

Shoalhaven Family Day Care is committed to providing a high-quality education and care service that meets the needs of the community, families and children in a home-based environment.

Our philosophy is a clear statement of our values and beliefs and guides all aspects of our service's operations. Our philosophy should be seen, heard and felt across our family day care service.

In relation to children:

- We believe in actively promoting the dignity and rights of all children within our care.
- We believe all children have a right to safety and protection from harm. We provide children with a safe environment at all times, meeting all obligations under relevant laws and regulations, and implementing quality practices that align with the National Quality Standard and Child Safe Standards.
- We believe that when children feel a sense of belonging, they develop confidence and self-identity, so we give priority to nurturing secure and respectful relationships with children and we create environments where children feel safe and welcomed.
- We recognise that children have a right to make choices and decisions and are capable of initiating their own learning. We value the importance of children's voices and listen to and respect children's ideas. We let children know their thoughts and opinions matter.
- We believe Childhood is a time of increasing independence. We promote each child's agency, and we support each child's growing competence, confidence and independence.
- We believe children need to be supported with transitions, so we assist children to negotiate changes and make transitions to new settings, including school. We support children through these transitions by building on prior and current experiences to help them feel secure, confident and connected, and to ensure continuity of learning.
- We believe in building children's cultural competence. We use positive language to promote and celebrate differences and similarities and support children to respond to diversity with respect.

In relation to families and community:

- We acknowledge the traditional owners of Country on which we live, work and play and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We support the inclusion of Aboriginal children and families in our service and aim to create a welcoming, culturally safe environment where cultural connection and a sense of belonging is fostered. We seek opportunities to embed Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum and strive to develop meaningful relationships with our local Aboriginal community.
- We believe partnerships between educators and families are essential. We encourage open communication, active participation and shared decision making. Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions. Families are supported in their parenting role; and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.
- We value the importance the community plays in the lives of young children. We recognise the rich learning opportunities provided by excursions and incursions that support children to develop connections with the community and enhance their role as active citizens.
- We support access, inclusion and participation of all children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in our service.
- We believe that family day care plays a unique and important role in our community, and we work to promote community understanding and appreciation of our service, strengthen local connections and build community partnerships whilst maintaining a service which is characterised by collaboration, integrity, adaptability, respect and professionalism, consistent with the values of Shoalhaven City Council.

In relation to the environment:

- We believe the environment is the 'third teacher' and physical spaces hold the potential to influence what and how children learn. We believe the physical environment should be engaging, empowering and respectful of children's emerging skills and competencies, inclusive and accessible, encouraging of collaboration and investigation, and supportive of nature.
- We believe children can be active participants in sustainability and inspire social change, so we stimulate children's understanding and respect of the environment and sustainable practices and encourage children to become environmentally responsible.
- We believe that outdoor nature play is fundamental to expanding children's natural wonder, imagination and curiosity. We ensure children have the opportunity to explore and experience the natural environment, to connect to, and learn about, the natural environment and to engage in outdoor risky play in a planned and supported approach.

In relation to the educational program:

- We believe in the National Learning Frameworks and uphold the ideologies of Belonging, Being and Becoming as a way to create and implement holistic approaches towards children's learning.
- We value the importance of play in a child's life; and acknowledge that play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. We believe play can expand children's thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn so we create supportive learning environments that sustain children's play.
- We believe that children learn through planned and spontaneous experiences. We actively and intentionally promote children's learning through challenging experiences and interactions that foster high-level thinking skills. We use strategies to extend children's learning such as modelling, open questioning, explaining and engaging in shared thinking and problem solving. We respond to children's ideas and play and build on their strengths, skills and knowledge to ensure their motivation and engagement in learning. We appreciate the spontaneous moments that educators nurture each day and use these to understand the children on a deeper level. We believe that it is these 'moments' that help shape our program and offer children meaningful learning experiences.
- We understand that all children demonstrate their learning in different ways, and we take this into consideration as we plan activities and experiences to promote children's learning towards the Learning Outcomes. We support the diverse interests, preferences and learning styles of all children in the service.
- We draw upon a range of perspectives, early childhood theories and pedagogy to challenge our thinking about how children learn and develop and how we teach.
- We recognise the importance of documenting children's learning and progress towards the Learning Outcomes. We make learning visible to children, educators and families in a clear and relevant manner.

In relation to organisational culture and professional learning

- We believe critical reflection provides a framework to think differently about working through various issues and obstacles and helps us make purposeful changes to practice. We examine what happens in our Service and reflect on what we might change to encourage continuous improvement across all aspects of the service.
- We continually seek ways to build our professional knowledge. We strive to build an environment that fosters staff motivation, recognition, performance improvement and career development.
- We communicate respectfully with each other, and we work collaboratively with mutual respect, equity and fairness. We challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills to help nurture constructive professional relationships.
- We believe governance provides leadership and direction to the service and we work with Regulatory and Management systems, procedures and processes to ensure the service operates effectively and ethically.
- We utilise the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics as an aspirational document; as the basis for critical reflection, a guide for professional behaviour, and to inform individual and collective decision-making. We understand what is appropriate and expected behaviour of early childhood professionals and speak out or take action in the presence of unethical practice as our professional responsibility.