



## Our Statement of Philosophy 2023/24

The Little Gumnuts *Statement of Philosophy* reflects the principles of the National Quality Standards, the Early Years Learning Framework, the National Law and Regulations, the Centre Curriculum Guidelines and our Vision and Values. It guides the decisions, policies and daily practices of our team and assists in planning, implementing and evaluating quality experiences for our children.

### Our Vision

The Little Gumnuts Early Learning Group Vision articulates the hopes of the organisation and paints a picture of the future. Our vision is:

*To support young families in their endeavour  
to raise happy healthy children.*

### Our Values

The Little Gumnuts values statement is our declaration of our core beliefs, both to guide our team's actions and also to connect with our children, families and other stakeholders.

The Little Gumnuts Early Learning Group Values are:

#### Innovative Leadership

We are driven by the passionate pursuit of quality early childhood education and guide our stakeholders through innovative thinking, responsible policy and inclusive practices.

#### Open & Honest Relationships

Our relationships are respectful, mutual and reciprocal and are built on trust, authenticity and ethical behaviour.

#### Growth & Innovation

We recognise childhood as a time for all children to be entrenched in secure and trusting environments that allow them to explore, play, discover and learn.

#### Acceptance & Belonging

We recognise and celebrate the efforts and achievements of our children, educators and staff to attain positive contributions and outcomes.

#### Equality & Diversity

We embrace, advocate for, and invest in the rights of all children to access and actively participate in our programs and have a sense of truly belonging in our community.

#### Safe & Secure

We provide a safe and secure environment for our children and team to enjoy while embracing our responsibilities to our children, our communities, our people, our environments & our long term sustainability.

## Our Children



- We believe all children are unique individuals who need opportunities to extend on their individual strengths, needs, interests and growing sense of agency. We believe all children, regardless of their age, gender, background, religion, culture or abilities should be able to participate in all aspects of the curriculum in order to engage in dispositions of learning such as curiosity, trial and error, and persistence.
- We believe that all children should feel welcome and need a sense of belonging developed through nourishing, secure, respectful and reciprocal partnerships with Educators and their peers. We will do this by greeting children by name, displaying their individual and family photos, and modelling positive social interactions.
- We believe children learn best through hands-on play based experiences, in environments that provide stimulating, practical and exciting experiences using resources that are open-ended, educational, natural, recycled and fun. We will engage children in opportunities to investigate the natural world, participate in sustainable practices and engage to promote creativity and imagination. We will also engage children in opportunities involving 'risk play' which allows them to challenge themselves, follow their gut instincts and become good decision makers in the future.
- We believe all children are competent and capable and we value and respect their thoughts and ideas. We do this by involving them in 'real' tasks; displaying their artwork in meaningful ways; giving them opportunities for expressive language through 'talk times', and providing them with opportunities to actively reflect on their own learning and assist in documenting this learning.
- We believe it is a child's right to become a successful, confident learner within a safe, respectful learning environment. We will provide a safe, nourishing and comfortable environment where children feel wanted, loved and valued. Our educators will engage with the children in our service, not just supervise them. We will ensure each child's health and wellbeing are paramount by formulating and adhering to a range of health and safety policies and procedures, including promoting healthy eating practices based on whole foods and eliminating many additives and preservatives from our menu.
- We believe every child should be given the opportunity to enjoy being a child. We do this by scheduling long periods of uninterrupted time to truly live in the moment, explore the environment, revisit their investigations to extend on their learning, and engage in experiences that are 'uniquely outdoors'.

## Our Families

- Our educators will work with families to develop nourishing, respectful partnerships that enable the exchange of information about their child's interests, strengths and needs as well as their personal preferences, thoughts and ideas on care giving strategies, educational pursuits and policies and procedures. We understand that parents want to know how their children are developing for their age and how their children cope in an early childhood education and care service environment.
- We believe all families, regardless of their structure, background, religion, culture or abilities should feel welcomed, respected and valued for the integral and pivotal role they play as their child's first teacher. We believe families provide us with valuable knowledge about their children and need educators who understand and support the complexities of being a parent.

- We support families in their parenting role by assisting them to access other agencies in our community and providing advice and resources when the need arises. We will welcome families into our service community by inviting them to participate in special days and outings throughout the year.
- We inform families about our educational program, The Early Years Learning Framework, and the National Quality Standards (NQS), through Parent Information Nights, website information, daily conversations, children's observations and printed media such as newsletters, photos, and take home items. By doing this, we hope they feel they are involved in the educational process.
- We have an Open Doors Policy that welcomes families at any time of the day to participate as they feel comfortable. We believe this inclusive practice promotes a sense of comfort and allows them to see, first hand, what occurs throughout the day.
- We will engage in shared decision making with families and where possible incorporate their ideas so the service becomes an extension of their family. Families are encouraged to approach educators/staff with questions or concerns. Families can speak to educators/staff in their child's class directly, or contact our Director. We conduct family meetings and surveys throughout the year to gain valuable feedback to assist with our continuous improvement.



## Our Team

- We believe that all educators and staff, regardless of their age, gender, background, religion, culture, experience, qualification or ability should feel welcomed, respected, valued, and appreciated as part of our team. Educators/Team Members are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas, knowing these will be listened to and seriously considered. We recognise and utilise each other's strengths and knowledge for the benefit of our children and families. This includes acknowledging the important role our administrative, support, catering and Leadership team do in ensuring our service operates effectively.
- Educators/Team Members are trained in the service's policies and procedures and are actively involved in any reviews to ensure a consistent approach in the service program and delivery.
- A professional team approach will be fostered by supporting Educators/Team Members studying or undertaking professional development. This engages all Educators/Team Members in a process of critical reflection as they discuss their learning with others, which improves personal and professional development and encourages continuous improvement in our policies and practices.
- Educators/Team Members will formulate annual professional goals and are involved in developing service goals as part of our Quality Improvement Plan. This reflects our commitment towards continuous improvement. Educators/Team Members are provided with regular professional development training based on these goals, to learn new skills, gain fresh ideas, and access networks within the wider community. We subscribe to appropriate journal publications that our Educators/Team Members are encouraged to read and reflect upon, and our Director regularly conducts development sessions on a range of topics relating to early childhood.
- We will provide educators/staff with a happy, friendly, positive, supportive and flexible work environment, which fosters motivation and commitment to a strong work ethic.

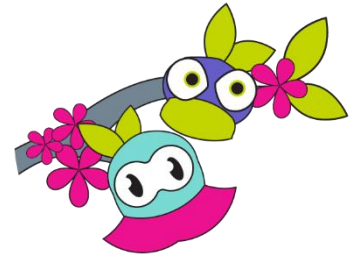
- As part of our commitment to high quality programs based on researched 'best practice' and to encourage a culture of life-long learning, we provide scheduled Administrative Time to all our team. This time allows them to complete observations on children; develop our educational programs and menus; share ideas, values, teaching practices and goals; and critically evaluate themselves.
- Management consistently review procedures, practices and positions to ensure Educators/Team Members are content and best suited to their positions in order to minimise staff turnover and to maintain a familiar, reliable team within the service.
- New educators and staff, or those returning from a long period of leave participate in an effective induction process to ensure they understand what is expected in their role and what they can expect from the service. All Educators/Team Members are given support, guidance and assistance during their employment with the service.
- Educators/Team Members are qualified Early Childhood Professionals and actively promote the important role they play in shaping children's futures and supporting the role of families both within the service and within the wider community.

## Our Community

- We will be actively involved in our community via centre activities and family/social events both inside and outside our operating hours. From this, children learn care and empathy for others, explore the natural world, and develop a sense of belonging and community spirit. It also encourages children to become active community members and supports them to voice their concerns in matters that affect them in the wider community.
- Educators/Team Members use the wider community as a teaching tool by incorporating events into our curriculum. We celebrate and embrace gazetted days (e.g. Jeans for Genes, Sustainability activities), participate in community events and encourage donations of resources and time from community members and local businesses.
- We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respect to Elders, past and present, and recognise their continued connection to these lands and waterways. We acknowledge our shared responsibility to care for and protect our place and people. We aim to incorporate aspects of the Indigenous culture respectfully into our programs.
- We will actively promote our service in the community and advocate for Early Childhood by welcoming early childhood students on Vocational Education work placements and high school work experience.

## Our Focus on Sustainability

- Little Gumnuts Early Learning Group will minimise our environmental footprint by significantly reducing the amount of waste we produce and implementing more sustainable practices.
- We will instil environmental responsibility into all aspects of our operation, encouraging recycling, composting, plant growing, animal care and minimising our landfill waste.
- We will purchase from sustainable sources where possible, and implement programs that teach sustainable practices to our children.



## Our Education Curriculum

- We provide individualised early childhood programs that nourish respectful partnerships through a play based curriculum. Our inviting indoor and outdoor learning environments foster a positive approach to learning across all developmental areas. Documentation and take-home outputs allows children to have ownership of their learning and make connections between home, the service and the wider community.
- We will plan experiences that are meaningful, interesting and educational. These will be based on educator’s observations, children’s and parent’s ideas, individual specialised programs from other agencies/professionals, and community events. They will acknowledge children’s agency; provide practical, open-ended opportunities for children to thrive; and will foster their love of learning, curiosity and wonder by using the children’s interests, ideas and own knowledge to guide our Session Topics.
- We will allow educators to have ownership over the service’s program and to guide each other, and liaise with our Educational Leaders in order to foster a professional and united team, dedicated to creating a relevant educational program for every child. We will employ additional educators to ensure sustainable practices, creative experiences and meaningful links with our community are embedded into our service.
- Educators use an inclusive anti-bias approach to ensure programs cover all abilities and learning styles. We continuously reflect on our practice; incorporate visuals and key words in home languages; and use intentional teaching to educate children on social equity and global empathy. We actively involve children in growing their own food and assisting in the preparation of the food they will eat.
- Educators are given released ‘Set Up Time’ and will set up purposeful experiences and learning areas to enhance children’s interests, extend milestone development and engage children in the learning focus of our Class Aims. The Indoor and Outdoor environments are viewed as a “third teacher”, deliberately arranged to enhance independent learning, exploration and skill development. A range of open-ended, varied, natural, recycled and manmade equipment is utilised.
- Educators will assess each child’s ongoing learning and development by documenting individual and group observations as part of our summative assessments of children’s learning; formative assessments for children’s learning against the five learning outcomes of the EYLF and share assessments as children learn with families.

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