

MEDIA RELEASE



DATE: *Wednesday, 8 July 2026*

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KOORANA TO OPEN A NEW INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL IN BASS HILL, FILLING SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY NEED.

Koorana Child and Family Services will open the doors of its new Bass Hill Preschool on 8 July, a 40-place, fully inclusive preschool in south-west Sydney that has been three years in the making and built, in no small part, by the generosity of the NSW Government and the local community.

The Hon. Kate Washington, Minister for Families and Communities and Minister for Disability Inclusion officially opened the new centre alongside the NSW Member for Fairfield, David Saliba MP; the NSW Member for East Hills, Kylie Wilkinson MP; Canterbury Bankstown's Mayor Bilal El-Hayek and Canterbury Bankstown's Deputy Mayor Rachelle Harika.

A Chance for All Children to Thrive

The arrival of the new centre could not be more timely. Bass Hill sits within one of the highest bands of socioeconomic disadvantage in Australia. This ward of the Canterbury Bankstown LGA also has the lowest ratio of childcare places to children LGA.

Research is unambiguous about what early learning does for children. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, children who received no early childhood education and care were nearly twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable at school entry compared to those who did (38.5% versus 19.9%).ⁱ The benefits are direct and lasting: the Australian Early Development Census consistently shows that children who attend preschool arrive at school with stronger language and communication skills, greater emotional maturity, better social competence and improved physical wellbeing.ⁱⁱ Critically, children from disadvantaged backgrounds show the greatest gains of all.

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A Centre Built for Every Child

The Bass Hill preschool is funded jointly by Koorana, the NSW Department of Education and a remarkable coalition of private donors and community organisations. Twenty-five percent of its places are reserved for children with high learning support needs or disability, consistent with the integrated model Koorana has operated at its Roselands and Lakemba preschools for nearly 50 years.

Koorana will embed its integrative model into this new preschool. The model is built on principles of universal design which mean that all aspects are designed to support children of all abilities. Visual aids, key word signing, sensory resources, and a routine that accommodates diverse needs are the norm for all children attending. Further, Koorana integrates early childhood specialists (e.g., Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, and Specialist Teachers) into the centres to work alongside the educational team to ensure the curriculum is accessible to all children and supports their development.

As part of Koorana's pedagogical approach, the preschool will also embed the evidence-based Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children across all practice. Australian researchⁱⁱⁱ demonstrated that educators trained and coached in the Pyramid Model produced measurably greater social and emotional skill development in children aged four to five than control groups. The model builds emotional regulation, resilience and social skills children need for a successful school transition and a confident life beyond it.

Built with Community Support

In addition to the generous government support, the build was made possible because Bass Hill's own community answered the call. To name a few of the key donors, Canterbury League Club, Bankstown Sports and Revesby Workers' Club contributed grant funding for educational resources and therapeutic equipment. Heidelberg Materials donated 70m3 of concrete, a contribution that proved decisive in completing the outdoor learning environment after months of delays. Bunnings, Dulux, Caesarstone, Reece Plumbing and Signature Floors donated materials across the building and learning spaces. Board member Rodney Timm volunteered hundreds of hours on the tools, personally building the outdoor ship structure, accessible sandpit and irrigation system. Even the

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local Men's Shed chipped in with a range of handmade outdoor play equipment. Other donors have included local trusts and foundations and a range of personal donations.

Total community and philanthropic support for the project has reached \$246,847 across cash and in-kind contributions. Over a minimum operating period of ten years, the centre is projected to support more than 1,000 children, 250 of whom are expected to have additional needs.

"It takes a village to raise a child. In this case, the village has helped raise the preschool. The Bass Hill community has given something extraordinary: a safe, beautiful learning environment where children of all abilities can discover who they are and what they are capable of. For children in this area who have never had access to early learning, that is a profound gift."

Morgan A. Fitzpatrick, CEO, Koorana Child and Family Services.

Enrolments Now Open

The Bass Hill Preschool is actively welcoming enrolments for children aged three to five, including children with or without a disability or additional learning support needs. The centre will operate a low out-of-pocket cost model for families and is specifically designed for children who may be starting early learning for the first time. Families interested in enrolling are encouraged to contact Koorana directly.

About Koorana Child and Family Services

Established in 1976, Koorana Child and Family Services is a not-for-profit organisation in Sydney, providing early childhood education, early intervention and allied health, and child and family support services for children aged 0 to 18 years and their families. In 2024-25, Koorana supported 2,294 children and young people across 126 Sydney suburbs. Koorana's vision is that all children of all abilities have the opportunity to explore all possibilities in safe, supportive, nurturing environments.

ⁱ aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/learning-development-impact-of-early-childhood-edu

ⁱⁱ [Home | Australian Early Development Census \(AEDC\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Promoting children's social-emotional learning through early education: piloting the Pyramid Model in Victorian preschools - Monash University](#)

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