



extraordinary

Concordia College Early Learning Centre

Statement of Philosophy 2023



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 and wellbeing of each child through a balanced play-based curriculum.

We respect families as a child's primary influence and will work as partners towards achieving individual goals for their children.

Our Statement of Philosophy is informed by the principles and practices of the Early Years Learning Framework, the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, Lutheran Christian Studies Framework and the education principles of Reggio Emilia.

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 with a strong sense of self.

Therefore we

- + Prioritise 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 predictable routine
- + 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
- + Use 'Focus Educators' to build strong, supportive relationships with children
- + Promote a sense of belonging to the ELC community

References

- + Early Years Learning Framework Principles
- + Be You
<https://beyou.edu.au/>

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

Rationale

Children adapt best to a learning environment when they can consider others, concentrate, have patience and are beginning to manage their emotions. Children do well in social settings when they are confident, happy to try new things and can get along with their peers.

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 Early Years Learning Framework in conjunction with the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) Primary Years Programme (PYP) Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning to plan meaningful experiences and activities to enhance children's social and emotional development
- + Provide opportunities for children to develop their physical, social and mental wellbeing

References

- + Be You-Beyond Blue
<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/social-and-emotional-learning/social-and-emotional-learning>
- + Australian Early Development Census
<https://www.aedc.gov.au/early-childhood>

We believe young children learn best through play and supported inquiries. Children must have a VOICE in decision making, CHOICE to direct and resource their own learning and feel OWNERSHIP of their learning.

Rationale

Children actively construct their own understandings and contribute to others' learning. They recognise their agency, capacity to initiate and lead learning, and their rights to participate in decisions that affect them, including their learning. EYLF

Therefore we

- + Apply the Principles and Practices of the Early Years Learning Framework
- + Use the Early Years Learning Framework and the IBO Primary Years Programme (3-5 years) as a basis for our curriculum planning
- + Adopt a holistic approach to teaching and learning
- + Are flexible in our routines to respond to children's needs and choices
- + Engage in a cycle of planning and assessment where we observe, critically analyse, plan, implement and reflect
- + Ensure an appropriate balance of child initiated and adult initiated activities
- + Planning provides 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 children with access to a range of digital media
- + Provide children with opportunities to express themselves through dance, visual arts, drama and music
- + 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 meaningful, active, hands-on experiences

References

- + Early Years Learning Framework Practices
- + From Principles Into Practice
- *ibo.org* - PYP Resources

We believe the environment significantly impacts the wellbeing and learning of children.

Rationale

Learning environments are welcoming spaces when they reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the setting and respond to their interests and needs. Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child.

Outdoor learning spaces offer a vast array of possibilities not available indoors. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education.

Therefore we

- + Use outdoor learning spaces to invite open-ended exploration
- + Modify and adapt the environment to include all children
- + Provide a safe learning environment which encourages risk-taking and investigation
- + Provide an environment where children can be fully engaged and involved
- + Provide experiences to learn about, and in nature
- + Use sustainable practices that encourage children to respect the environment
- + Provide quality natural resources that can be used in flexible and imaginative ways
- + Provide a literacy and numeracy rich environment
- + Provide digital technologies to access global connections and resources and encourage new ways of thinking.
- + Take inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach to education. 'The environment is the third teacher'
- + Provide flexible eating and rest-times
- + Create a calm environment

References

- + Early Years Learning Framework Practices
- + Reggio Emilia
https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-04/QA3_TheEnvironmentAsTheThirdTeacher.pdf

<https://reggioemilia2015.weebly.com/environment-as-a-third-teacher.html>
- + Nature Play SA
<https://natureplaysa.org.au/>

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

Rationale

Learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators work in partnership with families.
EYLF p.12

Therefore we

- + Respect the diverse histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families
- + Understand that 'family' may include parents, carers, grandparents or extended family.
- + Recognize and value the prior knowledge and experiences families bring from their home and community to the Early Learning Centre
- + Provide opportunities for 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 twice a year for an interview discussing children's development
- + Continuously report on children's progress through an e-portfolio
- + Provide a summative progress report
- + Provide regular communication in a newsletter
- + Display the planned curriculum
- + Communicate about learning experiences in the Learning Journal
- + Display children's work
- + Use 'Focus' Educators to build strong, supportive relationships with families
- + Liaise with parent coordinators
- + Offer regular opportunities for informal social gatherings

References

- + Early Years Learning Framework Practices

We believe in all children's capacity to succeed, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities, and are committed to equity.

Rationale

It is important to identify the rights and 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, while recognising their diverse circumstances and abilities
- + Recognise and respond to barriers to children achieving educational success
- + 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
- + Involve children in goal setting
- + Support children individually and in small groups to consolidate or extend learning
- + Provide Individual Learning Plans for children with additional needs
- + Communicate and collaborate with allied health professionals
- + Promote the inclusion and participation of all children
- + Seek funding for advice, resources, and additional educators from the Inclusion Development Fund

References

- + Early Years Learning Framework Principles p13,14

We believe children should grow up with an appreciation and respect for the diversity of cultures, races and ethnicities that surround them. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's histories, cultures and futures are acknowledged and respected.

Rationale

Encouraging children to understand and appreciate different cultures will assist them to build positive relationships and connections with their community.

We all have a role to play when it comes to Reconciliation, and in playing a part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people's histories, cultures, and futures.

Therefore we

- + Celebrate different cultures
- + Collaborate with families and communities
- + Build relationships and trust to create belonging and connection
- + Support to minimise language barriers
- + Reflect on personal bias
- + Address prejudice when encountered
- + Contribute to and activate the College's Reconciliation Action Plan
- + Acknowledge and show respect to Kurna Land and People
- + Embed respectful and meaningful practices
- + Demonstrate ongoing commitment to learning about First Nations People.

References

- + Building Belonging Toolkit
https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/buildingbelonging_Educator_Guide.pdf
- + United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- + National reconciliation Week
<https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/>
- + Narragunnawali
<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/>
- + Concordia College Reconciliation Action Plan
- + Early Years Learning Framework
(Principles p14 and Practices p19)

**We believe
children should
be supported in
transitions to the
Early Learning
Centre, to school
and throughout
the day.**

Rationale

Transitions, including from home to early childhood settings, between settings, and from early childhood settings to school, offer opportunities and challenges. Different places and spaces have their own purposes, expectations and ways of doing things. Building on children's prior and current experiences helps them to feel secure, confident and connected to familiar people, places, events and understandings.

Therefore we

- + Acknowledge that children, families and educators all contribute to successful transitions between settings
- + Provide opportunities and resources 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
- + Facilitate weekly visits by Reception teachers to the Early Learning Centre
- + Negotiate visits to the Reception classrooms
- + Provide Reception teachers with all available information about the children moving to their class

References

- + Re-Imagining Childhood. Carla Rinaldi 2012-13
- + Early Years Learning Framework Practices p19

**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

References

- + <https://www.lutheran.edu.au/about/early-childhood-education-and-care/>

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

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

- + Aim for continuous improvement every day
- + Self-assess and reflect on our personal and Centre practices to identify strengths and areas for development
- + Use Professional Learning Plans to inform and document our professional growth
- + Discuss and debate issues relating to curriculum quality, equity, and children’s wellbeing
- + Consider the consequences of our actions and the impact on children’s learning
- + Reflect on the theories, philosophies and understandings that shape our work
- + Seek opportunities to build and share our professional knowledge

References

- + ECA Code of Ethics
<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/code-of-ethics-core-principles/>
- + Early Years Learning Framework Principles

We believe when educators commit to upholding the core values of Concordia College, we create a safe, authentic, caring, and respectful community.

Rationale

'At the heart of every organisation and community are the core values that motivate the people to engage positively with each other and with the people they serve'.

Therefore we demonstrate

- + Integrity and authenticity
- + Compassion and caring
- + Community and collaboration
- + Positive attitude and resilience
- + Curiosity and inquiry
- + Excellence and mastery

References

- + Values and Culture (Concordia College 2021)

**Reviewed February 2023*