

Concordia College Early Learning Centre

Statement of Philosophy

Mission Statement:

Concordia College Early Learning Centre aims to provide a high quality age appropriate education in a Christian, nurturing and inclusive environment. Our program focuses on extending the learning of each child through a balanced play based curriculum. We respect parents as a child's primary influence and will work as partners towards achieving individual goals for their children.

We believe when children feel safe, secure and supported they grow in confidence to explore and learn.

Rationale – It is only when children feel safe that they will take risks to explore their environment and develop quality relationships. Children need to feel emotionally secure and valued.

Therefore we-

- Give priority to nurturing relationships with children
- Show genuine affection, understanding and respect for all children
- Show respect for the culture and context of all families
- Provide a learning environment that is safe, flexible and encourages investigation
- Provide a predictable routine
- Provide an environment where children can be fully engaged and involved
- Respond positively to and build upon children's ideas and interests
- Be consistent and fair in our expectations of children's development and behaviour and guide children in a positive way
- Promote a sense of belonging to the ELC community

We believe children's social and emotional development in the early years is critical to their future learning and wellbeing.

Rationale – 'Current research shows that our children's success in life will depend less on their "traditional" IQ and more on their emotional intelligence – their ability to form successful relationships, be more understanding of others and form a positive outlook on life. They will need the new "Three Rs", the values of respect, responsibility and relationships. These values underpin every student's capacity to thrive at school' (Dr John Irvine & John Stewart)

Therefore we-

- Provide children with consistent emotional support
- Mediate and assist children to learn to balance their own rights, needs and feelings with those of others
- Support children to develop resilience and a sense of agency
- Use the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) Primary Years Programme (PYP) Learner Profile and Attitudes in conjunction with the Early Years Learning

Framework to plan meaningful experiences and activities to enhance children's social and emotional development

- Provide opportunities for children to develop their physical and social wellbeing

We believe young children learn best through play and supported inquiries.

Rationale- We believe that play is a child's work and that all learning is experiential. Children learn by doing. We aim to provide a creative and stimulating environment, indoors and outdoors, in which children can interact with materials and each other. Children are provided with experiences with a focus on process rather than product. Children are free to wonder, explore, create, and make mistakes, question and repeat experiences from which they can make their own conclusions.

Therefore we-

- Apply the Principles and Practices of the Early Years Learning Framework
- Use the IBO Primary Years Programme (3-5 years) and the Learning Outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework as a basis for our curriculum planning
- Take inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach to education
- Adopt an holistic approach to teaching and learning
- Ensure an appropriate balance of child initiated and adult initiated activities
- Provide natural materials that can be used in flexible and imaginative ways
- Provide opportunities for children to make choices and decisions
- Provide opportunities for children to work collaboratively with others
- Provide opportunities for one on one, small group and whole group interactions
- Provide a literacy and numeracy rich environment
- Provide children with access to a range of digital media
- Provide children with opportunities to express themselves through dance, visual arts, drama and music
- Provide children with opportunities to develop their cultural competence
- Provide opportunities to enhance children's physical development
- Provide opportunities for children to sustain their interest, practice skills and extend their knowledge
- Intentionally teach curriculum concepts through active, hands-on experiences
- Use sustainable practices that encourage children to respect the environment

We believe children learn best when there is a positive and supportive relationship between educators and families.

Rationale – Building relationships with families is in the best interests of all children and is an integral part of a quality curriculum. Communication and partnerships with families create a strong sense of belonging and connectedness.

(DECD – We can make a difference – learning and developing in childcare)

Therefore we-

- Respect the diverse histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families
- Recognize and value the prior knowledge and experiences families bring from their home and community to the Early Learning Centre
- Encourage families to share insights and perspectives about their child
- Respond to the needs and interests of individual children and families
- Communicate freely and respectfully with families

- Engage in shared decision making
- Meet with families at least once a year for a formal interview reporting openly on children's development
- Send home a portfolio with samples of children's work, a disc of photographs of children at work and a written progress report
- Provide regular communication in a fortnightly newsletter
- Publish and display the planned curriculum
- Communicate about daily activities and experiences
- Display children's work
- Liaise with parent class representatives
- Provide opportunities for informal social gatherings

We believe children's learning is ongoing and each child will progress towards outcomes in different and equally meaningful ways.

Rationale – It is important to identify the needs of each child and to view learning as a continuum, with each child achieving developmental milestones in different but meaningful ways.

Therefore we-

- Hold high expectations for all children to succeed, regardless of their diverse circumstances and abilities
- Build on children's interests, skills and existing knowledge
- Use varied authentic assessments to plan for individual needs
- Observe and assess children daily through interaction, observation, anecdotes, checklists and developmentally appropriate formal testing
- Ask open ended questions and provide feedback to challenge children's thinking and guide their learning
- Encourage student self-reflection
- Support children individually and in small groups to consolidate or extend learning
- Provide Student Support Plans for children with additional needs
- Promote inclusion and participation of all children

We believe children should be supported in their transition to the Early Learning Centre and to school.

Rationale – Beginning at the Early Learning Centre/School is an important milestone in a child/family's life. We believe preparing children and families with information to assist in independence, familiarity in the routines, environment and personnel of the Early Learning Centre/School will assist in setting children up for success.

Therefore we-

- Build on children's prior and current experiences to help them feel secure, confident and connected
- Acknowledge that children, families and educators all contribute to successful transitions between settings
- Provide opportunities for children to become familiar with the environment of the Early Learning Centre/School
- Allow children time to feel secure in the setting and prepare them for changes
- Support children's introduction to specialist teachers
- Encourage siblings in the school to visit
- Involve the children in appropriate whole school activities and celebrations

- Make recommendations about appropriate class placements for Reception
- Arrange times for the Reception teachers to visit the Early Learning Centre
- Arrange times for visits to the Reception classes
- Provide Reception teachers with all available information about the Early Learning Centre children moving to their class

We believe children's sense of wellbeing is enhanced by a knowledge and understanding of God's love.

Rationale – We believe children should know that they are created with special gifts and talents to develop, enjoy and use. Children should be able to hear God's Word, know of His love and appreciate all that He gives us.

Therefore we-

provide children with the opportunity to:

- Participate in a Christian studies program that allows children to hear, explore and reflect on the Gospel message.
- Witness faith in action
- Form relationships with people who communicate their faith
- Enjoy trusting relationships
- Experience a sense of belonging within a caring Christian community
- Question and be given appropriate, sensitive responses
- Experience love, forgiveness and faithfulness
- Be involved in daily worship through Devotion in the Early Learning Centre and occasionally with the whole school at Chapel

We believe early childhood educators have a responsibility to be ongoing learners and practice critical reflection.

Rationale – “A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when early childhood educators and those with whom they work are all involved in an ongoing cycle of review through which current practices are examined, outcomes reviewed and new ideas generated. In such a climate, issues relating to curriculum quality, equity and children's wellbeing can be raised and debated.” (Early Years Learning Framework 2009)

Therefore we-

- Reflect on our current practices to identify strengths and areas for development
- Consider the consequences of our actions and the impact on children's learning
- Discuss and debate issues relating to curriculum quality, equity and children's wellbeing
- Reflect on the theories, philosophies and understandings that shape our work
- Seek opportunities to build and share our professional knowledge