

The Heritage Philosophy Statement 2023

The Heritage Philosophy Statement is our written document that outlines the values, principles and practices that underpin our work and educational program. It is based on the [Early Years Learning Framework for Australia \(EYLF\) v2 2022](#), and evolves according to the beliefs and values that are collectively held by our educators and families.

We recognise that teaching & learning have continued to take place on the land on which our Centre stands for many thousands of years. We are honoured to continue this tradition and acknowledge the Ngunawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land.

(We use Ngunawal instead of Ngannawal after consultation with elder Tyrone Bell)

Our Mission

Our Mission is to work together to build a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment focused on maximising each child's sense of wellbeing and acquisition of skills for life, learning, and wellbeing (*Belonging, Being and Becoming*).

Our Vision

Our Vision is to create a warm and inclusive family atmosphere where all educators and families feel inspired to work together in a genuine collaborative partnership focused on providing a dynamic learning environment to ensure each child realises their full potential.

Regardless of race, gender, age, ability, social status or family structure, our vision is to ensure each child is able to participate in all aspects of the program. We value the different gifts that each child brings to our community and embrace the many world cultures represented at Heritage. We celebrate our multicultural roots for the wealth of knowledge and understanding they bring to our community. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities, perspectives and connections to community and country are valued for their ways of being, knowing and doing.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

To look forward to a day when all Australians celebrate the longstanding and continuing contributions of the First Australians to our nation's shared history and identity. It is important that we, as a country, recognise our true history and the diverse past, present and continuing cultures, and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We strive to ensure that we continue to respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in all that we do. We acknowledge that it is a child's right to learn about the Ngunawal Land and the Traditional Custodians and their histories and are committed to reaching out to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our community to break down barriers and move forward together. As early childhood educators, we understand

that 'from little things big things grow' and that a child's learning journey and reconciliation journey begins here.

Our Aims

Respect and Dignity: We aim to ensure each child is given the opportunity to play, discover and grow in an atmosphere of care and mutual respect where their dignity and rights are preserved at all times.

Emotional Security: We aim to build warm, respectful and meaningful relationships between all our children, families and educators in order to create a community of learners which is a support network for all. We know that respect comes from being acknowledged, understood and empathised with in relationships that have meaning, and understand the importance of establishing an emotionally secure foundation based on respect in order to support each child's developing sense of self and empathy for others. We understand that caring relationships play an important role in healthy brain development.

Our Philosophy

Holistic and Inclusive Approach: We take a holistic and inclusive approach to caring for and educating our children and aim to develop each child's understanding of the world in which they live by developing broad-based knowledge, skills and attitudes to prepare them for lifelong learning and wellbeing. We aim to develop not only every child's cognitive ability but also their social, physical, linguistic and emotional skills to enable them to become active and informed citizens.

Innate Curiosity and Creativity: Our philosophy is underpinned by the view that each child is naturally creative, capable and inquisitive. We understand that children are fundamentally motivated to explore and discover the world by actively employing a complex network of abilities, interests and symbolic languages. ~~We know that children 'learn through play'~~ We believe in a play-based approach to learning and recognise children's agency from birth.

Connecting to our Environment: We understand the importance of connecting children to the natural world in order to develop their respect for sustainability and maintaining the health and beauty of the environment. We are committed to teaching children to care and respect the land of the local Indigenous people and to love all the beauty and freedom it has to offer. We value the pedagogy of outdoor learning and are inspired by **Forest School Theory** and **Nature Play**. We believe this approach is essential for building each child's health and fitness, life skills and resilience and aim to balance safety with the need to explore risks in order to encourage children to make sound supported judgements about risk taking. We believe outdoor education fosters a sense of community and adventure, encourages exploration and inspires creative minds. Exploring 'beyond the fence' is a fundamental part of the Heritage program and the surrounding landscape, Australian

culture and consultations with a local Aboriginal Elders strongly influence the design of our indoor and outdoor spaces.

Self-Reliance: We believe in encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions and allow them to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance, resilience and self-esteem. Our educators actively listen to each child throughout the day in order to genuinely understand their needs and what is important to them and strive to create a natural flow of stimulating activities and quiet times where each child feels safe to seek reassurance.

Qualified Team of Educators: We embed ongoing critical reflection in all areas of our practice by building a culture of enquiry and continuous improvement among our educators to meet the changing needs and expectations of children and families. We believe in collaborative leadership and fostering a team approach where all our educators are equally respected and valued for their contribution. We employ highly qualified educators and are committed to ongoing professional development and empowering our trainees to continually upgrade their qualifications.

Differentiated Curriculum: Our educators view each child as a unique person with their own dispositions, interests, needs and energy levels. We understand that children mature at different rates and have preferred styles of learning and our educators are trained to provide an enriched, flexible, and differentiated curriculum. We understand that children learn best when the program reflects their interests and has meaning for them personally and plan our program and environments based on careful observations of each child's individual knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities, and interests.

Collaborative Learning: We are intentional in all aspects of the curriculum and provide a balance between child-led, adult-initiated, and guided play. We utilise enquiry and project-based collaborative learning, initiated by children, families, educators, or involvement in the wider community to extend children's play and support creative thinking and problem solving. We understand that learning can happen every moment of every day and it is our job to "make the most of every moment".

"Young children's earliest years are the foundation for their physical and mental health, emotional security, cultural and personal identity and developing competencies."

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Our Core Values: Identity, Respect, Community, Resilience, Contribution