

LORNE KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY

Children need a safe, beautiful, stimulating environment, where they can indulge their natural curiosity and drive to discover and learn.

Research tells us that the environment has a crucial and formative impact on the way children's brains develop. We believe that our learning environment should support the development of children who can make choices, think independently, take challenges, explore ideas, appreciate beauty, appreciate diversity, ask questions, feel nurtured, safe, and well cared for, and express curiosity, be a source of pleasure and enjoyment within a social play-based context.

We acknowledge that the kindergarten stands on Gadubanud land and that this land continues to be sacred to them. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past and present of this beautiful country as they pathed the way for ourselves and future generations to come. We endeavor to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural values and beliefs within our program.

Educational experiences at this stage need to be integrated, child directed, and based around children's interests.

Within the context of play there exists a myriad of learning opportunities. Children explore social relationships, contribute ideas and take on the ideas of others. Play provides the opportunity to experiment, explore, discover, to solve problems. As children play there are opportunities to talk, to listen and to explore language. There are also opportunities to relax, to have fun, to experience and to express joy.

We support all areas of the curriculum through the educational, play-based program. Foundations of literacy and numeracy and other pre academic skills are learnt both in the context of play, and through responsive and intentional teaching. In practice, this means that rather than "teach" the alphabet, or "practice" counting, we instead look for opportunities to engage with children about text and meaning, language, rhyming, ordering, counting, matching, spatial awareness in a natural play-based context.

Children need warm, responsive, caring educators who treat them with great respect.

The early childhood years are crucial and formative years. What takes place during these years plays an important part in determining the way a person feels about him or herself, the way a person relates to others, their capacity to solve problems, the way a person thinks and learns.

We place a value on providing a caring and nurturing environment for children, their families and for educators. If people feel cared for and nurtured, this supports healthy emotional, physical and mental development - and engenders a sense of belonging, self-worth and connection.

At Lorne Kindergarten we recognise the tremendous importance of these early childhood years and the subsequent importance of our role as early childhood educators in supporting, nurturing and facilitating growth and development of children. With this in mind we aim to embed the seven 'child safe standards' (Nov 2015) into practice. Ensuring as a kinder community we are proactive in protecting children.

Supporting this is a professional culture of reflective practice, one where ongoing professional development for educators is supported and encouraged, an environment where there are high expectations for the quality of the educational program and a

mutual respect between families and educators as we work together to ensure a positive start in the early years for their children.

Relationships between educators and parents affect the program, wellbeing and enjoyment of the children in the kinder.

Educators acknowledge and respect the uniqueness of each child and his/her family, culture, structure, language, beliefs, and customs. We acknowledge that children learn within the context of their family and extended community and that they bring this knowledge and a wide range of experiences with them to kinder.

We place a value on ensuring that our program is accessible and meaningful for all children, that it includes and supports children and families with diverse abilities and alternative perspectives.

We endeavor to place an emphasis on communication, positive relationship building and also on learning within the context of groups and social contexts throughout our kindergarten day. We place a value on supporting and fostering positive and respectful relationships and communication between educators, families, and extended family.

Children need a garden. Children learn from playing outside at planned experiences all year round.

We aim to place an equal value on the learning through play that takes place both indoors and outdoors. We believe that a gentle rhythm to the day helps create a sense of security

We believe in the capacity the environment has to influence thinking, moods, learning, emotions and behavior. With this in mind we aim to establish an environment that is aesthetically pleasing, with an emphasis on a "home like setting, animals to care for, high quality materials, the use of natural, recycled and found objects. Our environment values the ethos of promoting and supporting children to care about their world, embracing environmental and sustainable practice.

Children need positive reinforcement, role modelling and supportive guidance strategies to enhance their learning.

The program is driven by the strengths, needs and interests of the children. Educators are involved in a continual process of observing children, recording their observations and planning the program as the result of these observations. The program also includes a number of visiting presentations and excursions throughout the year.

Our program aims to equip children for a positive transition to school - and we pay attention to research that suggests that emotional and social preparedness are key drivers in terms of being ready for school. Further, we pay attention to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework which reminds us to focus on a child's "being" as well as a child's "becoming". That is, a recognition of the here and now as well as future development and transitions.

Children need to build connections to the wider Community.

We recognise that all children, their families and educators are part of a wider community. We place a value on building connections between a child's home, family and the kindergarten. Supporting these connections helps children develop a sense of belonging and self-worth if they know that their teachers and families have a shared interest in what's happening in their world.

We endeavor not only to nurture and foster a healthy community within, but also to look outwards and to form connections with people and places outside the kindergarten. To support children's understandings with what it is to "belong" to a community. We believe that children are citizens in their own right and as such have the opportunity to participate, contribute and engage meaningfully within their various communities.

Our Philosophy is seen as a living document, continually evolving in the light of new research, ideas and input from educators and families.