

SPW ELC Philosophy

SPW Early Learning Centre aims to provide outstanding long-day education through a welcoming, nurturing environment full of awe and inquiry. Engaging in play is integral, underpinning all learning experiences. We celebrate strong connections to our extended school community and local environment. Our actions are inclusive and consistently fair. We value our partnership with each family and aim to have transparent, informative communication as we work towards achieving positive, personal outcomes for every child.

We believe authentic relationships between an educator and student enables deep understanding of the whole child. Only then can informed practices be developed to build upon strengths and areas of growth.

Rationale:

Children have different facets with strengths and areas for growth. All facets are equally important in a child's development. They are interrelated. 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.

In practice this means we aim to:

- Build early relationships through engaging in dialogue, playing, positive body language
- Give priority to nurturing relationships with children, ensuring consistent emotional support
- Show genuine affection, understanding and respect for all children
- Provide opportunities for learning which follow children's interests, promoting inclusion of all children
- Know and utilise children's strengths, interests and skills
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their physical and social wellbeing
- Ensure educators adopt an holistic approach to learning and teaching
- Undertake structured, informative observations - 360 approach
- Program for learning experiences in all developmental areas using both inside and outside learning spaces
- Recognise and value the prior knowledge and experiences families bring from their home and community to the Early Learning Centre
- Engage with outside support agencies and collaborating with families to ensure understanding and adoption of recommended strategies
- Engage with SPW Learning Support staff and families to design agreed Personal Learning Plan or Individual Education Play for students with additional needs
- Use the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) Primary Years Program (PYP) Learner Profile and Attitudes in conjunction with the Early Years Learning Framework to plan meaningful opportunities to enhance children's social and emotional development



- Share with children high expectations of success for all, regardless of their diverse circumstances and abilities
- Observe and analyse learning, document, plan, implement then reflect on each child's learning and development in collaboration with professionals and families

We believe a relationship with trusted adults within the ELC allows children to feel safe, secure and open to learning. Collaborative relationships with families are fundamental to achieving quality outcomes with children. Children have the opportunity to thrive when they feel safe, secure and supported. We believe by offering opportunities for children to interact with others, they can develop skills needed to care, respect others and resolve conflicts.

Rationale:

Relationships help children feel safe and secure, enabling them to explore, play and learn with confidence. Communication and partnerships with families create a strong sense of belonging and connectedness. (DECD – We can make a difference – learning and developing in Childcare). When children feel safe, secure and supported they grow in confidence to explore and learn.

In practice this means we aim to:

- Build secure attachments with one and then more familiar educators through our timetable/rosters
- Support children to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with others
- Form strong relationships with colleagues, parents and children by open, transparent communication so children feel safe, secure and supported
- Allow children to openly express their feelings - explicitly teaching body language and vocabulary
- Teach children about safe choices
- Use and model desired language and behaviours
- Support children in times of change through comforting, constant and regular routines, discussions and story books
- Explicitly teach and practice emergency procedures each school term
- 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
- Organise events to allow the entire family to join in, share in the learning and contribute, such as educator attended weekend excursions
- Use parent's first names when communicating
- Communicate 'right now observations' and examples of student experiences and work through Seesaw, empowering families to continue learning discussions outside the Centre, as per the SPW ELC SeeSaw Essential Agreement
- Respect the diverse histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families
- Meet with and encourage families to share insights and perspectives about their child
- Meet with families at least once a year for a formal interview reporting openly on children's development
- Send home a written student progress report once a year for all Programs

- Provide regular communication for families via Skoolbag app
- Publish and display the planned curriculum and children's work
- Publish parent handbook online for continual easy access
- Maintain open communication with families, keeping them informed on the planning for their child's needs

We believe children need to understand their actions and choices have consequences and affect others. They need to understand, as individuals, they can control their behaviours and actions. We believe children are part of the wider world and have a responsibility to think of others and the world around them.

Rationale:

Developing a sense of moral agency means distinguishing right from wrong and acting on what is right. For individuals, moral agency means understanding how to act on what you as an individual think is right, to develop and follow your conscience and to learn how to keep promises and obligations to others. (Charles Leadbeater, 2018)

In practice this means we aim to:

- Explicitly teach children the vocabulary to express themselves
- Ensure children develop confidence to use their voice
- Teach children values, manners, respect using, 'What's the Buzz?' program
- Respond to observations of children's inquiry or action
- Use the International Baccalaureate Organisation's Primary Years Program to support facilitation of the Early Years Learning Framework
- Pose open ended questions and provide feedback to challenge children's thinking and scaffold their learning
- Facilitate learning to balance their own rights, feelings and needs, with those of others
- Promote taking actions as an essential element of the IBO Primary Years Program units of inquiry.
- Listen to children's feedback during and after activities and use this feedback to plan for further activities
- Provide opportunities for children to sustain their interest, practice skills and extend their knowledge

We believe authentic reflection on our own practice is an integral component in providing best possible outcomes for learners and is the responsibility of all educators.

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)

In practice this means we aim to:

- Consider the consequences of our actions and the impact on children's learning

- Use designated space and regular opportunities, as educators, to build on and share our professional knowledge and understandings and reflect on theories, philosophies and understandings that shape our role
- Meet weekly (on fortnightly rotation) with Head of Early Years or Head of Learning and Teaching to discuss and apply new understandings following individual and group reflection
- Reflect on current practices to identify strengths and areas for development, and areas for celebration
- Engage in a range of curriculum staff meetings – ELC specific, whole school, Early Years
- Allocate timetabled Performance Development mentor meeting time for ELC teachers to maintain working toward individual SMART goals

We believe play-based learning is imperative for the development of children's interpersonal skills such as confidence, creativity and communication. Play supports children's emotional intelligence by providing opportunities for self-regulation, collaboration, negotiating, problem solving, decision making and assertiveness.

Rationale:

Play experiences provide children with the foundational skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for personal, social and academic growth. In early childhood, play opportunities underpin future dispositions for learning by providing a holistic platform on which children can shine. Through enjoyable play children develop neural connections vital to effective brain function.

In practice this means we aim to:

- Create secure, safe and challenging environments
- Provide engaging equipment and resources promoting exploration and creativity
- Observe children in play situations, documenting developmental achievements and needs through a purposeful form of visual or written display
- Intentionally teach concepts, knowledge and skills through active, hands-on opportunities
- Apply the Principles and Practices of the Early Years Learning Framework
- Use the IBO Primary Years Program (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
- Use sustainable practices that encourage children to respect the environment
- Adopt a 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 develop their cultural competence
- Provide opportunities to enhance children's physical development
- Intentionally teach curriculum concepts through active, hands-on experiences

We believe consideration needs to be made when designing exterior and interior spaces. The spaces need to foster and encourage choices, autonomy, curiosity, problem solving and exploration in the process of learning. They should also provide opportunities for multisensory learning where children can participate, communicate and be involved together. Light and natural materials should be encouraged as a way to bring the outside in.

Rationale:

More than the physical space, (the environment) includes the way time is structured and the roles we are expected to play. It conditions how we feel, think, and behave; and it dramatically affects the quality of our lives. (Jim Greenman)

In practice this means we aim to:

- Provide opportunities for children to contribute to their learning spaces
- Facilitate open-ended play spaces, supporting child initiated activities and experiences
- Ensure a balance between indoor and outdoor experience
- Provide opportunities for meaningful development (fine and gross motor skills)
- Provide neutral settings containing objects from nature for children to autonomously or intentionally engage with during implicit and explicit teaching
- Adhere to routines to ensure children can feel confident in knowing, 'what happens in my day'
- Align with the Reggio Emilia Approach

We believe children should be familiar with and supported through their transition to new learning environments, such as between ELC programs and from early learning to primary school.

Rationale:

Beginning school or in the ELC is an important milestone in a child's life. Providing familiar faces and environments give children an opportunity to feel safe and supported in their transition.

In practice this means we aim to:

- Involve children in appropriate whole school activities and celebrations
- Participate in SPW's Buddy Class arrangement, hosting and visiting older learners
- Engage children in regular excursions throughout the School grounds, making use of facilities and becoming familiar with and confident in the surroundings
- Connect visually with Reception students in their learning space due to the deliberate placement of SPW Reception classrooms
- Facilitate each child participating in up to four transitions during Semester 2
- Ensure children wear clear name labels during each transition to make certain value is placed on each child and educators use each child's name
- Allocate time during the final Saturday of Term 4 for each child to spend time in the Reception classroom, with his or her Reception teacher and fellow students
- Acknowledge children, families and educators all contribute to successful transitions between settings
- Engage families in a moving on day when moving programs within the Centre; children and their family attend a visiting day on a Saturday during Term 4 to become familiar with their new room and new educator
- Use knowledge of children to facilitate appropriate class placements for Reception

- Ensure SPW Learning Support staff are involved in class placement process
- Arrange times for the Reception teachers to visit the Early Learning Centre
- Provide Reception teachers with all available information about the Early Learning Centre children moving to their class
- Maintain pastoral notes on each child to allow each ELC educator to better understand and record important developmental data
- Transfer pastoral notes from the ELC system to the School's learning management system (iWise) in order to share foundation knowledge of each child upon entering Reception

We believe in supporting our students to understand and demonstrate the SPW Values; values are highlighted and developed through experiences.

Rationale:

Agreed values help all children and adults understand what it means to be a learner as part of the SPW community, how we hope our members will act when interacting with others and or understanding self.

SPW Values

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| Wonder | Approaching each day with curiosity and appreciation; sharing fun and happiness; and expressing gratitude |
| Courage | Always doing our best; being honest, strong and resilient; and standing up for what is right |
| Respect | Being true to yourself; appreciating other people and cultures; and caring for the environment |
| Service | Helping others; contributing to the community; and being a good citizen |