

Sweetpeas Kindergarten acknowledges the Dharug people as the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which we teach and learn. We pay our respects to Dharug Elders past, present and emerging. We celebrate the stories, culture, and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of all communities who also live, work and play on this Land.

At Sweetpeas we believe that the early years of a child's life are the most influential, and it is during these years that a child develops the foundation skills and abilities that they will use throughout their formal education and life. We acknowledge the importance of play in early childhood development and learning. It is through play that children explore and begin to understand the world around them as they communicate, problem solve, discover, create, imagine, socialise, experiment and challenge each other's thinking.

Our philosophy includes the following aims, reflections and beliefs:

IN RELATION TO CHILDREN:

- We believe that children that feel they belong are active members of our service feel more comfortable to learn and thrive.
- We believe all children are the most important part of our centre and that working with children is a privilege.
- We believe children are unique and capable individuals, who come to our service with their own interests, skills, ideas, knowledge.
- We believe children have a right to be active participants in their own learning and should be empowered to express their views and ideas.
- We endeavour to honour children's histories, cultures, languages, traditions, ways of knowing and languages spoken, as well as strategies used by children with additional needs to negotiate their everyday lives.
- We strive to make our centre safe, comfortable, clean, loving, fun and welcoming at all times.
- Our service caters for different capabilities and learning styles in our warm, learning environment, and invites children and families to contribute ideas, interests and knowledge and family traditions.
- We believe intentional teaching plays a large part in learning and happens often throughout the day.
- Educators are committed to providing an environment that offers opportunities for inquiry-based learning, ongoing projects and other STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) activities. We are proud to be a Little Scientists House.
- We aim to provide rich environments across all areas of the curriculum and actively seek feedback from children about their experiences.

IN RELATION TO FAMILIES:

- We acknowledge that family is a child's first teacher, and the significance of their relationships cannot be underestimated.
- We aim to ensure we involve parents and families in the services policies, procedures, practices as well as the development and implementation of our curriculum.
- We believe a family's involvement and ideas can provide diverse perspectives to our service.
- We strive to develop positive, mutually respectful relationships with family members, as we work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

IN RELATION TO EDUCATORS:

- We believe teamwork and effective communication are essential requirements for positive outcomes across all aspects of the services' functioning.
- We aim to create an environment of trust and respect, where we work towards achieving a shared goal.
- Through reflection and critical reflection of our actions, we are able to assess our own practices and identify areas that may need further improvement.
- We recognise educators' abilities and interests are one of our service's most valuable resources and aim to provide them with a satisfying and safe working environment. Further we also appreciate the experience and skills of all staff, and we appreciate their dedication as an integral element of the success of our service.

IN RELATION TO CURRICULUM:

- We work to ensure that no child is discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture or national origin.
- We believe that a curriculum in which children are active participants and collaborators allows for a more individualistic and meaningful involvement by the children. Our programs reflect planned and spontaneous experiences designed to support children's development in all domains.
- We believe families need to feel comfortable with their knowledge of our program, thus we strive to provide information, visuals and conversations for each family to develop their understanding.
- We believe our program needs to reflect the needs and wants of not only the child, but of the families too.
- All educators have input into the program, as we believe each staff member's individual pedagogy and knowledge and perspectives are of equal importance.
- We believe that by using the National Quality Framework, National Quality Standard and EYLF allows us to meet outcomes effectively for all children.
- We are committed to providing children with a healthy menu.
- We are committed to getting children active according to Munch and Move key messages. Educators role model and encourage fundamental movement skills.
- We feel children's voices need to be evident in the learning environment.

IN RELATION TO COMMUNITY:

- We strive to be seen as a service of excellence within our community, a service which values community involvement in all aspects of our program.
- We aim to utilise community resources effectively, to enhance the growth and development of individual children, families, and educators.
- We believe community involvement in our centre assists children's awareness and knowledge of the wider world and their sense of belonging; we will strive to play an active part in our community whenever possible.
- We believe that providing children and families with information on community events and services our centre will further foster a sense of belonging for all involved.
- We embrace diversity within our service and the wider community, so that children view this diversity with a sense of appreciation and wonder, rather than misunderstanding and fear. Through respect, acknowledgement, appreciation and acceptance of diversity within our community, our service embraces, celebrates and shares traditions and cultures throughout our program. With a committed approach to the Aboriginal culture and the Dharug land in which we educate and play on.

IN RELATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT:

- We understand that children often develop their ideas and understandings of the world around them from the information presented to them by the significant adults in their lives. As educators we acknowledge that we are some of these significant adults, and we have a responsibility to present a positive approach to the environment.
- We educate children about sustainable practices using the 6 R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair, Respect and Reflect), growing vegetables, maintaining gardens, caring for animals, understanding life cycles, maintaining our worm farm and reducing use of electricity where possible.
- We strive to provide an environment both inside and outside which houses a balance of manmade and natural materials to ensure children have many learning opportunities.

References:

- AGDE. (2022). Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. V2.0 (EYLF)
- Early Childhood Australia Inc. (2016). Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics.
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- Individual reflections/beliefs from current staff

Date of most recent reflection: February 2024