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Torrens Primary School

Preschools Information Booklet 2023

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| **REPORT ABSENCES :** | **Phone (02) 6142 0777, or email -****admin@torrensps.act.edu.au****, or complete the online form at** [**https://torrensps.schoolzineplus.com/form/3**](https://torrensps.schoolzineplus.com/form/3) |

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 **Education Directorate:** <https://www.education.act.gov.au>



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# **Principal’s Welcome**

Welcome to Torrens Primary School! Torrens is a vibrant, colourful P-6 school set in spacious grounds. In 2023 we have two offsite preschools operating in Pearce and Torrens. Torrens enjoys strong community involvement and support in all aspects of school life. The partnership between school and home is extremely important to develop and foster high academic achievement, meaningful relationships and a love of learning in our students. We look forward to a long and happy partnership with you and your family.

Our preschools are staffed by qualified Early Childhood professionals. The preschool curriculum is guided by the *Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Years Framework (EYLF)*. Endorsed by the Council of Australia Governments in 2009, the EYLF is Australia’s first framework for children from birth to five years. The vision for EYLF is for all children to experience engaging play-based learning to build success for life. Children attending our preschools are guided to play creatively in richly stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Through implementing the five EYLF learning outcomes, children are encouraged and supported to develop a strong sense of identity, connections with the world, a strong sense of wellbeing, confidence, involvement in learning and effective communication skills.

Under the National Quality Standard (NQS) rating and assessment system (introduced in 2012 for all early childhood services in Australia), our preschools have been assessed and rated in the areas of educational program and practice, children’s health and safety, physical environment, leadership and service management, collaborative partnerships with families and communities, staffing arrangements and relationships with children. The most recent assessment was undertaken in 2021.Our preschool settings have been awarded an overall NQS service assessment rating of *Exceeding the National Quality Standard*, the highest rating you can receive.

I look forward to meeting you,

Warm regards,

*Rachel Matthews – Principal*

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*Our preschool settings have been awarded an overall NQS service assessment rating of* ***Exceeding******the National Quality Standard*** *(Term 2 2021).*

# **Our Vision**

At Torrens Primary School we work together as a community to provide a happy, secure and stimulating environment where children are motivated to learn, are valued as individuals and are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential.

The planned program introduces children to the world around them by learning through play, participation, exploration and experimentation.

# **Our Philosophy**

Preschool offers a welcoming, friendly atmosphere for both child and family, where children create, explore, imagine and learn through a play-based program. Children are offered a broad range of educational opportunities and experiences that enrich their social, emotional, physical, intellectual and creative abilities. The uniqueness and individuality of each child is fostered, and children are provided with a diverse, vibrant program. Learning is promoted in partnership with families and is irrespective of gender, cultural background or disability.

Every year the preschool community interacts to write a philosophy statement that reflects the beliefs and desires of the educators and the families of children at preschool. This ‘Philosophy Statement’ forms the basis of the decisions made in the preschool and effects the experiences your child has in this environment.

**Our Values**

* Honesty
* Excellence
* Fairness
* Respect

# **Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships**

Our preschool educators:

* respect and value all children, their individuality, their interests, family, cultures and beliefs;
* ensure all children are treated equally and with respect;
* provide a safe, caring, nurturing environment where children feel happy and are confident and involved learners;
* encourage children to develop lifelong, respectful attitudes and practices towards the environment and sustainability, influencing the quality of life now and into the future; and
* initiate warm, trusting and reciprocal relationships with children and families.

# **Partnerships**

Our preschool educators:

* create and maintain a positive, cooperative learning environment where educators, children and families are encouraged to participate in, and contribute to the child’s learning and development;
* work with families to support a child’s learning and development at home;
* work collaboratively to share information and plan to ensure holistic approaches to a child’s learning and development.

# **High expectations and equity**

Our preschool educators:

* provide physical environments that support a range of opportunities for learning and physical activity, both indoors and outdoors;
* support learning and development through a combination of child-led and adult-led play-based learning, as well as active teacher-led learning;
* build on prior learning and experiences to maximise opportunities for every child;
* ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and development;
* encourage children to explore, solve problems, communicate, think, create and construct through play; and
* recognise that every child can learn, but some children require quite different opportunities and support to do this.

# **Respect for diversity**

Our preschool educators:

* promote cultural awareness and inclusivity in all children, including understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and
* build on the interests, abilities, cultures and previous learning experiences of the children to extend their thinking, learning and development.

# **Ongoing learning and reflective practice**

Our preschool educators:

* gather information that supports, informs, assesses and enriches decision making about appropriate professional practices;
* continually develop professional knowledge and skills to enable provision of best possible learning and development opportunities; and
* assess children’s learning in ways that provide evidence to inform planning and practice.

# **Early Years Learning Framework**

The Early Years Learning Framework has been developed to ensure your child receives quality education programs in their early childhood setting. It is a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to five years, which is a vital time for them to learn and develop.

The Framework‘s vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life. Educators will use the Framework in partnership with families to develop learning programs responsive to children’s ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

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.

For more information visit: [*https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/resources/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework-australia*](https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-package/resources/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework-australia)

# **Education and Care Services National Regulations – National Quality Framework**

To set a standard for children’s education and care across Australia, the provider of an education and care service is also required to operate under the National Quality Framework (NQF) which comprises the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

The National Regulations provide detail on a range of operational requirements for an education and care service. For more information visit:[*https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about*](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about)

# **Communication, involvement and participation**

Your preschool acknowledges the role of the family as a child’s first educator and recognises the importance of a positive family/staff relationship. Educators appreciate the opportunity to talk with parents or carers both informally and in formal situations. This ensures valuable insights and understandings can be shared about a child’s individual development.

At preschool we:

* welcome and inform families about policies and practices;
* maintain an atmosphere of openness, support and trust, providing regular communication and interactions with families, both formally and informally;
* provide opportunities for families to be involved in preschool activities and encourage parent and carers to participate actively in the preschool community;
* develop a sense of belonging to the preschool for the children, families and educators;
* foster a cooperative partnership with the home regarding care and education; and
* encourage sharing knowledge to enhance growth and development.

Please keep staff informed of any changes to addresses, home and work phone numbers, medical information and emergency contact phone numbers.

Do not hesitate to ask for an appointment to meet with your preschool educator with any questions or concerns.

Information about preschool organisation, excursions, events and happenings will be conveyed via noticeboards at preschool or notes in your child’s ‘take home pocket’.

To build a greater connection between home and school preschool families also have the opportunity to subscribe to the Seesaw App where students create digital portfolios of work. The online communication between families and preschool educators afforded by the Seesaw app has proved invaluable during periods of remote learning due to Covid19 ACT lockdowns in recent years. More information about Seesaw is provided in this information pack and via the Torrens Primary School website – Preschool page. You are asked to provide permission for your child to access the Seesaw app via a paper form in your pack or a link to the online permission form here.

The Torrens Primary School newsletter (*Torrens Times*) will also be available online each Thursday afternoon of term time. View newsletters archive here: [*https://torrensps.schoolzineplus.com/archive*](%20https%3A//torrensps.schoolzineplus.com/archive)

# **Voluntary contributions**

Public education is free. A school may offer or facilitate some specific optional items, activities and services for which families may be asked to pay if they want their child to access them. Such activities may include excursions, class photos, special day activities, incursions, special visitors, Seesaw and the like.

Schools do ask families to contribute on a voluntary basis to enable them to continue to provide a quality learning environment for our children. Purchases rely upon the commitment and generosity of our families.

Voluntary contributions will be received by Torrens Primary School and will fund the day to day resources required at preschool such as paint, play dough, paper, collage items, pens etc. The School Board endeavours to keep voluntary contributions as low as practicable. Voluntary contributions are necessary to ensure the continued operations of the preschool.

Families will be advised of the voluntary contribution amount at the beginning of the school year and payment instructions will be provided at that time. Please note that financial hardship does **not** exclude a child from preschool education.

# **Participation of volunteers**

Volunteers have a special place in preschool and assist in many ways. This may include interaction with individuals and small groups of students in a range of different activities.

Volunteers visiting the preschool on a regular basis are required to have a valid Working with Vulnerable People card and are required to complete a *Volunteers and Visitors in Schools Nomination Form* (available on request from your preschool educator, or download from the preschool pages of the school website - <https://www.torrensps.act.edu.au/our_preschools>).

More information for volunteers and visitors is available on the Directorate’s website, including links to Access Canberra’s Working with Vulnerable People page:

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/get-involved-in-your-childs-school/volunteering>

# **Contribution to decision making**

Torrens Primary School Parents and Citizens Association (P&C)

The preschool is part of Torrens Primary School and families are welcome to contribute to the decision-making procedures of the school through the Torrens Primary School P&C. The P&C holds regular evening meetings throughout the school year (dates and times are advertised in the *Torrens Times* school newsletter and on the school website). All parents are encouraged to attend meetings. As well as its more official activities, the P&C provides an informal meeting ground for families and staff and serves a fundraising function.

Torrens Primary School Board

The School Board is the policy making body of the school. The Board consists of members elected by the school community, teachers elected by the staff of the school, the school Principal and may include an ACT Government community representative. Elected members serve for two years. School Board meetings are held at least four times per year.

The major functions of the Board are:

* to formulate school educational policies;
* to approve the school budget, including liaising with the community and school to authorise the level of voluntary contributions requested from families, and
* to oversee curriculum requirements in line with the Australian Curriculum.

All members of the Board are eager to hear your views and welcome discussion of anything which comes within their jurisdiction. The Board is committed to the provision of the best educational opportunities for every child at school.

# **A-Z of general information**

### **Arriving and Departing - Delivery and collection of children**

Regular attendance is important as this allows the children to settle into routines and establish themselves as part of the group. In accordance with the National Quality Framework, collection of children must be by a parent or authorised nominee.

Please bring your child into the preschool room only when staff open the door. Make sure that staff know your child has arrived. Please DO NOT leave your child in the playground or at the gate. Please telephone if you are running late and will not be able to pick your child up on time. It’s a good idea to add the preschool phone number into your mobile phone.

If your child is to be collected by another person, e.g. a grandparent, carer or another parent (and they are not on your enrolment details) please write this in the ‘Communication Book’. This is a protective measure for your child. If the unexpected happens, please call before the end of the session.

### **Belongings**

It is important to label every item of your child’s belongings to avoid misplacing them. Hats, jackets, lunch boxes, drink bottles, spare clothes, library bag, school bag and anything that your child might bring to preschool should be clearly marked with their name.

Children are asked NOT to bring toys or items of value to preschool.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are celebrated at preschool. If you would like to supply a cake, small cakes (e.g. small patty cakes, muffins) are easy to manage and are enjoyed by the children. Please keep in mind that some children have nut allergies and birthday cakes, muffins or the like must be nut free. If your child is unable to eat cake, an alternative treat may be brought into preschool.

### **Celebrations**

We welcome celebrations that are significant to your child and family and we would like to acknowledge these in ways that are appropriate and significant. Please discuss with staff.

### **Changes to details**

Please keep staff informed of any changes to address, home or work phone numbers, mobile phone numbers, childcare arrangements, medical information and emergency contact phone numbers. To make these changes, you can contact the Primary School front office on 6142 0777 or send an email to admin@torrensps.act.edu.au or you can complete the online form on the website -[*https://torrensps.schoolzineplus.com/form/12*](https://torrensps.schoolzineplus.com/form/12).

### **Clothing**

Please dress your child in sensible clothes to allow free movement and participation in messy play. Shoes should do up firmly around the feet. Thongs, Crocs or slip-on shoes are not suitable. Please clearly label all clothing, including shoes, with your child’s name. A hat is essential, and a warm coat is necessary in winter.

Please also provide a change of clothing (labelled) for your child in their bag every day. Accidents do occur with paint, water and toileting. Please apply sunscreen to your child before preschool.

### **Child Protection practices**

All employees in schools are mandated to report any case of suspected child abuse. Failure to notify suspected physical and/or sexual abuse of children is a criminal offence.

Staff will deliver lessons to children in protective behaviour and safe behaviours. Staff will also deliver lessons to enhance social and emotional skills.

### **Concerns or complaints**

If you have a concern about your child’s preschool education, please have a conversation with your preschool educator. You are also welcome to make contact with an Executive teacher in the primary school. Should the need arise the ACT Education Directorate has a policy for complaints resolution. To view this policy go to: [*https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications\_and\_policies/corporate-policies/school-administration-and-management/complaints/complaints-policy*](https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/corporate-policies/school-administration-and-management/complaints/complaints-policy)

### **Contacting the preschool directly**

Please keep telephone calls to the preschool during session times for urgent matters only, as it is disruptive to the program when staff must leave the children to answer the telephone.

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### **Dogs**

Under no circumstance are dogs permitted on school grounds.

### **Drinks**

Provide water only in a named drink bottle for every session. Children will have independent access to this all day. Bottles are placed on the trolley or table on arrival at preschool and taken home daily for washing.

### **Emergency management procedures**

The school has a policy on emergency evacuations and is required to practice evacuation procedures. All staff and children participate.

### **Excursions**

Excursions are part of the preschool educational program. For all excursions parents will be advised in advance and asked to give permission in writing. Parents and carers are encouraged to be part of excursions too and you will be advised of the volunteer requirements in this regard. Please note that siblings are unable to attend excursions.

### **Food**

Provision is made for the children to eat during the preschool session. Parents and carers are urged to provide children with healthy snacks and lunch which will enable the staff to assist in the development of lifelong healthy eating habits. All children will need their own drink bottle with water only. ***Please note: Preschool is a nut and allergy aware school due to the possible inclusion of students with life threatening anaphylactic allergic conditions****.*

Healthy lunches and snacks are important for children and help with their concentration and learning. School lunches however are particularly susceptible to food poisoning, especially in the summer heat. Parents and carers are reminded of a few simple food safety rules to prepare safe and healthy school lunches and avoid the growth and contamination of food poisoning bacteria.

* Before handling food, wash hands with soap and warm running water and dry thoroughly. Lunch boxes and eating utensils should also be washed thoroughly before reuse. Children are encouraged to always wash their hands before eating.
* Foods that are prepared the night before, such as sandwiches, should be frozen overnight and then taken out for each day’s school lunch. Suitable foods to freeze are: bread, cooked meat, cheese, baked beans or vegemite.
* Keep lunch boxes cool by choosing an insulated lunch box or one with a freezer pack or include a wrapped frozen water bottle to keep the lunch box cool.
* Perishable foods such as dairy products, eggs and sliced meats should be kept cool, and eaten within about four hours of preparation. Don’t pack these foods if just cooked; first cool in the refrigerator overnight.
* If including leftover meals such as meats, pasta and rice dishes, ensure you pack an ice block into the lunch box.
* Healthy drinks, such as water and milk can be frozen overnight and then stored in your child’s lunchbox, helping to keep it cold.

Please provide your child with a healthy lunch in a named container or lunch box. We encourage the children to eat healthy food such as sandwiches, wraps, leftovers, fruit, cheese, sultanas, vegetables and yoghurt (please provide a spoon and/or fork if necessary). We ask that you refrain from packing lollies, chips, chocolate, soft drinks or cordials. Small treats such as cakes, muffins or sweet biscuits are suitable in moderation. Snacks should be provided in a separate named container and include such items as fruit, crackers, cheese, dried fruit, carrot sticks, and pikelets.

Practise undoing food containers and taking off lids prior to starting preschool. It is a good idea to take your child when buying lunchboxes to check if they can open them. Let them ‘have a go’ in the shop before you buy something that is impossible for them to undo.

### **Gates**

For the safety of all children, please ensure the gate is securely closed when entering and leaving the preschool grounds and that you are only taking your child outside the gate.

### **Hats**

Sun hats *must* be provided at preschool *every day* throughout the year. Label with your child’s name. There is a *‘No hat – play in shaded areas only’* policy in place at preschool. Please also ensure that cords on hats are detachable in compliance with Directorate regulations.

For more information on Sun Protection policies go to: *<https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policies>*

### **Library bag**

Please provide a separate named cloth bag to carry and store borrowed preschool books safely. We request that all books be cared for and replaced if lost or damaged. This bag is not for carrying craft items.

### **Medical condition management****, accidents and general health**

***Head Lice*** are extremely contagious but easily eradicated. Children with either eggs or live lice will be excluded from preschool until written evidence of treatment is produced. Please report any cases of head lice to staff.

***Hygiene Procedures -*** Staff, children and volunteers must adhere to preschool hand washing procedures. All children are encouraged to wash their hands:

* on arrival;
* before and after eating or touching food;
* ![MC900359157[1]]()after toileting;
* after blowing their nose and wiping tears and dribbles; and
* when leaving the centre.
* All scratches and cuts must be covered.

***Illness and Immunisation*** - Children who are unwell are unable to enjoy preschool and, if they attend, they run the risk of spreading illness. Please keep your child at home if he or she is unwell. Do not let them choose if they are well enough for school. Teach your child to blow their nose and encourage frequent hand washing.

Should your child become unwell during the session, you will be contacted and asked to pick your child up from preschool. Please also inform staff if your child has a contagious or infectious disease. Information about exclusion periods for students with infectious diseases is included in the *ACT Immunisation Requirements Parent Guide* available on the preschool website.

The immunisation status of children must be provided on entry to preschool. More information is available in the *ACT Immunisation Requirements Parent Guide.*

***Medical Information and Consent Form -*** The Directorate is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students. While school staff have a duty of care to students to provide first aid assistance when required, parents will be aware that schools cannot be responsible for the general management of medical conditions.

In special circumstances, staff may be able to assist with the administration of medication. In these cases, Directorate policy requires Principals to ensure that a comprehensive written authority is obtained from the student’s parent or carer, and a written statement from the student’s doctor authorising a member of staff to administer the prescribed medication is also sought.

Parents and carers of ACT Government school students are required to complete a *Medical Information and Consent Form* in relation to each child annually. This form requests general medical information and consent for first aid and the administration of authorised medications, salbutamol (Ventolin) and adrenaline in the event of a life-threatening asthma or anaphylaxis emergency.

***Known Medical Condition Response Plan -*** This is required in addition to the Medical Information and Consent form for any student with a known medical condition. It provides instruction for the management of an identified medical condition (such as Diabetes, Asthma, Anaphylaxis or Epilepsy) and should be completed in consultation with the treating health professional.

***Medication Authorisation and Administration Record*** - must be completed and returned to preschool if medication is required to be administered during the day.

It is important that information on these forms is accurate and detailed. If there are changes to your child’s health or medical circumstances during the year, please inform the school immediately. You may also choose to keep certain medical information private. When making this choice, please consider whether this might affect the provision of appropriate first aid care for your child.

All of the above medical forms, as well as a Head Lice fact sheet are available to download from the Torrens school website at: [*http://www.torrensps.act.edu.au/our\_school/general\_medical\_information*](http://www.torrensps.act.edu.au/our_school/general_medical_information)

***Transportation by Ambulance-* If** an incident occurs at preschool or during a preschool-related activity in the ACT, students will be transported free of charge to the emergency section of an ACT public hospital.

***Nuts-*** Our preschools are ‘Nut Aware’. To protect children who may have serious allergies we would ask you to NOT provide any nuts or food containing nuts.

### **Parent support**

The Parentlink website at [*www.parentlink.act.gov.au*](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au) is a website which parents can use to access:

* parent guides;
* a directory of local parenting services, and
* upcoming community events and parenting courses.

![MC900436043[1]]()

### **Physical activities**

Physical activity is very important for children. Educators provide opportunities for structured and unstructured physical activity. During the preschool sessions, your child will be involved with some hands-on experiences both inside the classroom and in the outdoor area. These activities can, at times, be very messy. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately so that they feel confident to participate in all the challenges provided throughout the session.

In keeping with the sun safe policy, children will need to wear either a legionnaires or wide brimmed style hat. Please ensure that cords on hats are detachable in compliance with Directorate regulations. If children do not have a hat, they will only be allowed to play in the shade. A warm coat and hat are required in winter. The children will be challenging themselves on the climbing equipment so sensible footwear is essential and long dresses and skirts can be dangerous. Please label all your child’s clothing and pack a spare set in case of extremely messy play or accidents.

### **Photography**

Digital photographs of everyday happenings are taken regularly at preschool. They are used as in integral part of the preschool program. You are asked to give appropriate permissions for use of any images on the preschool enrolment application form.

### **Policies**

All Education Directorate policies may be viewed in entirety on its website: [*www.education.act.gov.au*](http://www.education.act.gov.au/)

### **Relaxation**

During our preschool day it is important for the children to have some quiet time to reflect and recharge their batteries. “Quiet thinking time” may include listening to soft music or a story on CD, reading of a story for later reflection and other such activities.

### **Roster**

Parental involvement contributes significantly to the life of the preschool. Your help is greatly appreciated by the staff and children. Roster involves spending time at preschool being part of the program in various ways. It is an excellent opportunity to learn about your child’s day and understand the play-based program. You are actively involved in small group activities, such as reading a story or helping with craft. Some light cleaning is also involved. Roster ‘sign-on’ sheets are available at the preschool and you are encouraged to add your name for a day/time that suits you.

### **Student welfare and management**

At preschool everyone is valued as an individual with special qualities that make us who we are. It is important that students are treated with respect. We provide a supportive, welcoming and culturally inclusive educational environment where students feel safe and happy. Torrens Primary School has a Student Management and Wellbeingpolicy that outlines the steps for addressing student welfare and management issues.

You can view this policy at: [*http://www.torrensps.act.edu.au/our\_school/policies\_and\_procedures*](http://www.torrensps.act.edu.au/our_school/policies_and_procedures)

### **Take-home pockets**

Each child has a labelled ‘take-home’ pocket at preschool. Please check it every day as this is where notes such as newsletters, activity information, excursions and P&C news are placed. Frequently there will also be paintings and creations that the children want to take home to share with you.

### **Toys**

Please do not bring toys to preschool as it causes distress for your child if they go missing or get damaged.

### **Transitions**

Your child is a member of the Torrens Primary School community. By enrolling your child into one of our three preschools they are automatically enrolled in kindergarten at Torrens Primary School, ***provided you live in the Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) for our school\****. As with all transitions, the staff will ensure that the move from preschool to kindergarten is successful. To do this we have implemented a transition program for our preschool children. This involves a Kindergarten orientation session during Term 4 at Torrens Primary School, which is run in conjunction with an information session for parents and carers.

**\*If you live outside the PEA, you will need to enrol in kindergarten at your local school or follow the prompts to submit an Out of Area (OOA) enrolment application for your child. More information about this is available on the Education Directorate’s website:** [***https://www.education.act.gov.au***](https://www.education.act.gov.au)

### **Volunteers and participation in preschool activities**

The participation of parents and carers in schooling is important to student achievement and school success. Effective partnerships between preschools and families foster student learning and contribute to development of schools’ quality and culture. More information and forms are available from our website: [*https://www.torrensps.act.edu.au/our\_preschools*](https://www.torrensps.act.edu.au/our_preschools)

**Notes**

***We look forward to working with you this coming year to make preschool a safe, secure and stimulating environment for your child to learn.***