

# East Maitland Preschool Philosophy

*In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior. In play it is as though he were a head taller than himself.*

Lev Vygotsky

Our Preschool is proudly community owned and operates as a not for profit service . Our 'shareholders' are the families, children, staff and extended community. Our parent management committee guides decisions for the preschool based upon the best interests of all stakeholders . Their guiding principle is to deliver a high quality preschool service in a professional manner, supporting everyone's personal rights, encouraging two way information sharing and providing clear expectations.

We believe in the value of respectful relationships and encourage warm, productive and co-operative interactions between children, families, educators and the wider community. We value equal partnerships with families as the first and continuing educators of their children. We believe any input from families is invaluable. Family participation in our management committee, social events and program development help to strengthen this partnership. We recognise that all children, families and staff come with their own strengths, skills, dispositions and knowledge and strive to provide ways to include all of them into our centre. By inviting our preschool community to share, appreciate and celebrate the lives of those around us we bring a sense of belonging to the centre.

Children are competent and capable learners, co-constructors of their own knowledge and learning. We view the child as a whole, and work from what each child already knows to build upon their physical, emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual wellbeing. We believe it is important to provide meaningful opportunities and resources for children to express ideas, create, experiment, discover, explore, investigate, construct and solve problems in collaboration with their peers and educators. We value the role other children play in building upon the knowledge and skills of their peers. Play provides a supportive and safe environment for children to learn and develop, it allows children to be what ever they want to be. Educators plan and implement our program to be inclusive of all children and incorporate both what children have in common and what makes each child unique. We utilise the Early Years Learning Framework to guide and enrich every child's experiences at preschool.

We encourage connections with our local environment and community by inviting others into our preschool and exploring the resources in our neighbourhood and wider community. We have purposeful relationships with local schools and support agencies to facilitate information sharing and improve the transitions between services. Effective partnerships with other professionals enable us to ensure children with additional needs are included and are provided with daily opportunities to learn from active participation. We are committed to equity and believe in all children's capacities to succeed regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities.

We promote a sense of responsibility, respect and connectedness with our natural environment through education and regular discussions. Children are actively involved in sustainable practices at preschool everyday through recycling, composting, using rain water and growing their own food. We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land we work and live on as the first people of this country, in our area this particularly refers to the Wanaruah tribe. We provide resources and opportunities to celebrate and learn more about Aboriginal culture and develop partnerships to ensure the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal children at our service.

Our Educators continually seek ways to build upon professional knowledge and improve practices through reflecting on our program and practices, and participating in professional development. Through this we intentionally gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning, and guide continuing improvements at preschool. We share this information with fellow educators and families, engaging in conversations about the relevance of such information to our children and our setting. We make the time to connect with fellow educators to advocate for, and promote professionalism in, Early Childhood Education.