



SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

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 and promote 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, values and beliefs:

IN RELATION TO CHILDREN:

- 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 strive to develop pedagogies that are responsive to the youngest participants in our program, acknowledging that infants and toddlers have the same rights as their older peers.
- 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 learning environment, and invites children and families to contribute ideas, interests and knowledge.
- We acknowledge the importance of inclusion and actively strive to teach how children have different learning needs.

IN RELATION TO FAMILIES:

- We acknowledge that family is the most important and influential aspect in the lives of young children and the significance of their relationships cannot be underestimated.
- We value parents as primary caregivers and collaborate to individualise the routines of infants to best suit their needs outside of the greater service routine.
- We aim to ensure we involve parents and families into the program's development and implementation, as 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.
- We endeavour to share our collective knowledge as early childhood education professionals to compliment and support the parenting skills of our enrolled families and greater community.

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 evaluation of our actions, we are able to assess our own practices and identify areas that may need further development.
- We recognise educators as our service's most valuable resource 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 aim to create a collaborative curriculum, including our routine, drawing on the knowledge of all stakeholders to contribute to all children's learning in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators from infants to preschoolers.
- 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 suitable for each family to develop their understanding.
- We believe our program needs to reflect the needs and ideas 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 knowledge and perspectives are of equal importance.

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.

IN RELATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT:

- We believe that all children benefit from learning on Country and from Country.
- 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 aim educate children about sustainable practices, and endeavour to enrich our environment further, involving the children of the St Marys community.
- We strive to provide an environment both inside and outside which houses a balance of manmade and natural materials.

References:

- Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.0)*.
- Early Childhood Australia Inc. (2016). *Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics*.
- National Quality Standard. (Revised 2018).
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- Individual reflections/values contributed by current staff- (Janine, Cassandra, Antonia, Bella, Brooke, Chloe, Courtney, Emmy, Michelle, Sarah, Brooke and additional staff)

Date of most recent reflection: May 2023