

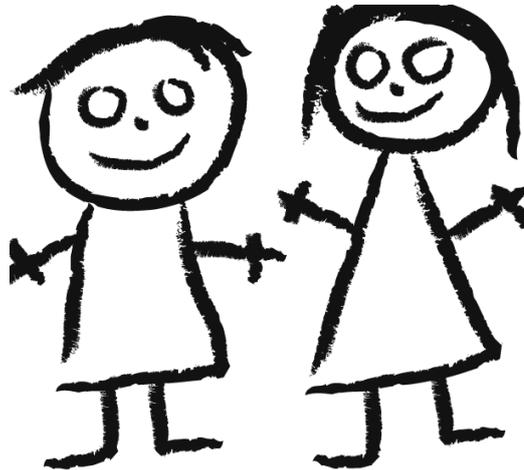


Ardtornish  
**Children's  
Centre**  
for Early Childhood  
Development and Parenting



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# *Preschool Information Booklet*



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# Welcome to Ardtornish Children's Centre.

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A very warm welcome is extended to you and your children. We trust that your time at Ardtornish will be enjoyable and you will value the high quality range of services available at our Children's Centre.

## Our Vision

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At Ardtornish Children's Centre, we provide a high quality program for children from birth to school age. The staff team work in partnership with families, children and the community to provide a stimulating and challenging integrated play based environment which meets the learning needs of each child. Children will have opportunities to access learning experiences within diverse age groups and in a variety of spaces. As an integrated service we are developing sustainable community services to support and provide the best opportunities for every family and child.

## We value:

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- learning through play
- active participation
- critical reflection
- collaboration
- shared decision making
- empowerment
- equity
- teamwork
- excellence
- trust, honesty & respect
- parent participation
- flexibility & spontaneity
- creativity & innovation
- individuality

## Centre Contacts

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<b>Director</b>	Heather Fuss
<b>Community Development Coordinator</b>	John Buckell
<b>Administration</b>	Jo Mickley
<b>Centre phone number</b>	8264 9828

## Services Available at the Children's Centre

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### Sessional Preschool

Sessional preschool is offered for children in their eligible preschool year.

Children are entitled to 15 hours a week. We operate the following sessions:

- Monday to Thursday 8:15am-3.45pm  
(These are separated into 2 booking patterns – Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday full days)

**Please Note:** Before and after the above mentioned times are educator's preparation and programming time.

### Occasional Care

3hr sessions run during preschool hours:

Morning sessions: 8.30-11.30am

Monday to Thursday am sessions for two years to preschool age

Wednesday and Thursday am sessions for babies to preschool age

Priority is given to children not using other care or education services, and is based on our occasional care guidelines (please see staff for a copy).

Bookings are made on an occasional basis.

Fees: \$5 a session or \$1.50 with Health Care Card

Please ensure that all people responsible for collecting children have been notified of the session times

### Parenting Programs/Community Information

Ardtornish Children's Centre offers a range of different community programs for parents, families and children. Crèche is offered during many of our programs. Fees are subsidised and often a small donation is requested. Please see staff for a copy of our program for further termly information, or see our noticeboard and Facebook page.

### Playgroup

There is a playgroup available to children and families on Wednesday to Friday mornings at 9.30am, during the school term. This operates out of a playgroup building on the school grounds.

## Local Management

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Ardtornish Children's Centre is a locally managed, community based site within the Department for Education and Child Development.

Educators in partnership with the Governing Council:

- identify strategic objectives within a Site Operational Plan and Quality Improvement Plan;
- work collaboratively to strengthen community partnerships;
- use human resources flexibly, effectively and efficiently;
- are accountable to the local community.

## Fees

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**Sessional Preschool**                      \$150 a term

Please note that the payment of fees is a vital source of income for the Children's Centre. This money ensures the viability of the Centre. It contributes to the cost of educators, administration and a range of running costs including electricity, gas, water, telephone, cleaning and gardening. It also allows us to purchase quality learning resources and equipment for your children. It also covers some performances and lunch time staffing.

Parents and carers should expect an annual fee increase in line with the CPI.

## Policies

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The Children's Centre has a range of policies that the Centre implements to meet National Quality Standards, National Legislation and Licensing requirements. These policies are handed out to all families when they enrol their child at preschool. Please see staff if you would like another copy. If you have any questions regarding any of the policies please feel free to approach a staff member.

## The Curriculum

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We are committed to provide a quality teaching and learning programme based on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) which is a National Curriculum document for children from birth to school transition.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of *Belonging, Being* and *Becoming*.

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- **Being** is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'- time to play, try new things and have fun.
- **Becoming** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

Educators, in partnership with children and families, construct a program with specific goals for each child and group of children, within a play based environment.

Play is the best vehicle for young children's learning, providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development.

Educators will assist your child to develop using the Framework's five learning goals:

- **A strong sense of their identity**
- **Connections with their world**
- **A strong sense of wellbeing**
- **Confidence and involvement in their learning**
- **Effective communication skills**

Our program is displayed throughout the centre. Take the time to read this as it outlines the learning experiences that the children will be interacting with throughout each week.

## Independence

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We encourage children to be independent in caring for their personal needs and belongings such as carrying own bag, putting shoes and hats on or in bags, opening and closing their own drinks and food containers, peeling their own fruit and determining when they need to go to the toilet. However, we do guide and support children in these learning experiences. Research has suggested that encouraging these skills enhances children's self-esteem as they gain much needed self-help skills for future development. This self-help is invaluable in your child's future. It is fantastic to see the face of a child when they say, "I did it all by myself!" That look is a child's self-esteem and self-concept developing.

## Arrivals & Departures

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Children must wait with their parents/ caregivers in the foyer; until the doors are opened at 8.15am. Sign in sheets are located on the front desk where you enter the building.

For safety reasons it is essential that the educators are aware of who is going to be collecting your child. If a person unknown to the educator is going to be collecting your child we ask that you please bring that person to the centre and introduce them to us. Please write the name and contact phone number in our diary. If you are unable to make it to the Children's Centre yourself and have arranged for someone else to collect your child please ring the Centre and notify an educator of who is coming. This person will be asked to provide photo proof of their identity (e.g. Driver's Licence).

### When your child is reluctant for you to leave

It can be quite distressing if your child is upset or angry when it is time for you to leave. Children may be a little anxious when you leave them after a break or for the first time. Generally calm reassurance is all that is needed.

If not:

- Keep everything as low key and 'normal' as possible
- Try to remain as calm and in control as possible yourself
- Be clear, truthful and consistent. E.g. 'I'll start you off with this painting and then I have to go' or 'I'll do one activity with you for five minutes and then I will go'...and then, do just that ...go. (Don't wait until they finish, leave once they have started)
- Always say goodbye and tell them when you will be back
- Always follow through with what you have said

- Don't be late coming back as the children can become anxious when they see the other children getting picked up.
- Make positive comments about their success.

Remember staff are here to help you and your child. We will reassure your child and assist them in managing their feelings. If they don't settle, we will ring you and of course you can always ring to check on their progress.

## Parking

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Please be aware that the car park out the front of the children's centre is for staff only. It is not for families to use during pick-up and drop-off times. The lower car park is only for Ardtornish Primary school staff. We thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

## What I Need to Bring to Preschool

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- a named bag
- a named water bottle
- a named hat legionnaire or broad brimmed
- a named spare change of clothes
- named sunscreen
- a named healthy lunch and 2 healthy snacks per day

We suggest you also send:

- Gumboots
- Raincoat
- Sunglasses

### What to Wear

Preschool clothes - Clothes that you and your child are happy to get messy/dirty! We have preschool t-shirts available for purchase, in blue, red, green and pink and are \$15 each.

Suitable shoes, sandals or sneakers (named) are appropriate footwear.

**Please no thongs or slip on "Crocs".**

### What Food to Bring

Children will need 2 healthy snacks (separate from their lunch box) and their healthy lunch. Please remember **NO NUTS** are to be brought to preschool, which includes muesli bars. Some examples of healthy snacks include fruit, cheese, savoury crackers and yoghurt. Please see our Healthy Eating Policy for more information.

## Hats

To ensure that children are protected from the harmful effects of the sun, we ask that all children bring a named hat which is either a Legionnaire or wide brimmed style hat that protects their face, neck and ears, each day (see Sun Safety Policy). Hats can be left at our centre in the children's allocated hat rack, next to their picture.

The application of sun-screen is essential from September to April. **Please apply sun-screen to your child prior to coming to the Children's Centre.** Children will be supported by staff to reapply their personal sunscreen independently.

### The Don'ts

- please **don't** wear thongs or 'cros'. They are dangerous on climbing equipment
- please **don't** bring toys from home – they get lost
- please **don't** bring Nuts to preschool or any products which may contact nuts
- please **don't** bring unhealthy food to preschool – keep 'sometimes foods' for other occasions

## Keeping informed

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### Communication Pockets

All children have a communication pocket. These are located on the left wall as you first enter the preschool. Please make it a priority to check this pocket each time you come to the centre. **Newsletters** and other information are provided regularly to these pockets.

### Facebook

Please like our Facebook page; Ardtornish Children's Centre, for regular updates.

### Main Foyer TV screen

The main foyer TV screen will also advertise our current programs, events and updates, as well as display photos of your children whilst at preschool.

## Parent Participation

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We value your contributions and encourage you to be actively involved in your child's learning. If you have some spare time and would like to spend it at the Centre please do not hesitate to do so. You may like to share some of your special talents with the children (art, craft, sewing, music, cooking), play a board game with a small group of children, read a story or spend some time playing with your child and getting to know his/her friends. In the first term we send out a 'Just One Thing' request for families to identify a way that they can do just one thing to support the children's centre.

### Governing Council

We have an active 'Governing Council' that meets twice a term. These meetings share information about what the children have been doing at the Centre, parent programs and new developments within the Department for Education and Child Development. Financial reports including details of what money is being spent and the allocation of funds for special projects are provided.

The Governing Council makes decisions ranging from the review of Policies and Procedures to the setting of fees, fundraising events and activities. We aim to keep these meetings friendly and low key and an opportunity for parents to bring their ideas and comments about what is happening.

If you can spare some time to attend a meeting or would like to hear more about what's happening at the Centre and would like to be involved with decision making and policy development, please speak to a staff member and/or come along to the next scheduled meeting. If you are interested in joining the Governing Council, please see a staff member.

**Note:** All Parents/Caregivers wishing to volunteer on a regular basis in our Centre or become a member of our Governing Council are required to complete a Criminal History Check through the Department of Community & Social Inclusion.

## Community Information

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Regular newsletters are posted on our website, parent pockets and emailed to parents keeping families and other community members up to date with our diverse range of educational programs and other current events. Please ensure that we have your current email address.

Various noticeboards are located on the walls outside and inside the rooms. These display a variety of community and other relevant information for parents.

Our Community Development Coordinator and Family Services Coordinator are available to assist parents and families in accessing a range of support, services and information to benefit themselves, their family and the community. A variety of parenting courses and family events are run on a regular basis.

The Ardtornish Children's Centre Facebook page has up to date information about current programs and activities.

## Assessment & Reporting

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During your child's time at Ardtornish Children's Centre, s/he will be placed into a small group. While in this group the children will access a variety of fine motor skills e.g. cutting/pencil grip, stories and other **language and literacy experiences** including age appropriate cooking, science experiments, and group games which enhance **numeracy skills** as well as the **social skills** of taking turns and listening to others.

All children who attend the centre have a portfolio which contains examples of their creative work, photos, and learning stories written by educators. The portfolios are available to the children and parents/caregivers and demonstrate our play based curriculum in action.

We value your contribution to your child's portfolio. You can share a story about your family, a holiday, pets, neighbours or anything else important to your child. When your child leaves the centre they take the portfolio with them as a reminder of their time and developmental progress at Ardtornish Children's Centre.

Information with regard to your child's progress and participation in their small group and on their portfolio can be obtained anytime from the Educator responsible for your child's small group.

Educators observe and support the children as they participate in the program. We discuss their strengths, dispositions, skills, interests and interactions with other children and educators at Program Planning and meetings. We exchange information when talking to you - **this forms part of the reporting process.**

After the first few weeks of your child's visits to preschool, educators will provide families with short written feedback on their child's transition and how they have settled in. Each child, in their first term of preschool is provided with an **Individualised Learning Plan (ILP)**, which is shared with the family and consistently reviewed and updated throughout the child's preschool year.

In term three, families are offered the opportunity of an interview with their child's small group educator to discuss their child's development.

Families will be provided with a **"Statement of learning"** at the end of their child's final **Preschool** term. A copy of their 4<sup>th</sup> term report will (with your permission) be sent to the school of your choice. This report will provide information to your child's school of their dispositions, strengths and interests and ensure a continuum of learning and a seamless transition from the Children's Centre to School.

## Special Occasions/Birthdays

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While we appreciate that the children's birthdays are very special occasions we ask that birthday cakes and treats etc. please not be brought to the centre to be shared with the children.

## Literacy Kits

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We have a wonderful range of **literacy kits** available for borrowing. The Literacy kits may contain a children's story book with related questions and activities or games to enhance and extend your child's interest in literacy and numeracy. Please record in the borrowing folder the Literacy kit number. It is important to check and clean the contents prior to returning to the Children's Centre.

## Lost Property

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All items that are left at the Children's Centre are placed in the lost property box. Please check the box regularly. All items left at the end of each term are donated to charity.

## Materials to extend children's creativity

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The items below are always in demand by the children. Please save and bring along anything you believe may be useful.

cardboard cartons	material scraps	greeting cards
plastic containers	soft wood off cuts	feathers, gumnuts etc.
cotton reels	wallpaper	gift wrap
wool scraps	ribbons, lace etc.	corks
tin lids	cardboard rolls	plastic lids

For allergy/hygiene/safety reasons – please NO toilet rolls, egg cartons or medication boxes

## Loose Parts

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Children will build 'stuff' that provides the correct level of risk that they are comfortable with and that challenges them. Fixed play equipment is an insult to children – it doesn't require anything from them! If they get it the first time – it's not successful because there's no challenge.

Two kinds of loose parts:

1. Natural – sticks, logs, bark etc.
2. Junk yard parts – anything that is made for something other than play!
3. E.g.
  - Cabling companies
  - Bread crates
  - Milk crates
  - Different tradesman's resources

If you have anything at your work places, that you think we could use at preschool to challenge and engage our children's creative minds, please bring in a photo and we will tell you if we think it's something we can take.

## Health

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If your child is showing signs of being unwell before coming to the Children's Centre, it is important to keep them home for the day. **Children who have diarrhoea or are vomiting must be kept home for at least 24 hours after the last episode.**

Please notify staff immediately should your child contract an infectious disease. Please ring and consult with an educator about the appropriate exclusion period.

Should any child become unwell at the Children's Centre, parents or people nominated by parents will be contacted.

**DO NOT leave medication in children's bags. Please pass medication to an Educator with the relevant consent form. Medication can be collected from the first aid cabinet where it is only accessible by staff.**

**Parents/ caregivers must collect unwell children as soon as possible after phone contact to ensure that other children and educators are not at risk.**

## Medication

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Educators cannot legally administer any medication (including ointments/Panadol/ over the counter medicine bought at the Chemist without a prescription) unless the appropriate forms have been completed and signed by a **doctor** (including asthma medication).

If your child requires medication, the medication must be supplied in the original container, clearly marked with the child's name, dosage and the use by date. Please ask a staff member for the necessary forms. Children with allergies and other long-term health issues may require medication to be held at the children's centre for use in emergency situations.

Medication plans will need to be updated at least annually. If your child has special dietary requirements, a medical practitioner will need to provide written evidence in the form of a Health Care Plan.

## First Aid

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All minor accidents will be treated by staff and reported to parents/ caregivers. The parent/ caregiver will be asked to sign the report on the day of the incident.

## Student and Disability Support Services

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Specialised assessment and support is available free of charge for children from The Department for Education and Child Development, Inclusive Directions, Novita, Disabilities SA, and Northern Community Health, (Speech Pathologist, Disability Coordinator, Psychologist and Social Worker).

If you have any concerns about your child's development, please do not hesitate to discuss this with the educators and together a decision may be made to refer your child for further assessment and advice.

## Transition to School

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Throughout your child's time at the Children's Centre, visits to Ardtornish Primary School are a valued part of the curriculum.

At other times during the week, the preschool children will visit the library, junior primary classrooms and the oval. Preschool children will also have a buddy class from the school who meet regularly and participate in a range of different activities and experiences.

Children transitioning to Ardtornish Primary School will have several visits to the school prior to their formal commencement. This is organised during session times towards the end of their eligible year of the Preschool program. An educator visits with the children, to ensure they are feeling comfortable and secure.

For children attending other schools, the school of your choice will make contact with you as required.

## School Library Visits

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As part of our great connection with the school, we also visit their library with the preschool children twice a week. Children visit the school library with their small group on either a Tuesday or Thursday morning on rotation, approximately once a fortnight. However, as children are allocated a library borrowing name, families are invited to use the library with their children before or after school.