



Periwinkle

PRESCHOOL

for Rudolf Steiner
early childhood education

Quality area 6:

Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Parents as partners in learning

*Since all people are teachers for children between birth and the age of seven,
we face the social task of achieving a genuine understanding
of the human being if humanity is not to regress,
but instead move forward.*

*Rudolf Steiner (1923) Walking, Speaking, Thinking –
Milestones in the Life of the Young Child*

Within Steiner educational philosophy, children aged below 7 years are considered implicit learners, continually learning through imitation and imagination. Rudolf Steiner emphasised the importance of the parent/child relationship in the first seven years, acknowledging parents as the first educators of their children. The preschool years are seen as a bridge between home and school.

The two-year program at Periwinkle supports the developing interdependent relationships with parents and the role as educators of the young child. I consider the development of this relationship as the most important partnership in learning for the child throughout these early years. A Partnership that will promote the children's learning is always an important part of the curriculum and integrated into the program planning. It is the partnership that will ensure the children can feel strong physically, emotionally and spiritually.

How our approach links to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

“Diversity in family life means that children experience belonging, being and becoming in many different ways. They bring their diverse experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge and skills to their learning” (EYLF).

Connecting with families through our structured program of parent involvement at Periwinkle enables educators to understand each child's family environment and so better understand them and their learning journey.

“Educators’ practices and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children’s involvement and success in learning. Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support young children’s learning” (EYLF).

Actively promoting parent involvement in the educational program as well as management of the preschool enables educators and parents to form productive partnerships.



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Strategy

Being available to parents

- Parents are all provided with the home telephone number of the director, with no restrictions placed on times to call
- The director and educators are available at the end of the daily sessions for families. During this time, educators discuss the child's day, emergent issues, and respond to any questions or concerns
- The director and educators are available for individual meetings with parents by appointment
- Educators make home visits at the invitation of parents.

Structured program of parent education

- Parent nights are held four times a year (talks on Steiner educational philosophy, curriculum activities and a program update)
- Parent library: Steiner educational texts for borrowing.

Parent participation in the educational program is encouraged and supported

- Classroom visits welcome after Term One
- Parents are encouraged to share skills and talents (eg: woodwork, gardening, felting, cooking)
- Parents are invited to attend a special birthday celebration and take an active role with the teacher, sharing stories and photographs from the child's life.

Clear and frequent home-school communication

- Comprehensive handbook covering policies and procedures provided upon enrolment
- A Communication Book is placed beside the sign in sheets every day. Parents record messages for staff members' attention during the day
- Periwinkle policy manual permanently available in sign-on area
- Parent-curated newsletters provided each term to all parents, covering upcoming events, program, Steiner philosophy, etc
- Notes and bulletins as necessary to communicate information about upcoming events and emergent issues.



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Special shared events and groups

- Festivals to mark the seasons (Spring, Autumn and Winter)
- Participation in the Cape Byron Spring Fair
- Craft groups and other groups to reflect/share Steiner educational philosophies
- End of Year Celebration.

Parents contribute to running the centre, including involvement in decision-making

- Parent management committee oversees administration of program and ongoing financial and other management of the centre
- Contribution to food program: List of required ingredients. Parents each purchase one to bring cost of food program down and lessen shopping burden.

Responsibilities

The director:

- acts in accordance with the Periwinkle Preschool philosophy and with *ECA Code of Ethics*
- aligns decision-making with the Periwinkle Preschool philosophy and with the *ECA Code of Ethics*
- ensures that all educators and staff are aware of their obligations in respect to ethical conduct through personal discussions, staff meetings, professional development activities
- ensures that all new staff members are provided with an induction that includes a detailed articulation of the Periwinkle Preschool philosophy and the *ECA Code of Ethics* and ensures that all staff members have access to a copy of both of these documents
- provides staff with structured opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice.



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Responsibilities

Educators and staff:

- maintain current knowledge of legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families and other staff in the preschool
- maintain current knowledge of the Periwinkle Preschool philosophy and *ECA Code of Ethics*
- align conduct and decision-making with the aforementioned legislation and policy documents
- engage in critical reflection on their own conduct and its relationship to legislation and policy.

Festivals

Educators:

- Send a written invitation three weeks prior to the festival
- commence singing of seasonal songs two weeks prior to the festival, for the last five minutes of the day. This gives parents an opportunity to learn the songs the children are learning and be active participants on the festival day.

Parents/delegates:

- Bring food to share at the festival lunch.





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Birthday Celebrations

The opportunity to celebrate the children's birthday is a blessing and a moment when teacher, parents and students can honour this very special occasion for the child. Parent and teacher work together to celebrate the child's birthday at school.

Parents/delegates:

- negotiate date for the celebration (time 11.00am) with educators
- prepare a biography photo board to stay in the room for the day as well as a short biography of the child's life, poem or song
- bring a birthday cake to share after lunch
- inform Periwinkle staff how many are coming to the celebration (eg: Mum, Dad, grandparent).

