

Service Philosophy

Vision – We believe children should have fun. Children can learn to make sense of the world around them; through play, children can develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence required to engage in new experiences and environments. It is of importance that we protect and enact the right to play in our service, in order for children to realise their potential and significance to live fulfilling and meaningful lives as active citizens.

Reconciliation – Our vision is to continue to strengthen and broaden community connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and to respectfully share our learnings and understandings with our culturally diverse families. We are committed to moving forward together, through a better understanding of the true histories of Australia, and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, and rights. We strive for our children to embrace and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and promote inclusive, thriving communities where the human dignity of all is respected and valued. We recognise the impacts of historical injustices, such as the sense of loss and the grief held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been forcibly dispossessed of their traditional Lands, and the disruptions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander freedoms, lives, languages, and cultural practices because of colonial policies and practices. We also acknowledge the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures continue to strengthen and enrich our community. We recognise value, strengths, skills, and contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people bring to our service and community.

Wellbeing – *Children have a right to be heard and have a voice*

Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety, and wellbeing (*ACEQA Quality Area 2*).

Children have a voice and a right to be heard through choice, opinion, feelings, and emotions. 'Children's voices' is defined as children's expressions of their perspectives, ideas, propositions, feelings, desires, aspirations – in short, what matters to them and what makes life valuable (*Harris, P. (2021) Children's voices matter*). Children are valued as independent in their developing and learn that they are important. The centre is well resourced with accessible areas and inviting learning play spaces. Children are encouraged to express their interests through all forms of communication and choice.

We will follow the principles of non-discrimination: All children have rights, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status (*Article 2, Convention on the Rights of the Child*).

Children have the right to protection from violence, abuse, and neglect, and from being hurt or mistreated, physically, or mentally (*Article 19, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989*).

Providing an environment that safeguards the holistic health and wellbeing of clients and employees by providing a safe and stable environment we aim to nurture and further develop everyone.

Community – We recognise and respect the Aboriginal land that our service operates on – Dharawal land. Inclusive, thriving communities where the human dignity of all is respected and valued. 'Cultural begins at home' (*Uncle Larry, local Elder*). We celebrate,

acknowledge, and respect the differences and diversities of each other as we work together to create an environment that is reflective of the cultures of everybody at the service. We understand and accept that every person who walks onto this land has something unique and special to offer our community. We offer a rich, cultural environment where the use of home language is encouraged and supported. KU Macquarie Fields Preschool offers wrap around support for families by providing a variety of services, support that meets the changing community needs. Dedication and commitment builds valuable relationships and gives us a deeper sense of belonging. We aim for connection with families and actively seek their input into what they would like for their children in our preschool.

"Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support young children's learning" (Early Years Learning Framework, p.9).

Social Justice – The centre has a high need of complex and vulnerable families "experiencing disadvantage". This was the incentive and motivation of exploring further, to form integral relationships. We take time to care. We strive for equity and opportunity for all, whilst assuring cultural appropriateness. We speak up for and give voice to those who are vulnerable and experiencing disadvantage, to ensure the rights of the child are being adequately met.

The Family Coordinator assists families to empower sourcing and accessing opportunities for everyone, especially families in need. The Family Coordinator is available to develop build and maintain relationships with families and staff, build and maintain external supports agencies and referral pathways, support additional programs such as *The Healthy Eating Project, Parent Education, Support for transition to School, Empowering families to source community support and referrals.*

Empowerment – assisting clients to build confidence, foster hope, and courage to make their own life choices, and achieve equitable outcomes for all. KU Macquarie Fields is a place where 'Belonging, Being, becoming' moves beyond words, into a culture that we live. We aim to collaborate with families to provide care, education, empowerment supporting the local and wider community. We recognise families as the child's first and most influential teachers and commit to working with every family to meet their individual needs. Families are encouraged to participate in community by welcoming and valuing input and feedback as partners in the care of their children.



Educators – being accountable, ethically fit, and confident about choices and actions in beneficence for each child. We have a commitment to know each child and family and respond appropriately to their individual needs as they develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience, and sense of agency. We strive to scaffold learning opportunities into all aspects of our day and attend pedagogical meetings, critical reflections, source professional development and collegial connections, as well as review current theory and practice, to shape and reshape the culture of teaching and learning that is contextual to our service. We focus on team building, communication advocating and mentoring for quality, innovation, for exceptional early childhood practice. Educators are invested in each child in our care and are competent in advocating and promoting each child’s overall health, to ensure that optimal wellness and wellbeing can be achieved.

Curriculum – we recognise the Early Years Learning Framework as the foundation for the way we work with children. We believe children develop and learn best in a play-based environment and we work to create rich learning opportunities, enabling children to develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination, and reflexivity. Intentional planning, and teaching throughout routines, environments, small group experiences, relationships, mealtimes. Transitions, experiences, arrival and departures, rest opportunities and quiet time within the educational program. Children are not simply learning and practising, they are living and accomplishing.

Respect – valuing human dignity and embracing diversity. Our curriculum encourages appreciation, respect and understanding for the natural world around them. Children’s identity is a foundation for learning and opportunity within play which is the foundation of learning as they are able to ‘*discover, create, improvise and imagine*’ (EYLF, 2009”).

Innovation – The centre is dedicated & has a commitment, along with a collaborative approach. Open bonds with others which is what builds valuable relationships and gives us a deeper sense of belonging. Connection with families to actively seeking family input into what they would like for their children in preschool. Through cohesive relationships with families, a wealth of knowledge about the child can be discovered. The centre is committed to maintaining and continuing to establish parent and community engagement through education, leading to positive outcomes for children and families

Collaboration – ‘Healthy communities are those places where belonging is valued, where the connections between individuals, families and the environments of their lives are as important as the life forces within’ (McMurray, A., & Clendon, J. 2015). We strive to work with clients, colleagues, and other services to achieve positive outcomes. As educators, it is vitally important that we continually build our own knowledge through professional development and pedagogical discussions. Each educator is valued for what they bring to our team. To ensure we create a culture of professional enquiry, we work together to examine our current practices, review outcomes, and discover new beginnings across programs within the centre.