

Elder St. Herald

SEPT OCT 2018

Our Community Philosophy

Since 2005 Elder St ECHC has been involved in a process by which we reflect, review and record discussions and suggested changes to our service's Community Philosophy. We have been capturing this information from our many team meetings and discussions, responses from families during the annual Partnerships with Parents survey, moments with children either observing or having conversations with them, for many years. We have never reviewed our philosophy via our newsletter before and haven't for a while explained the importance or meaning behind a service philosophy with our families and why revising the philosophy is so important to ongoing provision of our programs. So, we will pose some questions to stimulate some thinking for review of our philosophy.

What is a statement of philosophy and why is it important?

A philosophy underpins everything we do as early childhood educators. It is a living document that should be reviewed regularly as families join and leave the learning community,

whenever there are changes in the leadership and management of the setting, and when new knowledge becomes available through sources such as the learning frameworks we use and other professional learning opportunities. The philosophy should explain the reasons behind the way we implement our program.

Some guiding questions for this thinking are:

How do we believe children learn and acquire knowledge?

What are the views about families and their role in the setting?

What are the roles of the educators?

What is the role of the wider community?

Can we find examples in our environment that reflect and represent what we believe?

A service philosophy begins by declaring what we believe and then should further discuss what this will then look like in practice.

Our philosophy is housed in our very front foyer of the service. This is intentional as we want all of our community to understand what we are about and how we un-

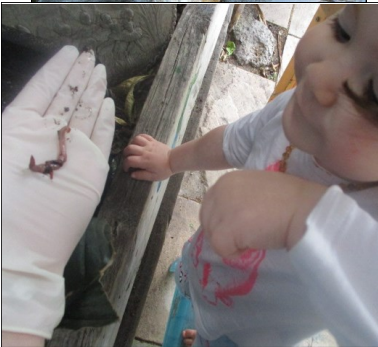
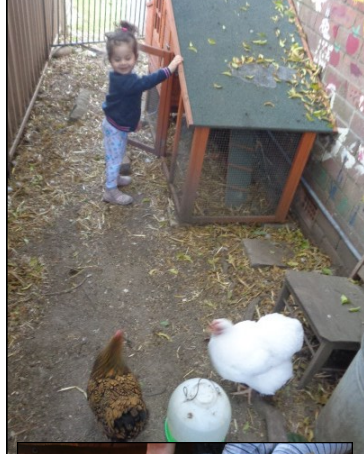
derstand and view the role of an early childhood education and care service.

As a team we feel confident that we reflect what is stated in our service philosophy but we also need to be confident that this is the experience for all who attends our service.

We have included our full philosophy statement on page 2 of this newsletter and would really appreciate families responding to a follow up email that we will send with the newsletter.

We appreciate all and any feedback and really hope to have lots of replies from our community so we can continue to reflect what we all believe to be best for our youngest citizens in these very important years.

We will send out an email with the newsletter for families to respond to the questions displayed with our Community Philosophy on Page 2. We value all feedback and would love to include your words in our statement.



The beliefs and values of the educators and families at Elder Street Early Childhood Centre have been consolidated to form our philosophy on the wellbeing and education of children from their experiences from home, time spent in the wider community and whilst attending the centre. As a community, this philosophy is what we believe to be best practice.

Partnerships with Families

Our community welcomes all families recognising the diversity of people's beliefs, cultures, values and abilities within our wider community. Our community believes in acknowledging the original custodians of this land, the Awabakal people and their language, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in our community. We believe in educating young children with an inclusive approach to our country's Heritage. We believe children's development is influenced by the social and cultural context in which they live. We therefore strongly support the development of partnerships with families based on mutual respect. We value and welcome their input and involvement in the centre. Management are committed to addressing the needs of its families, educators and the wider community. We aim to consult with these parties on issues of policy and procedure development.

Questions for reflection by families:

Does our philosophy statement reflect the key things you want for your child & your partnership with educators?

Questions for reflection by families:

Do you feel our service's personality is evident in our philosophy?

Nurturing Relationships with Children and the Natural Environment

Our professional, caring, informed and committed educators work together to meet the goals of our service. Educators have access to resources and training within the broader community that enhance their abilities to provide for the children's needs. We aim to develop positive and nurturing relationships with each child and family within our community. Management of the service holds educator's abilities, needs and levels of experience in high regard. They aim to ensure that educators are rewarded both intrinsically and extrinsically often within their work place. We provide a homelike, warm, secure and interactive environment for the children to explore whilst stimulating their senses and minds. We place great emphasis on the use of natural materials for learning and aim to nurture a love and respect for our planet in the children. We do this by encouraging the children to develop respect for their environment, engaging in activities that foster ecologically sustainable practices, skills and ideas (Hallett Cove PS, SA www.hallettpre.sa.edu.au/project). We as early childhood practitioners recognise that with our chosen philosophy of encouraging the use of natural elements and natural environments, comes some risk. We support our findings that with careful planning, ongoing risk assessment and adult support, that "risky play" can be managed and that the benefits to the children's learning and development outweigh any negatives.

Questions for reflection by families:

Are the unique features of our service reflected in our philosophy?

Questions for reflection by families:

Is there anything you feel we need to add to or change in this statement of philosophy?

Learning & the Value of Play

Our program pedagogy is based on understanding the whole child's world, relationships and the value of play. Play is the vehicle through which children learn about themselves and their surrounds. It also importantly encompasses the belief that children are people with potential, curiosity and interest in constructing their own learning as they play.

We implement this belief within our program by using the work of Reggio Emilia; the Emergent Curriculum and following the guidelines of the Early Years Learning Framework. We support the message in the framework that in early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Further, that childhood is about being, to seek and make meaning of the world and recognising the here and now in a child's life. Finally, that these early years should also focus on becoming, which reflects the process of rapid and significant change during the early years as young children learn and grow. (COAG: 2009)

Combining these principles and this type of curriculum explores what is "socially relevant, intellectually engaging and personally meaningful to children (Jones & Nemo, 1994, p3) Through the ever changing emergent curriculum our staff are engaged in a process of supporting, facilitating, observing, interpreting and evaluating the children's needs interests, ideas and activities, as they play.

We aim to assist in developing children who are happy through experiencing joy and wonder, respectful by understanding the needs of other and how they impact our society, confident from first hand experience of success, and capable, because they recognise themselves as successful learners who can change the world.

Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Commonwealth of Australia 2009

Assessment and Rating Process

The time has finally arrived! After a more than 5 year wait, we are at last scheduled for our Assessment and Rating visit. The exact dates for our visit are not yet confirmed, however we know the visit will happen some time between 1 November and 14 December, 2018.

We have been preparing for this visit for many years and our Quality Improvement Plan and progress notes are testament to this.

Assessment and Rating is designed to support continuous quality improvement in the provision of early childhood education and care services. The assessment process allows services to demonstrate how their practices meet the requirement of the National Quality Standard. Authorised officers from the Department of Education follow a structured

assessment process to determine the rating of services in NSW. During their assessment visit officers will observe and discuss practice with staff and sight relevant documentation to verify and confirm practice against the National Quality Standard. Towards the end of the assessment visit the officers may seek to clarify any anomalies or inconsistencies with the service's representative (Mel and Kim) The process is in three stages

PRE VISIT— officers plan and prepare by reading our QIP and history of compliance.

SERVICE VISIT—officers attend and scan the environment, discuss, sight and observe to confirm practice. Confirm and record minor adjustments if any or identify any serious non-compliance.

POST VISIT—the information is then analysed and rated in the Assessment Evidence Record and rate the service against the NQS. A report is issued with an assessment evidence summary and a provider feedback form. Any feedback is considered and then the Final Outcome Summary & Rating Certificate is given. We are confident we will do well and thank you for your support in this process.



AWESOME RESOURCES/TOYS/XMAS IDEAS IN PARENT DIRECT 2018!

Extra catalogues are available from the centre foyer for families to have a look through and make an order if you would like some great quality toys and resources. Each child would have also received a catalogue in their bag.

Paula and Roxi are heading up this fundraiser this year so will be collecting the order forms and sending them off to Modern Teaching Aids. If you have any questions, please ask the girls or send myself or Kim an email and we will try our best to answer you.

For now, all you need to do is have a lovely browse through the catalogue, fill out the order form (in the middle of the catalogue) bring your order form and payment in (either cheque or credit card) and hand it to Paula or Roxi (or put in the fee/suggestion box in the sign in desk) **by Monday the 5th of November, 2018.**

We will send off the orders the following week. They should be back at the centre for collection well before Xmas. If you can't see any catalogues, please let our team know and we will put more out for everyone.

ROOM NEWS...what's been going on in our rooms in September & October???

BABY POSSUMS.... Hello from the Possums! We have been learning about communication in different forms in the last few weeks; this has been happening through a local perspective of sign language and also a global perspective through a post card exchange. We have been working together during many different times of the day to learn Auslan Signing. Some of the children in our group are still non verbal so to support them in learning and processing language conversation we have begun learning sign language as a group. Even the children who do have language and the teachers model this language as they speak and interact. The children have responded really well and continue to remember the associated sign with little to no prompting from educators. We are excited to know that this signing is coming through the children's interactions at home and wish to thank parents for their support in this learning. Since our local post office closed down we now have our mail delivered to our post box at the front of the centre. The children love checking the mail. To extend this learning we decided to engage in a post card exchange. This involves sending post cards to a number of other early childhood services around the world. This is a great opportunity for the children to think globally and also connect with technology as they research where in the world the postcards are arriving from. The children have been researching the area and then marking the location on a map. After creating our own Elder St cards from families we are in the process of sending post cards back. This part of the project includes some trips down Elder street to the local post box with small groups of children to post our cards. Hope you have enjoyed reading your child's latest documentation that can be read from our online server—The Possum team :)



TODDLER JOEYS.... Our very exciting celebration visit to the park was rained out a few weeks ago, but we will reschedule and head down very soon. In the meantime we are still working on our already very adept independence skills such as dressing ourselves, packing away beds and placing socks in shoes and putting them on the shelf. This is an ongoing positive experience from the children and the varying ages of the children in the group has provided opportunities for mentoring of older children to younger ones within the group. Lots of beautiful supportive moments to share.

Our ongoing unit of learning "All about me" has been focusing on smaller parts of ourselves. We have moved through drawing our eyes and noticing all the unique characteristics of our own and each other's eyes. More recently we have used a different medium to create components of our self, namely clay. With the clay the children have created sculptures that represent their faces and have worked to manipulate the clay to create intricate features of their faces. They then painted the clay to represent how they see their eyes and lips. There has been lots of fierce concentration and serious discussions about what they know about their facial structures. The next and final stage of this project has come around to examining how the children understand the building of knowledge. As educators we are looking at epistemology and the theory of knowledge creation. How do the children seek to understand new ideas? We have observed the children going back to their persona statues, family portraits and project documentation and sharing lots of memories and understandings. We have also noticed that the children are interested in finding out more about the functions of their eyes and exploring the purpose of tears and eyebrows and eyelashes and why we have lips. These topics have been strong interest and conversation areas during meal times. We have a group of bright, curious and interested children which is such a joy to work with as teachers. They make learning so interesting. We hope you have had a chance to jump online to read the children's latest educational profiles. Don't forget to let us know where you would like their learning to head next. Thanks - The Joeys team



WALLABY PRESCHOOLERS...

Who would have thought back in January that collecting a few plastic bottle top lids would result in this beautiful piece of sculptural art work by 3, 4 and 5 year olds?! More than just beauty, the mural represents the children's thinking, reflection and commitment to sustainability and keeping our oceans and planet free of plastic. We are so, so proud of this work. We have so far created 33 documentation panels that tells the story of this learning journey that we will turn into a book to keep. We would really like to exhibit this work publicly but are at this stage unable to find somewhere suitable to display our documentation panels along with the mural and have the children attend to represent their work. We were hoping to use the pop up shop in Elder St Lambton, but it is unfortunately no longer available. If anyone has any knowledge about somewhere we could use, please let us know. We really do want to give the children the opportunity to share their work and voice.



Congratulations to the Wallaby children and Educators on this amazing piece of work

In other learning, our Transition to School program has started now and the children are really enjoying discussing and engaging in play based experiences focused on some elements of primary school. So far the children have been playing with letters and words in early literacy week and building on this have also been doing a wonderful job of speaking confidently with peers and teachers in front of groups. Some of these experiences also involved acting out told stories such as Billy Goats Gruff, Farmer in the Dell and There was a Princess long ago. We will continue to work through this special program until just before Pre-school Graduation on Thursday 6 December. There has been huge interest in construction of late; we are seeing small groups of children working together using a range of materials to create their ideas. Once the creations are made they are also being given another life by being used in other play with the addition of elements such as animals, people and cars. These shared sustained thinking experiences are wonderful learning opportunities for children, especially when they are leading the play themselves. This time of the year as some of our children have turned 4 and 5 we see a natural progression to wanting to make more sense of words and numbers. We have requests for help to write sentences, engagement in maths problems such as working out the difference between the lowest and highest numbers and lots and lots of self initiated practice in writing names or friend's names. This is a sign that all of this child centred, educator scaffolded play and learning has created deeper thinking and the need to understand concepts further. Children are so naturally geared to want to know more, especially if they have a say in the learning topics and have engaged educators who take opportunities to build on this learning to push their thinking further. Thank you to our families for sharing photos from holidays, artefacts and stories from special times together with your family. The children just beam as they share their news and eagerly answer questions about their experiences. Thanks for reading—The Wallaby Team and children



TRAINEES TRIALLING.....

You will see some new faces over the next couple of weeks as we meet some more people who would like to begin a career in Early Childhood Education. We will be trialling 3 applicants throughout the months of October/November and let families know who our new team members for 2019 are as soon as we have

finalised this process.

Congratulations to Heidi & Tully on the arrival of another beautiful baby boy

“Patrick” (brother to Elliott)

Well done also to Deb and Daniel on the birth of baby **“Nicholas”** (brother to Harriet)

DATES FOR THE CALENDAR.....

The family diary fills up quick so I thought I would get in early for these Elder St event dates...

Wed 21 Nov, 2018—School Photos— envelopes & info will be handed out week starting 29 Oct.

Fri 30 Nov, 2018 @ 4pm— Family Christmas Celebration (details & invites will be emailed in coming weeks)

Thurs 6 Dec, 2018@ 4pm—Preschool Graduation Ceremony and afternoon tea (details & invites handed out week of 22 October)



Happy Birthday to....

September— Oscar turned 2, Chloe turned 2, Sebastian turned 3

October —Louis turned 3, Grace turned 3, William turned 4, Austin turned 4

REMINDERS from the Teachers...



- Please remember to pack spare clothes for warm weather in your children's bags, especially spare undies and shorts/pants to cover any accidents that may occur.



- Please remember to bring a drink bottle with **WATER** only in it each day. Also take home and wash each day.



- Children need shoes that have a back on them for safe play—no thongs please.



- Don't forget to put sunscreen on each morning before you arrive or use our sunscreen on arrival.



- We have children with serious allergies, so please ensure no food is brought into the centre or kept in children's bags. Also please don't store medications or other potentially dangerous products in children's bags as they may be accessed by other children.

PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING :)

