

Appendix A Philosophy

Our Philosophy

At Bribie Island Community Kindergarten we aim to provide a warm, nurturing environment that encourages the development of the 'whole' child. The program is based on secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships between children, families, community groups, support agencies and educators. We also support the child's relationship with peers, and aim to provide a stimulating play based child-centered environment, which strengthens children's friendships and promotes collaboration. (EYLF Principle 1)

In practice this is reflected in our focus on your child's emotional wellbeing and social connections as the first priority, which we believe provides the foundation for their intellectual learning. We do this through building our relationships with your child, and supporting their relationships with each other. This is both about your child feeling respected and valued and then learning how to respect the feelings of others. We intentionally support your child to learn how to take turns, share, ask for help, recognize and understand their own and other people's emotions, and finally empathy – understanding and responding to the feelings of others. We believe this is all part of building a small community that reflects tolerance, compassion and respect. Being a valued and responsible part of their community, learning that they can cope with stress and frustration, learning to accept that it is O.K to make mistakes, and it is just as O.K to feel angry just as feeling any other emotion is O.K. And learning to become safe risk takers, helping them to be creative problem-solvers, understanding their own strengths, as well as having trust and being trustworthy, are also part of what will build your child's resilience.

It also means we will challenge ourselves as educators to support and extend your child in all areas. This is reflected for example, in our written programming which attempts to identify the intentional teaching ideas we will use to support your child to develop emotionally, socially, intellectually, creatively, musically, physically, as a communicator, and as a moral member of their community. It is also reflected in our understanding that learning is holistic. So we start with and highly value, the learning that happens during your child's own play – what they are naturally interested in, what they respond to or information you give us about your child's interests and learning's within your family and community. We seek to create an environment that extends that interest, gives them time to explore it in many ways, and encourages the learning dispositions of persistence, curiosity, problem solving and collaboration. E.g. an interest in dinosaurs provides opportunities for social learning as they negotiate turn taking and who will lead the play; science as they problem-solve the difference between wet and dry sand when making dinosaur 'footprints'; researching skills as they search the net and scour books for information, math's as we count how many different types of dinosaurs we have and language and writing as we learn their names and label them. The learning grows and becomes as complex as the children's interest and the children's and teacher's imagination allow.

We recognize that families are children's first and most influential teachers. Partnerships between educators, families and other professionals allow us to build on the strengths of each other's knowledge. (EYLF Principle 2)

This means we work to find ways to build connections between your child's home and yourselves, as their most trusted people, and the Kindergarten. The information we collect in the enrolment process, orientation visits, information sheets about your child and your expectations, hopes and dreams for them in their Kindergarten year and the social, cultural and family traditions story that you are encouraged to provide us with are all part of our intention to support the attachment your child has to you, and help them to extend their network of secure relationships. Your child bringing in photos of your family for us to display, favourite books for us to read, favourite music for us to play, and news to tell, Baker's Day and Birthdays to share, their special box treasures to show and talk about, Ned or Fred Bear accompanying you if you visit other countries and then sharing with us information about your travels, and Fred or Ned's Adventures with your family are all part of the intentional teaching strategies we might use to support their feeling of belonging here.

In our communication with you, we will work to be honest, share our insights and seek yours, and engage in shared decision-making. Our written updates are intended to provide you with more detailed information about what your child has done, what we were intending to achieve, and to allow you to engage with them about what they have participated in at the Kindergarten. We seek to provide opportunities for you to let us know what your child responds to, and what is important to them and you, through informal morning and afternoon discussions, email, communication sheets or meetings.

We are committed to equality and believe all children have the capacity to progress well, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities. (EYLF Principle 3)

What this means for us is starting with each child as an individual. Your child has their strengths and challenges. So we start from where they are now and build on this. Children's brains are still developing so this is a time when small interventions can provide significant benefits. We will proactively seek to identify anything that prevents your child from reaching their potential. We will do this through our observations, our communication with you as the child's first and most influential teacher, and more formal assessments. This allows us to determine what additional support your child may benefit from in order to achieve particular learning outcomes. We will then provide that support or assist you to access specialist resources if required.

This also means that we will work to adapt our environment, our program and our practices to support your child to succeed. If your child is not responding to our teaching strategies, then we return to observing, reflecting, planning and working with you and other specialists, to determine what is missing to enable your child to progress in their learning. Furthermore, we respect diversity and our curriculum works to value and reflect the practices, values and beliefs of families. We value children's different capacities and abilities and respect differences in families' home life. (EYLF Principle 4)

The Kindergarten is a community made up of many families and staff with different beliefs, histories, cultures, languages and child rearing practices. This provides an opportunity for us to recognize diversity, and find ways to value the richness that this brings to our community. Our ability to accept and find ways to respect differences in the Kindergarten provides an opportunity for the children to develop the skills they need for the complexities of their future. Our focus is on learning about each other and the differences reflected within our own Kindergarten community. The children learn about each other and then we hope, come to understand those differences whether it

be hair colour, family composition, languages spoken, food eaten at home or whether you can or can't throw/catch a ball. Learning that different does not equal right or wrong and/or more or less valuable. We believe that teaching children that they are different from each other yet each of them is still equally valuable, is the starting place for supporting your child to feel confident with diversity.

Finally, we are committed to reflective practice, and so we constantly review, examine and question our current practices, and reflect on what we might change. (EYLF Principle 5)

What this means in practice is that as educators, we know that we cannot ever know all there is to know about education. Each year we approach each group of children and families as new, and we spend time getting to know you and learn about your child. We reflect daily and weekly on the learning experiences we have provided, and on how your child has engaged. This also involves including the children's reflections on what did or did not work well for them. We reflect on our teaching practices and what we might need to change. We undertake professional development that extends and challenges our thinking, and as a team we challenge and question each other, and debate and discuss in order to improve and grow as professionals.

It means we will also use other means to review what we do. Our most consistent tool will be seeking your feedback and using the National Quality Standards as a quality assessment tool to identify strengths and areas for improvement with the view of always striving for Exceeding National Quality Standard (E) with the ultimate goal of Excellence.