



1.5 Philosophy

Our Guiding Statement

Curiosity is the core building block of a child's development; allowing them to seek, wonder and explore. At John Street we believe imagination is key to creating a lifelong joy of learning. Through play-based exploration, each child at John Street is an *active learner* and empowered to develop their passions, ensuring learning outcomes are both relevant and interesting.

Our philosophy

At John Street **we acknowledge and pay our respect to elders**, both past and present, in particular the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation who are the traditional custodians of this land on which our centre is located.

At our core **we believe in the value of play** and accordingly all our programs are developed and based on play-based exploration. Froebel (1887) taught us that children learn best through play: *"because the child learns through play, a child learns willingly and learns much...."*. We at John Street honour the groundwork Froebel set up in formal childhood education and the tools and materials children use to explore and discover the world around them.

We **promote children as active learners** and are advocates for the importance of early childhood education. We understand that the early years from birth to five are the foundation of a person's life when children learn about themselves and the world around them. We strive to provide holistic support of the child's individual needs and interests through a play based and Reggio Emilia inspired 'Emergent Curriculum'.

We believe family, cultural and community beliefs influence a child's resilience, social and moral development. We nurture this development by providing an inclusive environment where programs are culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of all children.

We focus on the uniqueness of individuals, of their varied life experiences and of their many learning styles (Gardner) through the integration of child-directed play and learning (Steiner), guided play and learning (Vygotsky) and adult-led learning (Bruner). We see value in the flexibility and creativity of emergent curriculum where the child's interests and passions set the foundations for learning outcomes that are relevant, interesting and functional.

Further to academic frameworks provided by educational theorists and practitioners **we are guided by:**

- The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics;
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA);
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) *Belonging, Being and Becoming*; and

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- The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), which supports our thinking that *“All children [should] have the [opportunity to receive the] best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation”*.

How we implement our philosophy

We promote each child’s right to be an active member of the community in which they live, to have their individual and cultural identity recognised and respected, to express their opinions and have their views considered in any decisions that may affect them. We encourage and support children to be themselves and promote the inclusion and participation of all children through the curriculum decisions we make.

At John Street there is a shared understanding of Albert Einstein’s proposal, that **imagination is more important than knowledge in our constantly changing world**. We accept this view with an emphasis on encouraging children’s exploration of their environment, their efforts at creative problem solving and the generation of novel ideas rather than the retention of isolated facts. Our curriculum is informed by the context, setting and cultural diversity of the families and our local community.

Our environment is set up to promote investigation and support children’s autonomy, based on their interests and abilities. Children can discover, take responsibility, observe, make inferences, predict, wonder and hypothesise in their learning spaces. Aspects of Montessori can be found in all the rooms as children learn at their own pace, and educators are used and valued as “guides”.

Relationships are the basis for the development of self-identity (Bowlby). Educators at John Street are committed to building individual relationships with each and every child, acknowledging that children are more receptive to learning when they feel safe and secure in an environment they can trust. Educators act intentionally to support positive self-esteem and respect that is essential for optimal learning and development, creating an environment where children are self-motivated and able to recognise their own agency, experiencing success in their many different ways.

At John Street we encourage our community to be respectful and ethical. We have zero tolerance for discrimination against children, families, and educators including those cultural, LGBTQIA backgrounds, religion, race, ethnicity or ability. We encourage children to be considerate and supportive of those whose views and beliefs differ from our own.

For many years sustainability has been embedded in to our practices and culture. We encourage and include sustainability and care of the natural environment in our daily interactions and experiences with children, educators, families and the community. We recycle, reuse, and conserve whenever possible and practical. We consider usage and materials before purchasing any new furnishings and equipment. We strive to find new ways to be sustainable and incorporate these into our daily practice.

Our educators’ commitment to the John Street philosophy

As professionals we aspire to continually develop our knowledge through professional development and to foster a ‘learn to learn’ aptitude for ourselves, families, and children. We recognise we are role models for the children in our community and seek to inspire the same passion for learning in them.

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To add to the lively culture of professional inquiry among educators at John Street and to ensure we are inclusive for all children and their families, we actively seek collaboration with families and the community on issues relating to curriculum quality, equity and children’s wellbeing. We welcome their contribution to the development of the education and care at John Street, including their input into our philosophy.

Legislative Provisions

Education and Care services National Regulations 2011:

<i>r.55</i>	<i>Quality Improvement Plans</i>
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National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care

Element 1.1.1	<i>Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence and learners and effectiveness as communicators</i>
Element 3.2.1	<i>Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments</i>
Element 4.2.2	<i>Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships</i>
Element 5.1.1	<i>Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident, and included</i>
Element 6.1	<i>Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.</i>
Element 6.1.2	<i>The expertise, culture, values, and beliefs of families are respected and families share in the decision making about their child’s learning and wellbeing</i>
Element 6.2.2	<i>Effective partnerships support children’s access, inclusion and participation in the program</i>
Element 6.2.3	<i>The service builds relationships and engages with its community</i>
Element 7.1.1	<i>A statement of philosophy guides all aspect of the service’s operations</i>
Element 7.2.2	<i>The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle</i>

Sources

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2009, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

Mac Naughton, G. & Williams, G. (1998), *Techniques for Teaching Young Children: Choices in Theory and Practice*, Addison Wesley Longman, Melbourne.

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2004), *Quality teaching in the early years*, in A. Anning, J. Cullen & M. Flear (Eds), *Early Childhood Education, Society and Culture*, Sage, London.

Flear, M. & Linke, P (1999) Babies, *Responding Appropriately to Infant*,. Australian Journal of Early Childhood, Vol 6 Number 2 1999, AECA, Watson, ACT.

Adams, M. Bell, L.A. & Griffin, P (1997), *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, Routledge. New York.

Making the most of childhood: *The importance of the early years*
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/parents/mch/makingmostofchildhood.pdf>

Commission for Children and young people, *Child Safe Standards*

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/the-child-safe-standards/>

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, *Revised National Quality Standard from 1 Feb 2018*.

Authorisation & Review

This policy was approved by the John Street Board in July 2018.