

EVANS HEAD PRE-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION INC.

Email: evansheadwoodburnpreschool@gmail.com



EVANS HEAD-WOODBURN PRE-SCHOOL STUDENT & VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

For further information, or to view Evans Head-Woodburn Preschool policies in full, please go to: www.evansheadwoodburnpreschool.com.au

Centre Locations:

Evans Head Preschool
1 Beech Street, Evans Head
Phone (02) 6682 5235

Woodburn-Evans Head Preschool
Woodburn Street, Woodburn
Phone (02) 6682 2993



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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Evans Head Pre-School and Woodburn/Evans Head Pre-School and thank you for volunteering or doing your student placement with us. Volunteers and students play a vital role in assisting the preschool team to provide an exciting and diverse pedagogical space for the children who attend. This handbook is designed to give you the information you will need to assist you while you are at the preschool and hopefully answer some questions you may have. Please talk to the director if you have any further questions that are unanswered by this handbook. We hope that this is the start of a rewarding association for us all.

When you arrive at the preschool each day, please let the director know you are here and **sign the visitor timesheets**. The Director will be able to inform you of your duties and responsibilities for the day. Please be respectful of the rights of the children and introduce yourself to them. Ensure you have a thorough understanding of the philosophical perspectives and vision of the preschool. The philosophy and vision are attached to this handbook. The Director will be able to point you to other sources of information within the centre to help you enrich and deepen your understanding of the pedagogy of the preschool. Listening to and observing the other educators will also assist you.

2. Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers and Students

Both volunteers and students, and the organisations they work with have rights and responsibilities. Volunteers and students are engaged to perform a specific job and the preschool agrees to provide the volunteer or student with a worthwhile and rewarding experience. In return, each has the right to some basic expectations of the other. Students will also have expectations of their performance from their educational institution. The student's educational placement institution will have guidelines on student's rights, responsibilities, conduct and behaviour that need to be observed.

Volunteers and students have the right to:

- Be treated as co-workers. This includes job descriptions, Equal Employment Opportunity, Workplace Health and Safety, anti-discrimination legislation and organisational grievance processes.
- Be asked for their permission before any job-related reference, police or other checks are conducted.
- Know the purpose and "ground rules" of the preschool.
- Appropriate orientation and training for the job.
- Be kept informed of organisational changes and the reasons for the changes.

- A place to work and suitable tools for the job.
- Reimbursement of agreed expenses.
- Be heard and make suggestions.
- Personal Accident Insurance
- A verbal reference or statement of service, if appropriate.

Organisations have the right to:

- Receive as much effort and service from a volunteer or student as a paid worker, even on a short-term basis.
- Expect volunteers and students to adhere to their job descriptions/outlines and the organisation's code of practice.
- Expect volunteers and students to undertake training provided for them and observe safety rules.
- Make the decision regarding the best placement of a volunteer or student.
- Express opinions about poor volunteer or student effort in a diplomatic way.
- Expect loyalty to the organisation and only accept constructive criticism.
- Expect clear and open communication from the volunteer or student.
- Negotiate work assignments.

Source: *The NSW Centre for Volunteering* (www.volunteering.com.au).

At Evans Head Pre-School and Woodburn-Evans Head Pre-Schools, students and volunteers are considered to be vital members of the preschool team. We believe that:

An education and care service operates most effectively when there is open communication and information is shared. Effective communication and problem solving between the adults in the service also models successful working relationships for children.

Teamwork and collaboration, where others' viewpoints are respected and contributions are acknowledged, are fundamental to the development of trusting relationships.

Diversity within the team in terms of skills, experiences and backgrounds enhances the team and ultimately leads to more effective and responsive programs for children.

Nominated supervisors, educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers develop and maintain relationships with each other that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness.

Educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers respect and value the diverse contributions and perspectives of their colleagues and this is evident in their interactions with each other.

(Source: The NQS, QA 4).

3. Social Justice

At our preschool we actively practice the principles of social justice and we work to promote and encourage them in our pedagogy.

Social Justice Principles

Social justice is based on four interrelated principles of equity, rights, access and participation, to ensure that:

- There is **equity** in the distribution of resources;
- **Rights** are recognised and promoted;
- People have fairer **access** to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life; and
- People have better opportunities for genuine **participation** and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

(Source: *The Social Justice Framework 2008 – 2012, Division of Local Government, NSW*)

4. Anti-Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly because they belong to a particular group of people or have a particular characteristic.

Many people have fixed ideas about groups of people who are different from themselves. If we aren't careful, this can lead us to discriminate against people who belong to those groups.

The Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW is part of the NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice. It administers the anti-discrimination laws.

Staff at the Anti-Discrimination Board:

- deal with complaints of discrimination;
- try to prevent discrimination — by educating people about what the anti-discrimination laws say and why they are important; and
- report to the Government if they think the law needs changing to help prevent discrimination.

In NSW there is a law that says people must be fair to you —

- when you go for a job
- at your work
- at your school, college or university
- in shops, banks, hospitals, hotels, clubs, coffee shops and offices
- when you rent a house, flat or room

This law is called the Anti-Discrimination Act.

This law says people must not treat you unfairly, just because —

- you have a learning difficulty;
- you have a disability;
- you are black or from a different country;
- you are going to have a baby;
- you are breastfeeding your baby;
- you work and look after a family member;
- you are old or young;
- you are a man or boy;

- you are a woman or a girl;
- you are single or married or defacto;
- you are gay or lesbian;
- you are transgender (you are a man who has become a woman, or a woman who has become a man);
- you have HIV or AIDS.

(Source: The NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice).

If you feel you have been treated unfairly at our preschool and internal grievance procedures have not satisfied you, you have the right to complain to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board.

5. History of the Pre-School

Evans Head Pre-School was formed by a group of concerned parents in the Presbyterian Church Hall in 1973. Mrs Susan Morgan was employed by the Committee as the service's first educator. She continued to work at the service for over 30 years.

The community and committee raised \$30,000 before they could start to look for a block of land (and to approach Council for a loan).

The Management Committee secured a block of Crown Land on the corner of Park and Beech Street. The Committee secured a loan through the Council (at a scandalous 16% interest) to build their own centre.

The community fundraised tirelessly to pay back the loan. The pre-school was in its own purpose-built centre from 1983.

Sue was also instrumental in starting the Lennox Head Pre-School in 1980/81. There was a roster mother each afternoon over there to assist her. Twelve months later Wendy was employed to help. They would run the Evans Head Pre-School from 9am to 12pm, and then pack Sue's car and head to Lennox Head, eating lunch on the way, and start pre-school at 1:00pm in the community hall. They would finish at 4pm and repack the car and head for home. They did this until 1983 when the Lennox Head community opened their own service.

Evans Head Pre-School Association Inc. expanded when it opened a centre in Woodburn in July 2010.

6. Our Philosophy

The philosophical perspectives of the preschool underpin all of our actions and drive our preschool in all aspects, from management and governance, to staffing and the pedagogy that occurs with the children. It is important that you know and understand the preschool's philosophy. As a new student or volunteer of the centre, your beliefs and theories will also shape the preschool philosophy. Therefore it is important that our philosophy is seen as dynamic and fluid. For this reason our philosophy is revised, reviewed and reflected upon regularly.

The need for a written statement of philosophy is highlighted in the National Quality Standard 7.2.1 (page181), which states that a written statement of philosophy outlines the principles under which the service operates and reflects the principles of the National Law, and the Early Years Learning Framework. "It underpins the decisions, policies and daily practices of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and staff members and assists in planning, implementing and evaluating quality experience for children" (NQS 7.2.1, 2011:181).

Our Philosophy is attached.

7. Aims of the centre

The pedagogy of our preschool supports the principles and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework "Belonging, Being & Becoming" (DEEWR:2009).

Principles:

1. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
2. Partnerships.
3. High expectations and equity.
4. Respect for diversity.
5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice.

Outcomes:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity.
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4. Children are confident and involved learners.
5. Children are effective communicators.

Our Vision Statement is *attached*.

8. Governance

The National Quality Framework (NQF)

All preschools in Australia operate under an Australian Governmental Quality Framework called the "*National Quality Framework*" (NQF).

The Law

The foremost component of the NQF is the National Law called "*Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010*". This Law regulates education and care services for children.

The Regulations

The way that this law is applied is detailed through the "*Education and Care Services Regulations*". These regulations are the practical details and rules under the law (A Really Simple guide to The New Regulations. Community Childcare Cooperative 2011:3). Amongst other things, the Regulations set out the minimum operational requirements of an Early Education and Care Service.

The National Quality Standards (NQS)

The NQS is a schedule to the National Regulations (The Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA:9). The NQS is part of the Regulations.

The Learning Framework

NQS 1.1 prescribes that the educational program and practice i.e. curriculum decision making must be based upon the approved learning framework. The approved learning framework for preschools in NSW is the Early Years Learning Framework called "*Belonging, Being & Becoming*" (DEEWR, 2009). This document is generally referred to as the "EYLF".

The aim of the ELYF is to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school. It assists services to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:10).

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

ACECQA is the national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to oversee the NQF system.

NSW Department of Education (DoE)

Under the NQF, each state and territory has its own *Regulatory Authority* that has primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the NQS (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2018). In NSW, the Department of Education is the *Regulatory Authority*.

Approved Provider

Our preschool operates under a community-based not-for-profit model of management. This means that we have a Management Committee (comprised of parents of enrolled pre-school children and other community members) and, any profits made by the preschool are fed back into the service. The management committee of the preschool is referred to as the “*Approved Provider*” under the Regulations. Our preschool is an Incorporated Association. This is the preschool’s business structure.

Management Committee

The *Approved Provider* or the Management committee is responsible for the overall performance of the organisation. They determine the service’s mission and purpose, set the strategic directions of the organisation, that is, develop the service’s strategic plan, appoint and monitor the performance of the director/nominated supervisor, ensure staff are employed in accordance with industrial obligations, ensure compliance with legal obligations, ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the service, monitor and evaluate the service’s performance against the strategic plan (including the committee’s own performance), enhance the profile of the service in the community and recruit and orient new committee members. (*Community Connections Solutions Australia Fact Sheet, “Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee/Board”*).

The Management Committee operates under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009, and our Constitution. Therefore, we have Executive committee member roles of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, as well as 3 ordinary committee members. These positions are annually elected and filled at each Annual General Meeting (AGM) during March.

Pre-School Director

While the Director fills the role of Public Officer, he/she does not have voting rights at committee meetings, however, he/she forms an integral part of the management team. In children's services, the Director is employed to:

- manage the day to day operations of the service including supervising other staff;
- provide relevant and up-to-date information to the committee to assist with their decision-making;
- work in partnership with the committee to achieve the service's mission and purpose;
- and report to the committee on progress against the service's strategic plan.

The Director of the preschool is the expert in regards to the pedagogy of the centre and informs the Management Committee through knowledge.

Responsible Person

The National Law requires service providers to ensure that at all times the service is educating and caring for children, there is a *responsible person* present at a centre-based service. A Responsible Person is either:

- The *Approved Provider*
- The *Nominated Supervisor*
- The *person placed in day-to-day charge*.

Nominated Supervisor

The committee nominates an educational staff member (usually the director) to be the Nominated Supervisor of the service. They are responsible for the operation of the service along with the approved provider and for ensuring it is following the Law and Regulations. (Community Childcare Cooperative, Really Simple Guide the New Regulations, 2011:7).

A person placed in day-to-day charge of the service

Appointing a person in day-to-day charge enables there to be a responsible person at the centre-based service at all times the service is educating and caring for children. For example, they can be a point of contact for parents and staff in the absence of the Nominated Supervisor.

The person must give consent. They must meet minimum requirements to be appointed to the role. Being in day-to-day charge of a service does not place any additional legal responsibilities on a person under the National Law. The responsibilities relevant to educators under the National Law continue to apply.

An Approved Provider does not have to appoint a person in day-to-day charge if a Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider is to be the Responsible Person.

A person in day-to-day charge must be 18 years or older. The Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor must take reasonable steps to ensure the person:

- has adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children;
- has an ability to effectively supervise and manage an education and care service;

The Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor must have regard to:

- The person's history of compliance with the National Law and other relevant laws;
- Any decision under the Law to refuse, suspend, refuse to renew, or cancel a licence, approval, registration, certification or other authorisation granted to the person under the National Law and other relevant laws.

A person who previously consented to be in day-to-day charge of the service will not need to provide consent again from 1 October 2017.

(National Quality Agenda Review/ Responsible Person requirements for Approved Providers, ACECQA, 30 August 2017).

Educational Leader

Under the National Law: Section 169 and the National Regulations: Regulations 118, 148 the Approved Provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as *Educational Leader* at the service, to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.

According to Community Childcare Co-operatives Educational Leader fact sheet; an educational leader, through a collaborative process with educators, families and the community will guide the development of the program of learning and education for children. They will also assist with educator growth in reflection and the understanding of children's learning and development. This role is key to sound practice in the education and care of children – it is a role of great significance and importance.

Early Childhood Australia Association (ECA) Code of Ethics

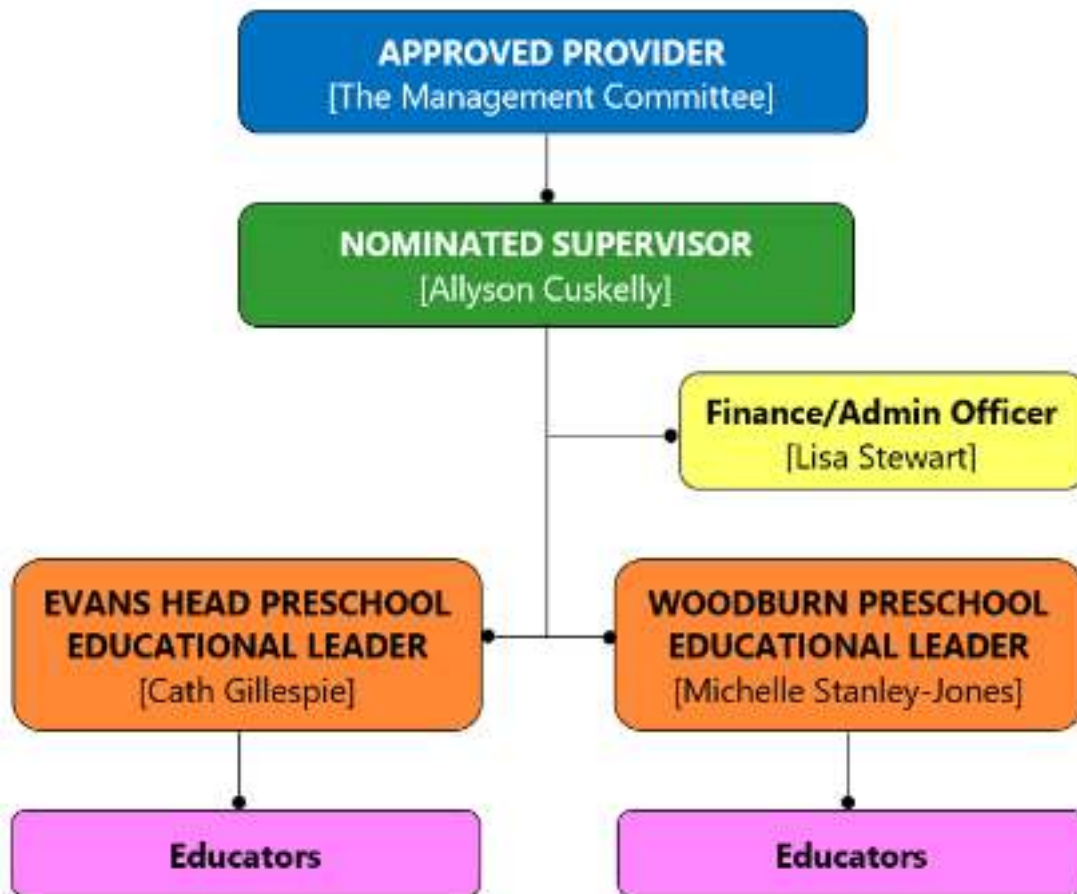
A Code of Ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of members of a professional group and, as such, reflects its values.

The Early Childhood Australia *Code of Ethics* was first developed in 1990 by a national working party, with considerable input from the early childhood field. The 2003-06 Code of Ethics Agenda resulted in a *Code of Ethics*, which was endorsed at Early Childhood Australia's National Council meeting in September 2006. The current version of the ECA Code of Ethics was published in 2016.

The *Code of Ethics* is owned by the field, rather than imposed upon it.
(Source: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics)

You will find a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics displayed in the service. It is expected that at all times you will uphold the principles and values within it.

9. Organisational Structure



10. Policies

The NQS QA 4 (p.111) states the importance of clear policies and procedures to:

- Ensure there are common expectations about how things are done at the service
- Promote consistent practice.

The management team (the Committee, the Nominated Supervisor/Director) writes and reviews the policies and procedures that inform the way the centre is operated. These policies are informed by all the legal documents that the centre is governed by, including the Education and Care Services Regulations, the National Law, WH&S legislation, Fair Work Australia, the NQF and other relevant sources.

It is expected that all students and volunteers at the centre adhere to the policies and procedures of the service and refer to them when needed.

These policies will aid you, should you need to find information on the grievance procedures, resolution of formal complaints, responding to a complaint, appeals, work-place health and safety (WH&S), staff conduct, leave, child protection, mandatory reporting procedures and policies relating to working with children.

11. Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S)

It is important that you understand your workplace healthy and safety rights and responsibilities. The NSW Government WorkCover Authority classifies students and volunteers as “workers” within the Act. Therefore, in relation to WH&S you have the same rights and responsibilities as that of any employee of the preschool.

You have the **right** to a safe working environment that ensures you are not exposed to any risk to your health or safety. Your **responsibilities** are to take reasonable care of yourself and others in the environment and comply with reasonable instructions from the management team and preschool policies and procedures.

Please read the below information further clarifying these points from the New South Wales Government, Work Cover Authority of NSW.

New Work Health and Safety laws replaced the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) laws in NSW on 1 January 2012. The new laws will provide greater consistency, certainty and clarity making it easier to understand your work health and safety duties. Under the new work health and safety (WHS) laws, the term ‘employers’ will be replaced by ‘persons conducting a business or undertaking’ (PCBU) and ‘employees’ will be replaced by ‘workers’.

Duties of a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (i.e. the Approved Provider) Primary duty of care

The PCBU has a primary duty of care to ensure workers and others are not exposed to a risk to their health and safety. A primary duty of care is owed by a PCBU when it:

- Directs or influences work carried out by a worker;
- Engages or causes to engage a worker to carry out work (including through subcontracting);
- Has management or control of a workplace.

The PCBU must meet its obligations, so far as is reasonably practicable, to provide a safe and healthy workplace for workers of other persons by ensuring:

- Safe systems of work
- A safe work environment
- Safe use of plant, structures and substances
- Facilities for the welfare of workers are adequate
- Notification and recording of workplace incidents
- Adequate information, training, instruction and supervision is given
- Compliance with the requirements under the work health and safety regulation
- Effective systems are in place for monitoring the health of workers and workplace conditions.

Employees and workers

Duties of a worker:

A worker must, while at work:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety;
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of others;
- Comply with any reasonable instruction by the PCBU (in this situation, the Management Committee).

Hazard Reporting

It is important that you report any hazards in the environment as soon as possible to a *responsible person* for them to address. This will ensure that our preschool continues to be a safe place.

Injury and Accident Reporting

The preschool has policies and procedures for reporting of injury and accident to yourself. Please ensure you follow these as your health and safety is of high importance.

12. Administration

Student and Volunteer Record

Please complete and sign the Student/Volunteer Details form in your pack and return.

Sign In and Out Book

You are required to **sign in and out each day** on our preschool Visitors Timesheets when you attend the preschool. You will be shown the procedure for this during your orientation visit.

Emergency Procedures

It is important that you understand and comply with any emergency procedures that our preschool has. The primary emergency procedure is that of the fire evacuation. At your orientation visit you will be guided through the procedure of the preschool in relation to this.

Code of Conduct

Your conduct within the preschool is very important. Please ensure you are familiar with the preschool's Staff Code of Conduct Policy. Ethical conduct guides our behaviour and decisions within the preschool setting and is founded in respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the extended community.

At our preschool we aim to uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with the ECA Code of Ethics (2010) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We view the National Quality Standards as minimum standards of which we constantly aim to far exceed.

Recruiting appropriate staff

At our preschool we aim to have consistent and committed educators and directors who support good quality standards and continuity of care for children. We value effective, transparent and equitable recruitment processes that ensure the preschool attracts and retains educators, directors and other staff members who can best meet the needs of children and their families (refer to NQS QA 4).

Confidentiality

The NQS QA 7 highlights the importance of maintaining confidentiality and currency of information provided by families, educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers or other stakeholders of the preschool at all times. This practice is an indicator of the level of professionalism that exists within the service and builds families' confidence in the service's records management practices.

At our preschool you will be required to sign our confidentiality agreement as an indication of your awareness of the significance of this area.

Remember in your short time in the centre you will see only a "snap shot" of each child (they may be having a bad hair day!) ... Every child is a complex and amazing individual. It can be damaging to children's wellbeing for adults to discuss their observations and/or judgments of behaviour, ability, health, etc. To be blunt, gossip about other children is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Working with Children Check

In keeping with the laws under which the preschool operates, volunteers and students over 18 years of age are required to have a Working with Children Check. Volunteers and students do not pay for the Working with Children Check. Please provide your Working with Children Check Number on the Student and Volunteer Record Form.

If you are under 18 years of age you do not require a Working with Children Check. Also, if you are volunteering and you are a parent or close relative of a child at the early education service, you do not require a Working with Children Check.

For more information go to www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children

We are very excited to welcome you to the preschool community and to have the opportunity to begin a professional relationship with you. We hope you will find this to be a rewarding experience.

13. Parent Helpers

How long should I stay?

Most people would stay from morning tea until home time. This way you do not have to say goodbye to your child and leave them to go home only to come back again.

Suggestions of jobs for volunteers that will help us out:

(If everyone is busy and you want something to go on with, these are some ideas. This is NOT a list of what we expect you to get done).

- Read to a child
- Help at a table top activity (e.g. craft, playdough, etc)
- Do a puzzle with a child
- Wash / dry up
- Wipe down kitchen bench tops
- Sharpen pencils
- Put lids on textas
- Tidy collage trolley and/or the useful box in the craft area
- File craft into kids folders
- Tidy home corner
- Disinfect tables and/or sweep floor (after mealtime)
- Assist children to make bed or pack away their sheet
- Get out/put away beds
- Disinfect toys/equipment

We hope you enjoy your time at our centre. Please remember ... if you are unsure about something – just ask.

Vision Statement

We value and promote partnerships with **community** and families for their connections, traditions and support the dreams we hold for all children.

We engage deep listening and treat each other with **kindness** and empathy.

We believe Early Education has an important role to play in developing an **inclusive** society which is safe, celebrates diversity and promotes reconciliation.

We provide high quality Early Childhood **Education** which ignites a love of learning, encourages self-belief, critical reflection and sustainability.

We **respect** children as capable learners with an innate sense of awe and wonder, curiosity, creativity and playfulness.

We value our staff for their love and advocacy for children, their knowledge, expertise, **integrity** and commitment to families.





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*.



