Survey which helps us with our review and planning processes.
• Lastly when your child finishes their preschool year staff provide an overview of their year in the form of a report to parents, copies of this are given to the school with parent’s permission.

Illness
Illness spreads quickly through kindergartens so please keep your sick child at home to rest and recover. Some childhood conditions are highly infectious, so please notify the kindergarten if your child contracts an infectious condition.

Head Lice
Head lice are common among young children and spread through close contact. There is a lot of information available regarding the treatments for head lice. When staff observe that a child has head lice we ask that the head lice be effectively treated before the child returns to kindergarten. We will send a general note home when head lice are detected requesting that all children be checked and treated for head lice where necessary.

How you can help
There are many ways you can be involved in your child’s kindergarten. Here are a few suggestions/requests:

• Washing. A parent volunteers to take the weekly washing home for a term at a time.
• Extra washing. Volunteer to take the home corner clothes home and give them a wash
• End of Term/Year cleaning. Periodically the kindergarten needs some extra cleaning.
• Supporting our fundraising/social events
• Becoming a member of the Governing Council
• Arrange to come and spent some time at kindergarten helping with a special project/skill/or interest
• Working Bees. Become involved in periodic working bees
• Offer to help with some of the art/craft preparation
• Collect useful junk that children can use in their creations at kindy
• Watch out for requests in newsletter

Mt. Compass Preschool Centre       updated  28.1.2011
The Governing Council
The Governing Council members are elected by the parents each year to oversee the running of the centre. They meet twice a term (8 times a year) and are involved in financial management, maintenance and upgrading of the buildings, grounds and equipment. The Governing Council members arrange fundraising events throughout the year. The kindergarten relies on funds raised by the Council. We use this money to purchase new equipment and generally keep the centre and grounds safe, clean and tidy.
All parents are welcome to come along to the meetings.

The Early Years Framework: Belonging, Being and Becoming
This is the new National Framework for the Early Years (Birth – 5 years). This framework is being introduced throughout Australia during 2010-2011 and it will guide educational practice in preschools. Please see the attached pamphlet for details.

Child Protection Curriculum
The Child Protection Curriculum is now a mandatory part of our preschool and school curriculum and is part of teaching and learning from preschool through to Year 12. It explores two themes
- We all have the right to be safe
- We can help ourselves be safe by talking to people we trust

With preschool children we explore the concept of safety within the context of young children’s experiences. We do this through exploring instances that occur at preschool; stories; use of puppets; role plays and other related activities. The second theme focuses on children being able to self select a range of people they trust.