



SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

Reviewed: November 2015

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We believe in acknowledging the original custodians of this land, the Cadigal, the Gweagal and the Bidjigal tribes and their language and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the community past and present.

Our Children - At Hilltop Kids, we see children as unique and capable individuals, who come to our Service with their own interests, talents, skills, and ideas. We as Educators are well trained and passionate. We value, respect and appreciate this uniqueness to be able to support the children in our care. We feel children have a right to be active participants in their own learning and must be empowered to express their views and ideas. We empower children with communication skills so that they can learn to take responsibility for themselves. To cooperate with others and to effectively resolve conflicts. We as educators encourage children to have a voice and it shines through the program and environment.

Our Families - We acknowledge that family is the most important and influential aspect in the lives of young children and the significance of their relationships cannot be underestimated. Working alongside families, assists our centre community when working towards achieving the best possible outcome for all. We aim to ensure that we involve parents and families throughout all aspects of the program. As a small community, we strive to develop positive, mutually respectful relationships with everyone that comes through our door. We believe that working in partnerships with families is central to ensuring continuity and progression in a child's learning, development and future success.

Curriculum - Here at Hilltop Kids we offer a balanced approach to planning within an emergent curriculum.

'A balanced approach to planning involves the integration of long- and short-term decisions with daily and emergent responses to children's interests and ideas. A balanced approach enables teachers to incorporate children's voices, ideas and interests with their own teacher-led focus for learning. Creating opportunities for children to take an active role in decision-making is important, as the greater degree of choice that children have in their learning, the greater the degree of involvement in their learning'.

We are currently in the process of researching and learning from the Reggio Approach and its principles.

Believing that *"The potential of children is stunted when the endpoint of their learning is formulated in advance"* (Carlina Rinaldi).

Principles of the Reggio Approach include;

- The image of the child- competent, full of potential, an active learner, able to construct their own learning.
- Role of the environment- where the environment serves as another teacher.

- The role of the teacher- teachers mediate, review, reflect, arrange, challenge, connect, plan, proceed, ask questions to discover the prior knowledge of the child, engage in play, listen and document children's learning.
- The importance of time.
- The value of relationships and interaction of children in small groups.
- Investigations.

We acknowledge children's milestones, stage of development, individuality, interests, progression and needs. We feel that a balanced approach to planning within an emergent curriculum where learning occurs primarily through projects and learning centres supported by observing, documenting and brainstorming creative ideas that emerge from the children's interests is what the children and families at our centre need.

Program - A program in which children are active participants and collaborators, allows for a more individualistic and meaningful learning environment. We believe that children are unique individuals who develop at their own pace. Our aim is to provide enriching, meaningful and realistic opportunities where children will explore, create, discover, and imagine and our documentation is evidence of these spontaneous and planned experiences. In terms of our 'transition to school program' our educators are all trained in providing experiences as set out by the federal government. Our curriculum and daily programs are supported by the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. "Belonging, Being and Becoming." Where the elements of the framework create a vision for the children's learning. Hilltop Kids is assessed by the National Quality Framework, where the framework aims to raise quality and drives continuous improvement and consistency in Australian education and care services. Established in 2012, the NQF applies to most long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside schools hours care services.' The aim is to utilise basic day to day occurrences, children's interests and the ability to investigate as the means of learning. What does this mean for your child's development? It means that it puts more fun back into learning. In the year before your child commences school they will receive a 'transition to school statement' to take with them.

Our Educators - Team work, anti-bias education and effective communication are essential requirements for positive outcomes across all aspects of the service. Educators are responsive to all children's strengths, abilities and interests and build on children's knowledge to ensure their motivation and engagement in belonging, being and becoming within our community and outside of the centre. We aim to create an environment of trust and respect. Ongoing education and training is a critical aspect of staff's professional development. It is through accurate evaluation and assessment, which occurs when we critically reflect on our actions, that we are able to identify areas which may be considered a skill and those which may need further development. We recognise that the educators at our service are the most precious resource and aim to provide them with a satisfying and safe working environment. We appreciate the experience and skills of all Educators and see that they each bring individual qualities to the team. We appreciate their dedication as an integral element of the success of our Service.

Our Surrounding Community - We strive to be seen as a Service of Excellence within our community, a Service which values community involvement in all aspects of our program. A Service where community resources are utilised effectively, to enhance the growth and development of individual children, families, and Educators.

The Environment - Children inherit a connection to the natural world. As Educators, we understand that children often develop their ideas and understandings of the world around them from the information presented to them by the significant adults in their lives. The educators at this service believe and view the environment as the third teacher. We acknowledge and believe that children should feel a sense of belonging within their environment. An environment that should embrace diversity with acknowledgement and appreciation. It should also be respectful when celebrating and sharing traditions and cultures of the families that attend our service and of the Indigenous community. We aim to create an environment that is welcoming, nurturing and challenging. Where learning environments are spaces that reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the setting and respond to their interests and needs. Our Service will cater for different capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions (EYLF) to create a better environment.

Sources:

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.

(Laevers, F 2005, *Deep Level Learning and the Experiential Approach in Early Childhood and Primary Education*, Research Centre for Early Childhood and Primary Education Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.)