

# Children's Services Statement of Philosophy

At CatholicCare Children's Services, management, staff, educators, parents, children and families endeavour to create an environment that reflects CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay's values of: respect, hope, commitment, professionalism, excellence, and social justice. CatholicCare Children's Services are committed to providing a nurturing welcoming and aesthetically pleasing environment for children and their families. Children currently attending have indicated that they value the play based and creative activities provided for them.

## Relationships

Forming respectful relationships with children, colleagues and families is an essential part of working within the Children's Services. We believe that this involves creating a culture whereby staff and educators place importance on the processes of collaborating, listening and valuing difference. It is where warm, safe relationships develop and children are nurtured in a positive way.

We will place importance on collaboration and participation by:

- Having everyone (staff, educators, families and management) participate in sharing ideas and information so that there is a common understanding about the way in which we work with children
- Involving children, staff, educators, families and management in decision making and recognising individual skills and interests

We will ensure that we "listen" to others by:

- Placing value on everyone's point of view
- Attempting to "hear" the messages that others communicate and supporting different ways of communicating
- Being open, honest and sensitive in the way in which we communicate

We will value differences by:

- Affirming and appreciating the uniqueness of each individual. This includes differences in ability, opinions, interests, ethnicity, background, socio economic status, religion and family structure
- Placing importance on the way in which differences contribute to the richness of the program

## Learning

Learning takes place when experiences are meaningful, real and engaging. This means placing importance on the day-to-day experiences of being together, playing, interacting and doing, as well as, on the spontaneous and unexpected events that often occur. We believe that the staff and educators have an important role as facilitators of learning. This role includes setting the scene for how we "see" the learner, providing experiences, encouraging play, creating a social context and documenting the life of the program. We will also follow the principles outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework and My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care.

We will "see" the learner as someone who is competent, able and eager to learn by:

- Allowing them to make choices about the ideas they wish to explore and the processes they use to explore them
- Giving them opportunity to participate in planning the program
- Acknowledging and valuing the knowledge, theories and experiences that they bring with them

We will provide experiences that are relevant to everyday lives by:

- Giving everyone opportunities to investigate real problems and questions
- Giving children authentic choices
- Providing for the interests and passions of the learner

We will value the way in which children learn through play by:

- Providing resources that act as a provocation for play
- Allowing children to use play as a way of expressing themselves and of exploring and trying out ideas
- Encouraging children to try new things and to develop independence and confidence

We will value the social context of learning by:

- Acknowledging that all of our child care settings provide a space for adults and children to learn from and with each other
- Allowing children and adults to negotiate the program and the experiences in which they want to be involved
- Providing time for children and adults to work together, carry out ideas and pursue interests
- Providing children and adults with opportunities to develop and explore relationships and respect for others

We will use documentation as an important part of the program by:

- Constructing documentation that acts as a memory of children's and adults' explorations, relationships and life in the programs
- Having it as a tool to reflect on the experiences, interactions and relationship building that have taken place in the programs
- Using it to communicate with families and others about children's abilities, interests and achievements
- Involving everyone in its creation, including children and families

## Environments

Because children will spend many hours in their child care program we believe that the environment plays an important role in children's well-being. It should be aesthetically pleasing, rich in possibilities for children to express themselves creatively and a place that belongs to everyone who uses it.

We will attempt to create an environment that places importance on aesthetics by:

- Organising spaces so that they feel pleasant and welcoming to be in
- Arranging spaces that can be explored with all the senses
- Valuing that which is beautiful
- Having resources that reflect the people that live in the environment

We will aim for a place of creativity by:

- Having spaces that are rich in possibilities
- Forming spaces where children can explore and research alone and with others
- Giving children open access to resources which they can use to express ideas and try out theories.

We will try to create a place that belongs to everyone who uses it by:

- Ensuring that it is physically and emotionally safe
- Allowing adults and children to influence the way in which spaces are organised and to leave reminders of their explorations, ideas and theories
- Giving children opportunities to be alone and to work in groups
- Connecting children and adults to ideas about sustainability of the environment
- Making it accessible to the community in which it is located.

## Advocacy

Being an advocate for the rights of children and families is an important part of our work in Children's Services.

We will advocate for the rights of children by

- Being aware of the way in which the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child impacts on the work of the Children's Services
- Always treating children with dignity and respect and speaking out when we see that this is not happening
- Having a good understanding of child protection legislation and the services available to support children

We will value and support the role of families in children's lives by

- Including them in the decisions we make that affect their children's time in the child care program.
- Adhering to CatholicCare Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour Policy

We will take account of current recommendations for children's services by:

- Having a good understanding of legislation and best practice and keeping up to date with literature and research related to working with young children and children of school age.
- Being involved in professional development that helps us to reflect on and improve our practices.

## Guiding principles

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay has a set of values that underpin the values of the organisation and are a guide to the philosophy for all of our children's services.

1. Respect
2. Hope
3. Commitment
4. Professionalism
5. Excellence
6. Social Justice

# Scope

All Children's Services staff, family day care educators, volunteers, students, families and children

# Glossary

## **Respect for Diversity**

Recognition and acceptance of differences in culture, socio- economic backgrounds and beliefs

## **Play Based Learning**

Defined by the EYLF and My Time, Our Place as a foundation for learning, where children have the opportunity to organise and make sense of their world through play based activities.

## **Reflective Practice**

Children's Services' Staff commitment to regularly reflect on CatholicCare Children's Services philosophy, ethics and high standards of professionalism.

# Related policies

- *CatholicCare Mission, Vision and Values*
- *CatholicCare Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour Policy*

# Related links and references

- [Australian Government. \(2009\). \*Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia\*. Commonwealth of Australia](#)
- [Australian Government. \(2011\). \*My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia\*. Commonwealth of Australia](#)
- *Early Childhood Australia. (2009). Code of Ethics. Early Childhood Australia; Deakin West, ACT*
- *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (1990). Convention on the Rights of the Child. United Nations*  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- *(2010) Code of Ethics Brochure. Early Childhood Australia*  
[http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/code\\_of\\_ethics\\_-\\_brochure\\_screenweb\\_2010.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/code_of_ethics_-_brochure_screenweb_2010.pdf)