

EARLY YEARS PHILOSOPHY FOR BLACKWATER NORTH STATE SCHOOL

IMAGE OF CHILD

At Blackwater North State School our image of the child is that all children are individuals and have varied and unique backgrounds that need to be valued. We know that every child has different learning styles, knowledge, gender, religion, cultural background, strengths, gifts, talents, needs and desires. Students have a natural enthusiasm for learning and are curious, inquisitive and active and have fun playing and exploring in a stimulating environment using concrete materials with support, encouragement and praise. We aim to understand children and support each individual child's unique ability and provide opportunities for growth (social, physical, emotional and cognitive development and attitudes). By doing so, children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential, thrive in a positive environment, become confident, reach individual and appropriate goals and participate as worthy members in our society.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

We understand young children to be capable, inquisitive, active and enthusiastic learners that come with past experiences from diverse backgrounds, cultures and families. They are influenced by the attitudes, values and behaviours of those close to them.

Young children need love and boundaries, good modeling, intrinsic motivation and time spent talking, interacting with others, sharing, reading and playing. They need to feel valued and safe. They need time to explore, investigate and make sense of their world through play, interactions and social and cultural experiences. It is our job to keep them on track with succinct and varied activities that cater for children with different strengths, needs, interests and learning styles.

THE VALUE OF PLAY

Play based learning is vital in the early years. Children learn through play and we need to show that we understand and value play. It provides real life experiences and real life resources that cater to different learning styles. It is how they make sense of their world and their place in it. Play is meaningful and builds foundations for children to develop social, emotional, motor, literacy, numeracy, group work and problem solving skills. Play provides an opportunity for students to practice skills in a risk free environment and for children to manage their own behaviour, build self-esteem, and to share and interact appropriately with others at their own pace. Children need a range and balance of open-ended and age appropriate play experiences, investigations and flexibility. There are a variety of different play experiences that children learn through including manipulative, constructive, socio dramatic, fantasy, free play, teacher directed, explorative, directed, physical, games with rules, education and non education play. Interactions with other children and play can be

enhanced by pairing children up, providing teacher interaction and then stepping away. Teachers take on various roles in the play process: facilitator, observer, player and scaffolder.

KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING

As teachers we believe children are like sponges, they soak up the things they find appealing and exciting. Like children, we all come from diverse family backgrounds and have different experiences. Planning lessons that encourage children to draw on their background experiences can promote self-esteem and active involvement. We help children develop social skills, respecting themselves and others. We network with other teachers and extend our knowledge with professional development which is a lifelong process. We are good role models and provide positive environments. Each child has a passion or talent for something. As teachers we strive to find it and help children reach their potential in all aspects of development. We all deserve to succeed and be happy.

ROLE AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER

Our role as an early childhood teacher is to be a facilitator, scaffolder, questioner, confidant, role model, guide and teacher. We aspire to provide a rich, unbiased, inclusive, flexible service of high quality learning experiences that will value the needs of everyone. We also provide children with play and learning experiences and opportunities for them to learn and make sense of the world. We do this so that they learn knowledge and skills to function as useful adults in their modern day society. We share decision making processes, offer open ended resources, observe, plan and reflect.

ROLE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT IN LEARNING

It is important to be devoted to creating a warm, child-friendly, safe, caring, healthy, challenging, supportive and inclusive learning environment where friendships are built upon and curriculum goals are met and success is encouraged. There is an equal balance of focused teaching, learning with discovery, whole group, small group, individual, routines, transitions, investigation and exploration. Teachers strive to provide open ended activities and a wide variety of materials. We make our classroom inviting, colourful, musical, cheerful, open, literature rich, aesthetic, organized, accessible, productive, respectful and active. We do this by displaying students work and balancing routines of the day with flexibility and valuing access to the broader community and local environment. We like our classrooms to feel friendly, relaxing and safe with space and time to encourage learning through play. Rules and consequences are set so that students are provided with opportunities to develop a positive self-concept. This is done when children's attempts are positively praised, children are encouraged to have a go, and children's needs and interests are met.

PARTNERSHIPS IN THE COMMUNITY

Productive partnerships are established when the school and the wider community work together and a continual learning cycle takes place and positive relations are fostered. Ideas can be shared in positive ways by listening to comments, advice and feedback and discussing knowledge. Teachers network with other teachers in our cluster. Community members are used as a resource to promote smooth transitions, teach values and skills, positive role models and to create a negotiated learning

process. It encourages children to talk about their learning outside of school when they see people in the community whom they have met in the school environment. Parental involvement is valued and helps planning as information about children's needs and interests can be shared, views can be respected and parents can become involved in the program. Communication with parents by talking to them and sending home letters assists parental involvement.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL WHICH PREP ARE PART

Blackwater is a mining town and small community and we all share close relationships. We are a transient population and because of location and parent occupations, we are often isolated from extended family and friends and people who are new to town need to be kept informed of what is around and what is happening. A big proportion of our students come from families that have parents working shift work. Sport and extra curricula activities play a big role in the lives of our students. As a small community we need to have positive relationships and work together to feel stable, happy and supported. There are opportunities for professional developments and the Early Years team strives to improve numeracy and literacy across P-3. Transitions and communication is improved through year level meetings, networking with the rest of the primary school, Kindy and Year 1 visits, under 8's day, town library visits, P&C meetings and school newsletters.