



Service Philosophy

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, The Bandjalang People of the Bundjalung Nation who have nurtured their children and this land for thousands of years. With respect, we welcome all people, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and Non Indigenous people into our learning community.

We are mindful to enhance connections *with children, families, each other and community as they are central to our sense of belonging*. Our roots were woven into the community in 1973, when parents and the local community saw the need to create a service to educate and care for their children. Today we look back with pride on our community's vision and passion to fundraise tirelessly to build a service at Evans Head and, in more recent times, having the foresight to answer the need to extend our service for Woodburn families. We value the resulting sense of ownership and enduring bonds between our sister services and the way each reflects their unique immediate communities.

Children are active, social learners. They learn best within meaningful relationships, those with their families, friends, cultural group and community. We celebrate children as capable learners, who have their own unique learning style. Parents and educators walk respectfully alongside children on their learning journey. Experienced educators work in partnership with children and their families to co-construct learning experiences, tapping into children's innate curiosity and sense of wonder. Educators are mindful to ask "what is best for children?" when designing environments and experiences to spark and extend authentic play based learning. We understand that play based learning should be fun, hands on, challenging, spontaneous whilst balancing children's needs for stimulation and calm. Educators will structure the daily routine to support children to achieve *flow* so as to promote their deep engagement in their learning, and to reflect the natural rhythm of their physical needs. Thoughtful documentation will facilitate children's voices and make learning visible.

We strive to build a community that values every child for the amazing person that they are; that respects their rights and provides security and love. We believe in building a community that empowers children for their transition to school and, more importantly, supports their readiness for *life*.

We advocate for young children as citizens with the right to "be" and to learn in a way that suits their development and unique learning style. Being 3, 4 or 5 is a precious time, worthy of celebration and protection. It is not just an apprenticeship for school.

In our services children follow their interests, explore, discover, experiment, create, investigate, theorise, problem solve, develop their autonomy and sense of agency, influence their world, think critically, take and balance risks, express their ideas and opinions.

Our services will reflect children, family and educators' culture, language, family grouping, and ability level back to them in an authentic light celebrating our uniqueness and diversity as a strength. We exercise our responsibility to advocate on behalf of children, families and educators; embracing reconciliation and actively engaging with Bandjalang custodians in an authentic and collaborative partnership to maintain a sense of belonging, connection to the land and pride in our shared Aboriginal history and culture.

Children have the right to inherit a world that is sustainable and to experience awe and wonder in that world. A connection with nature and the rhythms of our seasons, the feel of grass underfoot, the sun on our face and breathing fresh air are essential for everyone's development and wellbeing, as well as for the future of our planet. Through action and critical reflection, we collaborate to make our world a better place.

Dated: November 2016

Review Date: November 2017