



BELONGING – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. *Belonging* acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of *belonging*. *Belonging* is central to *being* and *becoming* in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

BEING - recognizes the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.

BECOMING - Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. *Becoming* reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasizes learning to participate fully and actively in society.

National Early Years Learning Framework, 2009

Philosophy

Our Mission

The Dorothy Waide Centre for Early Learning provides the highest quality care and education for young children, and accommodates the needs of their families in our community.

Values

The staff and management of the Dorothy Waide Centre for Early Learning embrace the following values:

- ★ Each child has the right to be an individual and to have its physical and emotional needs catered for at all times.
- ★ Our care and child centred early learning program are of the highest possible standard and reflect the latest knowledge and ideas.
- ★ The individuality of parents and families is respected, and our practice of care and education is appropriate to the child's family situation.
- ★ Our practice respects and reflects the community's aspirations for care and education of young children.
- ★ Our Centre is responsibly managed and the service provided is affordable within our community.
- ★ The individual needs of staff are respected and the Centre provides a supportive environment for their personal and professional needs.

Of significance is our acknowledgement and respect for our nations first people. Respect comes from understanding, and it is our aim to ensure our practices acknowledge the unique cultures of all peoples and to ensure that no one is disadvantaged while accessing our service. It is our aim to reflect each

person and families unique culture within our day to day program, and find ways that celebrate this. Of particular note is that our practice will find ways to interweave aspects of Aboriginal culture and practice within our program.

A child's early years determine much of their future development. Research has shown that the first eight years of a child's life are the formative, basic years and that the opportunities that they experience during this time will have lasting and far-reaching effects.

Our Centre's overall aim is to allow each child in our care to achieve their potential and to find ways to achieve this creatively. Overall, we hope to create an environment where children can become enthusiastic, inquiring and challenged. Children are encouraged to follow their own interests; to take risks where they become in a sense, the catalyst for their own curriculum.

The children provide the lead for the adults within the Centre, involve themselves in individual and group projects and where possible are encouraged to record what they have done in their own words - through paint, craft, clay, song or drawing.

Our curriculum is based around a number of key concepts and focus points reflecting the National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) Belonging, Being and Becoming..

The key principles that guide the EYLF and our own understandings focus on creating an environment where the following are embedded in our practice:

- *Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships - with children, families and colleagues*

- *Partnerships - with families, children, early childhood educators, and community.*
- *High expectations and equity - where every child, family and educator is valued and catered for.*
- *Respect for diversity - where difference is acknowledged and celebrated in respectful ways that enhance our understanding,*
- *Ongoing learning and reflection - where we as educators take the time to reflect on what and why we do what we and what might change and why.*

Our key learning outcomes are aligned to the National Early Years Learning Framework and encompass the following key understandings:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.



So how is this curriculum delivered? What does it look like? What will my child learn?

Our curriculum is built around a play based program, focussed on the interests of young children and also the intentional planning undertaken by educators.

Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. Play and learning are entwined in such a way that it is difficult to separate. What we know is that when children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings.

As educators our role is to create supportive environments where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking.

Children's immersion in their play illustrates how play enables them to simply enjoy *being*.

As early childhood educators we will take on many roles in play with children and use a range of strategies to support learning. We will engage in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking, asking questions like "I wonder how that happened? What would happen if? What else can you tell me about this? Tell me about this?"

As educators within the learning environment we will provide a balance between child led, child initiated and educator supported learning. We will plan and create learning environments that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct.

Our routines and play experiences will provide children with a sense of security and stability, enabling children to predict what will happen next, build confidence and a sense of self.

We will work with children to promote and model positive ways to relate to others. Actively supporting the inclusion of all children in play, helping children to recognise when play is unfair and offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair and inclusive learning community.

To assist your child to achieve these skills, our team will provide opportunities for your child to ...

- be held, cuddled, loved, listened to in a safe a secure environment with people who care and understand their individual "ways of being and knowing"
- be creative - with music, language, drama, blocks, clay, paint, dough, paper, natural materials etc.
- take risks, challenge their thinking, skills and ideas.
- dramatise the family and adult world through role-play and the use of incidental themes.
- experience a wide range of textural and sensory activities. enjoy quiet times of concentration with books, puzzles and manipulative games.
- enjoy and participate in outdoor activities as well as story-time and music.

- have opportunities to build friendships with peers and with children older and younger than they are - reflecting the broader community.

We will create opportunities for your child to build a positive self-image. The cooperation of parents and our staff in this task, by guiding the child to develop at their own rate and by understanding that your child will need to adjust to a variety of situations and people, is a vital part of the educational aspect of our Centre.

Offering a wide range of stimulating individual and group activities and experiences provides this.

We will do this by:

- setting limits, providing choices, encouraging conversation and giving responsibilities.
- valuing what each child achieves and by setting an example of self-control.
- by valuing life and the world around us.
- by encouraging children to test their ideas, to experience success and failure, to question, to describe, to observe and to express their feelings.
- encouraging children to feel confident about themselves.
- having a stable staff, using various teaching methods and by creating a caring, loving environment.

We appreciate parent involvement in the Centre and welcome opportunities to share ideas and experiences. If you feel you would like to contribute, please do not hesitate to ask.

Your child's day....

During the day your child will have opportunities to do many exciting activities, listen to stories, play with friends and to have quiet times.

Some things to bear in mind about our centre and the day are: -

Children attend the centre in a variety of care options - some are here for five days a week, others are only for one day. Some children are also here for long periods and others for only a short number of hours.

There are children attending from many different backgrounds - different family types and different ethnic groups - all are valued and made to feel part of our extended family.

Talk to your child about their day at the centre - if they want to - and admire what they bring home. Don't be too concerned if they don't bring home art or craft work - they have been involved in so much during the day that they just never got around to doing some, and there are many ways to be creative and to build meaning.

Our daily diary is a great way to catch up on the days happenings and will provide a starting point for discussions at home.

Key Points

- The early years are critical in each individuals development and how they achieve in the rest of their life.
- Each child is seen as a unique and special person.
- The opportunity to play and the use of it as a tool for learning is seen as a critical component of our approach to working with young children.
- Creating opportunities for children to capable, resourceful and resilient are essential in building strong independent children.
- A connectedness with parents and family is important in how we all work together for the benefit of each child.