

# SALTWATER CHILD CARE CENTRE PHILOSOPHY



## ENVIRONMENT

We acknowledge the Environment as our 'Third Teacher.' Our interactions with our physical environment teach us how to be independent, care for our natural world, and have the power to affect positive change. Our daily practises and routines at Saltwater encourage children to develop lifelong awareness of sustainable practices using recycling, reducing and reusing. Not only do we encourage children to be mindful of our impact on the environment, we encourage them to explore their place within it, by spending extended time outdoors in natural spaces to rest, relax and just be.

### How do we prioritise the ENVIRONMENT in our practice?

We encourage children to be aware that our environment is to be nurtured, respected, and an integral part of our everyday routines, by eating from kitchen gardens, using compost, observing wildlife, and revelling in the natural elements of our play spaces. Our environment engages with the senses: in our sandpits, rainwater rivers, fragrant gardens, and native inspired landscapes. We celebrate the weather and changing seasons in a symbiotic relationship through our program that is largely facilitated outdoors.

We also ensure that our safe and secure environment reflects the children's abilities and interests. Both indoors and outdoors, it stimulates a sense of wellbeing and belonging, and inspires children to initiate and direct their own play. By empowering children to interact with their physical environment independently, they can self-initiate learning opportunities and extend their interests in their own time and space.

There are opportunities for children to design their own spaces using loose parts. Loose Parts play invites Educators to use the Playworks Principles, by standing back and respecting children's right to conduct 'secret children's business'. We encourage and celebrate their sense of agency when using our Loose Parts Library.

## COMMUNITY

We pride ourselves on our sense of community – built on reciprocal relationships with children, families, and our vibrant, multicultural Footscray. We celebrate local events, are connected to our local spaces with walking excursions. We work in partnership with the local university to accommodate work placement for pre service educators and teachers. These are some ways in which we amplify the rich and diverse heritage of our community.

### How will you be welcomed to our Saltwater COMMUNITY?

We encourage parents to actively engage in their children's learning and progress. We invite you to support and continue your child's learning journey at home, and work with you to develop strategies to support your child's engagement with learning. Parent participation is incredibly welcomed and encouraged, with many of our parents participating in centre events and evenings. We endeavour to develop co-operative working relationships with our families, maintaining regular open and constructive communication and ensuring confidentiality and privacy at all times. These partnerships with families enable us to include your families' cultural background visibly within our program. Our Educators encourage a collaborative approach to parenting practices, by providing information to parents to expand their knowledge of early childhood education and parenting techniques. Reciprocal relationships where we can collaborate and support each other to nurture children's development are critical to our sense of community.

## PROFESSIONALISM



At Saltwater, we take pride in maintaining professional standards for our assessment, documentation and planning for children's learning in accordance with the Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework. We are committed to supporting children's individual learning journeys, and making environmental modifications that are responsive to our children's growing needs and interests. We consistently encourage our team to further their professional development, and have established a Leadership Team. We can reflect as professionals to ensure we are providing a responsive, relevant, and high-quality program that caters to every child within our care. We engage in open, constructive discussions that both inspire and challenge us to be appropriate and professional role models. We value open channels of communication, co-operation and mutual respect as a fundamental base for teamwork.

### How does our PROFESSIONALISM look and feel in our practice?

Every child in our care, regardless of their age, experience or ability are able to participate in activities that explore:

Music and Movement

Relaxation

Numeracy and Literacy

Language and Communication

Discovery / Science

Creative / Expressive Arts

Manipulative

Construction

Dramatic Play

Project work

Sustainability

Appreciation and care for the natural environment

Incursions and Excursions

Our commitment to each of these learning areas demonstrates our knowledge and passion for an innovative and stimulating program.

Our programs provide open-ended learning experiences that encourage creativity and self-awareness. We make learning 'hands on' and use the environment as our third teacher to help children develop independence and life skills. We scaffold children's play with positive meaningful interactions, and we celebrate children's achievements alongside them. We ensure that we invite all families to be a part of the learning process. We uphold high standards of professionalism whilst engaging with the wider community, representing Saltwater Child Care Centre with pride.

## RESPECT

At Saltwater, a culture of respect has been developed strongly within our working relationships, and for the children and families in our care.



## How does RESPECT manifest in our daily practice?

Our programs are reflective of Australian history and culture, including positive representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Across the centre, you will hear the children begin their day with an Acknowledgement of Country, understanding its importance and why it should be included within their daily routine. Equally, we respect and celebrate the rich diversity and heritage of our local community. We encourage children to use and maintain their first language, while allowing them to acquire English at their own pace. We understand our children's cultural backgrounds and ensure our programs meets their individual needs. We promote gender equity by encouraging all children to actively participate in all areas of the program. We are mindful that our language and perspectives regarding gender can successfully role model equality and respect to all people.

Within our programs, we assist children to build their self-esteem by providing opportunities to make choices, extend their interests, and have opportunities to play uninterrupted during the day. We aim to create positive environments that are fun, enjoyable, and respectful to their right to be children. We offer equal opportunities for them to explore their own individual interests and strengths.

Within our team we value and encourage Educators to share their life skills and experiences. We acknowledge and celebrate Educator/staff milestones and achievements. We promote and encourage co-operative teamwork within the Centre with the Management Committee, parents and employees working together. We believe mutual respect underpins positive relationships and healthy social emotional development. This is why we speak respectfully to one another, children, co-workers and parents. We consider each other's feelings and needs, encouraging us all to reciprocate respectful attitudes and language, towards our peers, Educators and the wider community.

## WELLBEING

We nourish the wellbeing of all children in our care, acknowledging their physical, emotional and educational needs.

## How is WELLBEING nurtured in our Early Childhood Setting?

At Saltwater Childcare Centre, we create a healthy and hygienic environment, whereby children learn to take care of their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We echo this in our care for each other: employees, families and visitors to our centre.

Our programs enhance self-help skills, social skills, problem solving, language, physical awareness and creative expression. Our environment challenges children and encourages them to develop resilience and independence, to set them up for lifelong learning. We encourage children to nurture a self-awareness and expression of their feelings. In doing this, they feel encouraged and supported in conflict resolution and positive interactions with others. We support children to develop their self-regulation skills, which will enable them to express emotions and communicate effectively with others. In all ages, we facilitate the child's general wellbeing by providing adequate time for rest and sleep (based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs).