

Our philosophy

Preamble

Children's Services Community Management acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which our communities come together for the purpose of learning together, and pays our respects to the elders past, present and future.

A philosophy can be described as "the study or science of the truths or principles underlying all knowledge and being (or reality) or a system of principles for guidance in practical affairs." (Macquarie Dictionary).

Early childhood education is a system of educational principles for children birth to eight years based on a rich history of philosophies, theories and research. Care, an implicit component of education, is considered an ethic of practice rather than a task or responsibility to be addressed in a philosophy. A philosophy reflects the knowledge, beliefs and values of early childhood teachers, supporting staff, children, families and the wider community. In Australia, there is diversity within each community and an early childhood philosophy is to embrace, value and respect this complex diversity and culture. Each community has unique characteristics and cultures which provide the rich context for the curriculum and programs.

"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children." (Mandela, 1995)

The rights of the child

The rights of the child underpin any decision that is made, any policy that is written and any program that is planned in each Children's Services Community Management early childhood educational program. The rights of the child are to be upheld in daily practice, routines, experiences and events. The question: "is this in the best interest of the children?" is to be the point of reference in reflecting on and evaluating daily practice, the timing of routines, the development of programs and the organisation of staff.

The image of the child

Children are competent and powerful and come to us with knowledge, skills and unique ways of being that are to be valued and incorporated within the curriculum and daily program. Our image of the child is one which challenges the long held truth that children are vulnerable, unknowing and incompetent. Our image of the child guides our everyday practice with children.

The learning environments

The design and organisation of the indoor and outdoor environments and the resources we provide are to reflect respect for children, their play and learning, and their intrinsic awareness of beauty and aesthetics. The comfort of children, staff and families are to be considered in the furnishing of each program. The design of furnishings, materials and resources will be inspirational as well as functional and well maintained. The learning environments will reflect local community culture and the lives lived beyond the program.

Relationships

Staff, children and families share the responsibilities of respecting one another's diversity in ways of being, culture and community. Discrimination of any kind is to be challenged and collaboratively addressed. Engagement, participation and forthright communication builds respect, one for the other, and will develop and continue to grow within relationships based on truthfulness and trustworthy, ethical, behaviour. Building relationships is integral to the inclusion of children with additional needs. The orientation process will facilitate the transition of the child and family from home to the early childhood learning community. This process begins the relationship with staff, children and families sharing relevant information, expectations and goals. This information will inform practice, the program and curriculum.

Curriculum and practice

Current research and theory will inform the early childhood curriculum. The Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework and each state and territory's curriculum will guide the decision making and planning process. Staff, children and families will discuss and reflect on, and evaluate the curriculum as it unfolds throughout the year. Infants, toddlers and preschool age children will be provided with a program that facilitates their play and promotes complex language development, higher order thinking, problem solving and creativity and positive sense of self within a community of learners in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

Staff are to reflect on, evaluate and assess the appropriateness of the curriculum and daily practice, ensuring true inclusion, authentic and meaningful experiences and worthwhile outcomes for each child. The educational progress of each child will be monitored and recorded by the early childhood qualified staff in collaboration with children and families. Staff, children and families will be engaged in conversations about children and their progress throughout the year.

In Summary

This philosophy is a blueprint for practice and curriculum development and is a reference for decision making. Early childhood practitioners are guided by the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics which recommends particular ethical behaviour in response to engagement with children, families, colleagues and the community. Abiding by the ECA Code of Ethics and the principles in this philosophy should promote mutually respectful relationships, social justice and equity for all within the community.

Wendy Shepherd MEd , February 2009

The rights of the child underpin the decisions we make, the policies we write and the curriculum we plan in each Children's Services Community Management early childhood program.

Current research and theory inform the curriculum.

"In all actions concerning children ... the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

Article 3.1

"... the education of the child shall be directed to... the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential."

Article 29.1a

"... the education of the child shall be directed to... the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin"

Article 29.1d

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

CHILDREN'S
SERVICES
COMMUNITY
MANAGEMENT Ltd.