

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe that children are happiest and learn best when the environment is safe, warm and relaxed and they have the opportunity to develop independence, agency and a positive self-identity. We recognise that each child is an individual, will develop at a different rate and comes to Kindergarten with varied life experiences, interests, ideas, cultures, languages, abilities and family backgrounds. We can foster a sense of belonging by acknowledging, accepting and including family values, beliefs and customs within our curriculum. Our planning is influenced by Bronfenbrenner's theory of child development and we promote the inclusion of all children and families. We believe that when children feel they belong, their capacity to be active participants and decision makers will flourish, and they will initiate and lead their learning. Best practice is expected, and learning is dynamic, complex, social and holistic at our Kindergarten.

Play is children's research and an important part of a child's learning and development as they make choices to discover, create, improvise and imagine, it is their right to play. Our curriculum encourages children's independence, stimulates their curiosity and recognises that children are competent, and self-motivated learners. We aim for children to develop a questioning attitude and eagerness for learning and a respect for the needs and feelings of others. The focus of our routines and practices encourages children to gain skills and confidence interacting with peers and adults, promoting positive relationships, independence, and prepare them for a positive transition to school as well as a lifelong love of learning. Learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors are provided with the purpose of children to engage through spontaneous, intentional, directed and meaningful play experiences. We promote children's health and wellbeing through a healthy and active lifestyle as well as relaxation and mindfulness.

The Kindergarten is owned and managed by parents in the Kindergarten community. Community ownership, established in 1973, is a central characteristic and will be reflected in our staff and management committee structure. That is, the staff support and promote community ownership while the management is mindful of their own transient custodianship of the Kindergarten, and their responsibility to ensure positive development for future families. We encourage each family to participate in the Kindergarten community and support and welcome their interest and involvement. *Our place to grow* represents the child, parent, educators and community. We are continually working towards developing our own and the children and families' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through embedding learning into our planning and the environment. We believe this is the way in which children gain an in depth understanding of the history and future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We aim to develop authentic partnerships within our community and embrace the historical impact of the Darug people and be active participants in reconciliation.

We are proud to have highly qualified and experienced educators with long term service at our Kindergarten. We are committed to providing ongoing opportunities for educators to share their values and beliefs and have ownership over their professional growth and development. The culture of our service will be reflective of the uniqueness, experience and diversity that each staff member brings. The educators are passionate and committed to providing a high quality educational and care environment based on open communication and a cycle of observation, planning, evaluation and reflection of individual and small group learning experiences. This is fostered through the Early Years Learning Framework.

As Early Childhood Educators we play an important role in helping young children and families to recognise the impact we can have on our environment. It is an integral part of our curriculum and practice. Sustainability is important to us, our service, our community, our nation and our world and it is part of our everyday Kindergarten routines. Our community is an extension of our learning environments and children have opportunities to explore, view and participate in the local community. The program and pace of learning is driven by the children; their thoughts, ideas, collaboration, interests and needs.

We regularly review and evaluate the service to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the community it serves. This evaluation process will be inclusive, participatory and transparent to all people involved with the Kindergarten.