

CURRICULUM

...Our image of the child is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and, most of all connected to adults and other children.

Loris Malaguzzi in Dahlberg, Moss and Pence 1999, pp 48

Children enter kindergarten with a diverse range of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and dispositions that reflect the diversity of their backgrounds and experiences.

The role of early childhood education and care is to connect with and build upon children's home and community learnings as well as opening up new and multiple possibilities.

Children of this age learn most effectively when their physical and emotional needs are met and they are able to feel safe and secure in a climate of consistency, stability, support and high expectation.

Children develop at different rates and in different ways: emotionally, intellectually, morally, socially, physically and spiritually. All aspects are important and interrelated. When these differences are respected and honoured children build a sense of trust and confidence, a willingness to take risks and thus make new discoveries and connections.

Parents sometimes wonder what learning at Kindy consists of. Unlike schools, where formalised lessons, assessment and reporting are obvious, Kindergartens' curriculums can be hard to define. Sometimes it seems that children "just play" at Kindy, whereas important learning is taking place all the time. While children often won't produce a tangible product to take home; they are learning new skills, procedures and concepts which are vital for getting along in the world.

According to the national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) curriculum means '*all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development*'.

All the activities you see at Kindy are carefully devised to help children develop vital skills and understandings, in line with the EYLF **3Bs**:

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they *belong* because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- **Being** is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun.

• **Becoming** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

These **3Bs** are explored through the following 5 learning goals. Kindy staff will help your child develop:

- *a strong sense of their identity*
- *connections with their world*
- *a strong sense of wellbeing*
- *confidence and involvement in their learning*
- *effective communication skills*

On the parent noticeboard in the main room there is further information about the **3Bs** and how Kindergarten activities address them.

Learning through play

The EYLF has a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development. Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. When children play they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings. Play can expand children's thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn. In these ways play can promote a positive outlook towards learning.

Teaching at Kindy

Kindy provides a supportive environment where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. Rather than front-of-classroom "chalk and talk" type teaching, the Kindy educators use varied strategies to develop learning, they:

- share conversations with children to extend their thinking,
- provide a balance between child led, child initiated and teacher supported learning,
- create environments that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct,
- make the most of spontaneous teachable moments as they occur,
- promote and model positive ways to relate to others and solve problems,
- support the inclusion of all children in play, helping children to recognise when play is unfair, and
- offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair and inclusive learning community.

Whilst doing all these things, Kindy educators also constantly monitor child safety and well-being, dealing with the everyday mishaps, conflicts and problems that arise in any group of four year-olds!

How Kindy experiences enhance learning

Here are some examples of how our everyday Kindergarten experiences help children to develop new understandings and skills:

☐ *Outdoor playground:* gross motor skills (balance, coordination, strength, agility), social skills (cooperation, taking turns), risk taking, understanding that physical activity is healthy and fun, connecting with nature (weather, plants and animals and non-living features).

☐ *Sandpit:* gross and fine motor skills, creativity, construction, role-playing (to develop understanding of others' role in society as well as communication), exploration of scientific concepts (eg. gravity, solids & liquids).

☐ *Playdough:* fine motor skills (essential for learning to write), creativity, self-expression, role-play.

☐ *Construction sets:* cooperation, mathematical concepts (size, shape, order), problem solving and lateral thinking.

☐ *Jigsaws and other puzzles:* fine motor skills, cooperation, lateral thinking, mathematical concepts (recognising colours, patterns, order and positions).

☐ *Dramatic Play:* communication skills, imagination, role play, cooperation, understanding roles in family and community.

Whilst participating in these activities, Kindy educators enhance the learning experience by

- ☐ modelling and demonstrating
- ☐ open questioning
- ☐ speculating and explaining
- ☐ engaging in shared thinking and problem solving

Each term, Kindy has a curriculum overview. Information about the curriculum is communicated via the Newsletter or Curriculum noticeboard in the main room.

Educators use mat time activities (songs, games, shared stories), small group story time and related puzzles, art and learning activities to explore the topic and further develop understanding.

Kindy at home

Take advantage of the resources available to extend Kindy learning activities into your home.

- *Library*: a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Fill in a borrowing card to borrow 2 at a time.
- *Literacy Kits*: books with related toys and activity suggestions to explore texts.
- *Maths Monster*: offers numeracy-related activities to explore and complete together in a fun way.
- *Science Kits*: explore scientific concepts together in a fun way.
- *Persona Dolls*: develop literacy skills by working on stories together to write down in the book for sharing.
- *Ukulele*: explore music and sound as forms of expression and entertainment.

All children attending Kindy full-time are welcome to borrow these resources. Exploring kits is a great way to spend time together learning in a positive, enjoyable way. It's invaluable for your children see that you value learning and are excited about - and involved in - their learning. Check with educators about how to borrow these items.

At home, learning is more about the journey than the result. There is plenty of time for serious study when your child starts school; so if learning activities become a chore for you or your child, it's time to stop.

Parents have a unique knowledge and understanding of their child. In order to maximise each child's learning potential, it is beneficial that parents and staff work towards fostering an effective partnership.

Finding out more

There are several ways to get information about Kindy's curriculum:

- ❖ Newsletter (sent electronically with hard copies by the white board)
- ❖ Input into the Planning for Learning document for your child
- ❖ Notice board in the main room
- ❖ Annual General Meeting & Governing Council meetings
- ❖ Volunteering time at Kindy

At the AGM, learning priorities for the year are mapped out and parents are encouraged to contribute ideas. You are welcome to attend Governing Council meetings at any time without obligation to join.

By building a community of learners that includes children, families and educators, opportunities exist for developing a lifelong interest in, and enjoyment of, learning.

Nature Education Centre

Each term we borrow a selection of animals from the Nature Education Centre so that the children can have the opportunity to observe, handle and care for them.

WRITING – MODERN CURSIVE:

All Department for Education schools are now teaching children modern cursive. One of the main features of this writing style is the slope rather than the upright letters. Individual letters have also changed. Later the children will link the letters to form linked script.

This printing is used by kindergarten staff to name children's work. If your child shows an interest in learning to write, for general writing please encourage the use of 'little' or lower case letters rather than capital letters. If kindergarten, home and school all use the same script we will be complementing and reinforcing each other.

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A B C D E F G H I

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