

# Carey's ELC Philosophy

*We are committed to developing wise, independent and motivated young people.*

## How we view the child

Each child in our Early Learning Centres is valued for who they are. They are seen as unique and competent, with an intrinsic motivation to learn and a reverence for wonder and discovery in their world.

We celebrate and acknowledge the diversity of families. The differences in background, development, personality and ability that every child brings are welcomed.

We start with what is present and not what is absent. Each child's strengths are recognised and nurtured to build a positive sense of self.

## Relationships

It is important to us that the youngest members of our community feel safe, secure, nurtured, supported and engaged in their learning and play. We build a sense of community and open communication is valued. Key to this is forming and maintaining strong relationships between the child, educators and parents. These strong relationships with families foster partnership, trust and consistency in our approach. Positive communication skills are explicitly modelled and taught to support healthy relationships between children through our play-based program.

## Developing a wise, independent student through play

Children construct their learning with others through a play-based curriculum that maximises opportunities for them to create meaning by learning about themselves, others and the world. Complex thinking occurs naturally during play and thinking is vital to learning. When young children are made aware of their thinking, they become more curious; they question the world around them to deepen their understanding. Our approach is holistic.

Opportunities to create, take turns and negotiate, and to touch, manipulate and experiment with materials are part of the daily experience in our Early Learning Centres.

Supported by educators, children become more resilient as they learn to negotiate, bounce back from setbacks and see things from another's perspective.

In our Early Learning Centres, we set the foundations for developing principled learners. The notion of right and wrong, empathy and supporting others through 'doing' are explored through storytelling, role-play and active projects. Emerging literacy and numeracy skills are strengthened.

## Learning through the environment

The Early Learning Centres are structured to provide a pathway that supports children to progress according to their developmental needs. We work collaboratively with the children to ensure the physical environment supports their

learning. We provide a beautiful, stimulating environment that encourages a sense of awe and wonder that nurtures children's spirituality both indoors and outdoors. Foundations are built to create a sense of respect, responsibility and appreciation of a sustainable natural environment. We respect First Nations culture and perspectives through shared and learnt knowledge from local elders, guests, stories and songs. First Nations heritage and connection to land is recognised and celebrated.

## Making learning visible

Children's learning is made visible and celebrated through robust multi-modal documentation. These records of the learning process and outcomes enable children, staff and parents to reflect on the children's experiences. They provide the basis for communication and evaluation between staff and the school community. We celebrate the whole child, scaffolding and supporting their learning through tangible communication channels that are shared regularly.

## Expertise

Expert educators collaborate to provide targeted learning experiences that build on the children's interests and allow them to thrive as they move through the Early Learning Centre. All decisions are taken to improve children's learning and wellbeing.

We draw on both the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (2016) and the National Early Years Learning Framework (Version 2.0 2022) to guide our planning and reflective practice, alongside the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia.

We have a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning. Our educators constantly review and reflect on their teaching practice.

## Early Learning in a school setting

Our Early Learning Centre children utilise and enjoy a rich environment within a Christian, co-educational school community. Proximity to other sections of the School allows future years of schooling to be anticipated with enthusiasm. Children's access to specialist resources in areas such as performing arts, literature, STEM and art provide opportunities that support the development of the whole child.

## Collaboration

To ensure we continue to meet the needs of the children in our care, we have collaborated with members of our community to build and review this philosophical statement in 2014, 2018, 2022 and 2026. We will next review the statement in 2028.