

**Waratah Cottage Early Learning Centre Child Care Philosophy**

Waratah Cottage Early Learning Centre's Philosophy is a mission statement identifying our beliefs and our reasons behind our practices. Staff, children and families that utilise the service and reflects on current practices in the childcare field have influenced our Philosophy. Families are welcome to have input into our Philosophy at any time.

**In relation to children:**

We believe all children are capable and unique with individual needs, interests and strengths. We support all children and ensure they are given equal opportunities regardless of their gender, culture, socio-economic background and abilities, teaching children about being kind to other and having respectful friendships.

We believe in the "circle of security" a theory based on the foundation that once children form secure attachments they will be able to thrive in all areas of development. By addressing our children's attachment, emotional and behavioural needs we are promoting their abilities to develop and maintain positive and trusting relationships with their families, educators, peers and the wider community.(Belonging)

Children develop at their own pace, therefore educators will ensure their expectations for children's development are specific to each child and their unique experiences and individual backgrounds are valued.

Children learn best through play and educators will support development by providing experiences that are meaningful, challenging and ignite curiosity through investigation. Children are given the opportunity to choose their own experiences that, most importantly, reflect their interests. For example, the child's knowledge is valued and can be used as a tool for enhancing the knowledge of others. (Becoming)

We value the importance of the present day in our children's lives, learning about themselves in a holistic manner, building and maintaining relationships preparing them for life learning. (Being)

Educators will use positive forms of behaviour guidance and will continue to work in partnership with parents throughout this process.

**In relation to families:**

Families are the most important people in their child's life and have valuable information to share with us. Educators are respectful of parenting skills, parenting structure, culture, and beliefs.

We believe that partnership with families is beneficial to their children's success at the service. Therefore, we endeavour to create sound and reciprocal relationships with our parents, families and the wider community. (Belonging)

Families are welcomed and encouraged to become involved at the service in whatever way they feel comfortable. We encourage family involvement through discussion at the orientation process, emails, an open door policy, teacher interviews/meetings and through surveying their ideas, suggestions and needs. Parent voices are welcome in our program.

Families need to feel secure in knowing that their child is cared for in a nurturing environment. We also recognise that parents have needs and we endeavour to support them through stressful times.

Families should expect confidentiality, fairness and the respect for privacy at all times is paramount.

**In relation to educators and staff:**

We recognise and respect that every educator is an individual with diverse needs, interests, skills, knowledge and experiences.

We are encouraged and given opportunities to reflect on current practices and to further skills and knowledge through training.

We work as a team by supporting each other's health and wellbeing. We help to build an atmosphere of trust and respect through open communication, respecting different points of view, using constructive methods of conflict resolution and maintaining confidentiality.

We believe that the role of adults within the service is to be education facilitators who support, guide and encourage children's learning at the child's developmental level and pace.

We build our knowledge in partnership with a range of tertiary institutions e.g. TAFE and Universities to foster and assist in research and educate students in becoming high quality Early Childhood Professionals with better outcomes for our children.

We abide by Councils Guidelines and Procedures, Corporate Values, The National Regulations, The National Laws, PIEC Principles of attachment, ECA, UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, standards set by the National Quality Framework, Early Years Learning Framework and NSW Curriculum Framework.

**In relation to the program:**

The program empowers children to make choices through use of learning centres, and simultaneous indoor and outdoor play, which fosters and nurtures sibling and family relationships. (Belonging)

Educators use theorists, EYLF, Philosophy and other research to support programming and planning.

The program is based on the Early Years Learning Framework that guides the program implementation.

The program has an open approach incorporating both spontaneous and intentional teaching moments; educators encourage the children's interests and their contributions to the curriculum. We acknowledge that educators play an important role in shaping children's identities giving them the skills to face life's challenges. (Becoming)

A positive learning environment is created through theory and practises, where children can learn at their own pace utilising individual skills and abilities. Educators actively observe children extending learning by encouraging children to wonder, explore, test, predict, problem solve, negotiate, reflect and research through play and in partnership with each other and the educators.(Being)

Children's documentation is in digital format consisting of photo galleries and observations (individual, small and large group) all focusing on a child centred approach to planning.

**In relation to the environment:**

Our educators and staff recognise the importance of providing a safe, secure, homelike and consistent environment that supports trust and familiarity, as well as active exploration of learning.

We believe that our service is an extension of our children's home environments. Educators aim to promote a calm, friendly and positive atmosphere where children take ownership and are active participants in respecting themselves, each other and our resources. (Belonging)

Our learning centres provide our children the opportunity to revisit experiences, refining, reinforcing and challenging their abilities. (Becoming). We believe in the importance of providing engaging learning environments in both the indoors and outdoors. The routine of the service allows for children's choice between the indoor and outdoor environments. We acknowledge the importance of the outdoor environment.

By encouraging children to positively contribute to creating eco-friendly (natural surroundings) and sustainable environments, we are developing active environmental citizens who are appreciative and exhibit an awareness of our environment and the wider community for future generations. (Being) We are trying to educate the children on being environmentally friendly, responsible individuals and a community of learners.