



EARLY LEARNING

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Glen Dhu
**CHILDREN'S
SERVICES**



EARLY LEARNING BENEFITS

Childhood is a significant time in its own right; to be, to play, to wonder, to marvel, to explore, to investigate and to experiment with the world. It is a time for children to follow their natural curiosities and develop their creativity and imaginations. Positive experiences and relationships nurtured during this time set an important foundation for subsequent growth of healthy bodies and healthy minds!



Research continues to highlight the value of attending an Education and Care Service that is committed to attaining quality outcomes and maximising potentials for children, families, educators and the community, in the years before school. Play-based learning is an essential component, supporting the development of strong and flexible neural pathways in children's brains.

Studies show that children who engage in quality play are more likely to have "well-developed memory skills and language development" and "are able to better regulate their behaviour" (KidsMatter). Furthermore, experiences within early learning program's offer early exposure to a social learning environment with high expectations and responsibilities, where children continue to build on their sense of identity and belonging and begin to practice and develop the necessary skills, attitudes, values and behaviours needed to be active global citizens, with rights and influence in their world.

Glen Dhu Children's Services is a unique Education and Care Service, operating since 1993. We pride ourselves on achieving and maintaining our Exceeding rating in the National Quality Standards.

We offer a preschool early learning program that is accessible and welcoming for all children. We aim to set children up for lifelong learning, setting strong foundations and dispositions from birth which will continue to be developed in their school setting.

During the preschool year, children will be provided with real-world, meaningful opportunities and experiences, to develop and practice the skills and dispositions that will best support them in their transition to school. Enabling them to successfully continue on the trajectory of their learning journey.

**to play,
to explore,
to investigate
and experiment
with the world**



EARLY LEARNING AT GLEN DHU CHILDREN'S SERVICES

What can you expect to see in our preschool room?

We focus on holistic development, aimed at nurturing and developing the whole child; emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually and cognitively. A sense of belonging and wellbeing is the foundation of our learning.

Our vision is for a child is to be competent and capable with their own rights. We trust children to exercise their independence and responsibilities, testing out their individual limits and capabilities and building their problem solving, self-regulation and resilience skills. The rights and best interests of the holistic child underpin our pedagogy. We advocate for and empower them to express their voice, personality, motivations, interests, strengths and abilities. We maintain high expectations of each child and acknowledge that children are successful, competent, and capable learners with autonomy, agency and cultural and linguistic rights.

We acknowledge children learn through various learning methods at their own individual pace, and we seek to provide a program that is flexible and adaptive to suit individual styles and needs.

We are guided and influenced by the Early Years Learning Framework of Australia, the Reggio Emilia Philosophy, The Early Childhood of Australia Code of Ethics, The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child and the many Nature Pedagogies.

Our Learning Programs focus on specific outcomes following the planning cycle. Children follow and investigate their own curiosities, interests and paths of inquiry, where they can explore and extend on their own thoughts, ideas and develop their own theories. Intentional teaching underpins the program, where Educators make decisions about learning content and purposefully guide children in their learning.



A sense of belonging and wellbeing is the foundation to learning.

FOCUS AREAS



Language and Communication



Social and Emotional



Independence and Responsibility



Numeracy and Literacy



Cognitive and Critical Thinking Skills



Physical Skills



Language and Communication:

We believe children have the ability to express themselves in a wide range of ways. We adopt the premise from the 100 Languages of Children – Reggio Emilia, which describes the “infinite ways that children can express, explore and connect their thoughts, feelings and imaginings.”

Educators promote and facilitate high-quality language interactions and experiences on a daily basis. Educators stimulate and develop these skills by using open-ended questions, listening and responding to children’s ideas and interests, engaging in intentional talk, fostering rich vocabulary, researching information together and providing information on topics of interest.

In the preschool program children participate in abstract and complex discussions through shared, sustained conversations, singing, reading aloud, storytelling, role-play, show and share, group time and social games.



Social and Emotional:

Strong social and emotional intelligence allows children to demonstrate confidence, self-esteem, improve their communication skills, develop strong relationships, to negotiate situations, take on challenges and assess risks, bounce back from disappointments, have greater self-awareness and resilience and be empathetic and compassionate towards others.

In our preschool program, we focus on: identifying, recognising and expressing emotions in constructive ways; exploring strategies and skills for positive social engagement, such as co-operation, turn taking, sharing and problem-solving; and we encourage, respect and celebrate diversity and develop capacities for social-justice. This develops a growth-mindset and ‘can do’ attitude. We have adopted the ‘Fill your Bucket’ motto and refer to ‘Ditto’ the Braveheart’s lion cub, in developing awareness of personal safety.





Independence and Responsibility:

Allowing children the opportunity to do things for themselves from a young age builds self-esteem and sets them up for success. Children are supported to take ownership and accountability for their actions and participate, influence and make choices and decisions that affect their own lives. Educators support children to be independent and responsible by encouraging them with their self-help skills, providing as many opportunities as possible to build these skills throughout the day and make meaningful contributions. The children are responsible for completing developmentally appropriate tasks, to feel a sense of purpose, motivation, achievement, productivity and contribution to themselves and their community.



Numeracy and Literacy:

Children explore early literacy and numeracy concepts everyday through play. Children are encouraged to make their mark and investigate letters, numbers and symbols during small and whole group games and experiences. As the children's interest and knowledge progresses, Educators respond with appropriate individualised opportunities and support.



Cognitive and Critical Thinking Skills:

Participating in small group times, following simple instructions, sustaining concentration for longer periods and self-regulation, are important developmental skills that provide children with the tools to be confident and successful in a more structured school environment. Attention is given to the processes of learning, where children are encouraged to collaborate, think, question and problem-solve.



Physical Skills:

We offer indoor and outdoor gross and fine motor, physical play experiences. Children are encouraged to participate in small group and team game experiences, that support them to develop their physical skills. Our preschoolers participate in regular excursions/incursions with trained sports facilitators.

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SPECIFIC FOCUSES OF OUR EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM



Lunchbox Program:

It is a fact that good nutrition plays a vital role in the development of healthy bodies and healthy minds, conducive to learning. Our Move Well Eat Well Program supports healthy choices and we regularly cook healthy recipes together, with ingredients from our garden.

Creative Expression:

Children are encouraged to create and explore their curiosities and to project their thoughts, feelings and ideas, through various mediums including musical and artistic expression.

STEM:

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) are incorporated into our programs providing children with opportunities to explore, question, analyse, hypothesise, experiment and problem-solve, which encourages creative and innovative thinking.

Excursions:

Excursions out into the community, provide an opportunity to extend learning and spark new modes of inquiry.

Nature-based Learning:

We are conscious of our carbon footprint and continually support and adopt practices that minimise our effect on the environment. We model respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment and use evolving knowledge to cultivate our own pedagogies. We incorporate into our programs worm farms, recycling, upcycling and growing and maintaining our own fresh fruit and vegetables.

Documentation:

We make our learning visible through documentation. Programs, project books, displays and learning journals - together form a collection of our evidence-based learning journey.

Family and Community Connections:

We develop and maintain respectful and genuine relationships with families and collaborate in shared decision making. We are dedicated to developing cultural competence, acknowledging and celebrating our connection to place and promoting a respectful understanding of the richness of culture, our local community and Australia's first peoples.



THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

Our Educators are qualified and experienced professionals, who are passionate advocates for children's care, education and rights. Our Educators share the vision of children being competent and capable, deserving of a positive, safe, nurturing and supportive environment where they can flourish and feel empowered to make choices and decisions that affect them.



Educators see themselves as role models, learning alongside the children and respectfully guiding them in their learning while setting appropriate limits and boundaries. Educators teach in ways that are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful, with an emphasis placed on teaching children how to think, not what to think.

Educators set group and individual goals and outcomes, to challenge and encourage children to build their self-efficacy and autonomy whilst making progressions aligned to their own individual developmental stages, needs, abilities and knowledge.

Educators use intentional teaching strategies conducive to learning, including role modelling, demonstrating, scaffolding, speculating, explaining, engaging in shared thinking and supporting children to learn in ways that reflect their own learning styles.

Motivations are built on positive reinforcement and intrinsic rewards, where children feel pride and satisfaction for their efforts in learning, which result in those behaviours being repeated.

Educators are seen as the decisive element to the classroom, responsible for ensuring the environment is conducive to the wellbeing and belonging of all. Educators promote respect for all and know the importance of

allowing sustained amounts of time for the children to play, discover and explore, building their own theories and revisiting experiences to consolidate learning.

Educators facilitate high quality interactions, communication and learning potentials, working alongside the children in a co-constructivist or social approach – we believe children learn best through connecting with others! We encourage collaboration and emphasise the importance of relationships. We offer a balance of child-led and teacher-led experiences that are developmentally appropriate.

The environment is seen as the third teacher, where the physical spaces play an important role in what and how our children learn. Therefore, ample care, consideration and attention to play spaces, resources and the overall environment are given.

A shared, harmonious space is a space where children feel comfortable to be themselves and share their gifts with the world.

Our Educators acknowledge the importance of professional development and ongoing learning opportunities. We engage in reflective practice that informs and enriches decision making about children's learning, educator practice and pedagogy.



Glen Dhu

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