



# St Monica's School Oakey

## Early Years Philosophy Statement

Revised 15/06/2006

The *Early Years* are defined as being those years of learning from Prep to Year three.

The Staff of St Monica's school recognise that the early years of schooling are vital in the learning journey of the child. Growth, development and learning is an ongoing process and future progress in these areas is influenced by both what has gone before, and how we as teachers link to these experiences. Each child is therefore unique and comes to school with their own interests, backgrounds, needs and capabilities. Each child is precious and deserves to be valued and respected.

The staff of St Monica's School affirm and endorse the following Principles for Early Years Education:

1. Children's perception of God is based on awe and wonder, their experience in the world, the way they are treated and the values they see enacted around them.
2. Children are capable and competent and have been learning since birth.
3. Children build deep understandings when they learn through all senses and are offered choice in their learning experiences.
4. Children learn best through interactions, active exploration, experimentation and by representing their learning through a variety of modes.
5. Children's positive dispositions to learning, and to themselves as learners, are essential for success in school and beyond.
6. Children learn best in environments where there are supportive relationships among partners in the learning community.
7. Early Childhood programs are most effective when they recognise, value and build upon the cultural and social experiences of children.
8. Building continuity of learning as children move to and through school provides foundations for their future success.
9. Assessment of young children is an integral part of the learning-teaching process and is not a separate activity.



# St Monica's School Oakey

## Early Years Philosophy

### Implications for Learning Environments and Resources

Revised 15/06/2006

#### ❖ Flexible learning environments

- Physical environment
  - Indoor AND outdoor learning environments
  - Flow of movement between indoor and outdoor learning environments
  - Outdoor spaces providing open areas, active areas and quiet areas
  - Open carpeted spaces for larger construction tasks, games, movement and whole-group learning interactions
  - Wet areas for table and art work
  - Accessible to children and encouraging independence, consider heights, accessibility and safety:
  - Providing engaging, stimulating and challenging experiences
  - Providing opportunities to take part in sensory experiences, including visual, auditory, bodily and kinaesthetic modalities.
- Social environment
  - Inviting and welcoming to children and parents;
  - Opportunities to engage socially in the learning process (co-construction of learning)
  - Characterised by mutual respect
  - All partners share ownership and responsibility
  - Responsive to children
- Temporal environment
  - Predictable sequence of events in the day
  - Flexible enough to respond to unplanned learning opportunities that arise
  - Extended periods of time to engage in sustained investigations.
  - Sense of continuity from one day to next

#### ❖ Resourcing

- Accessible – easy access to objects materials and tools to encourage children to make independent choices about their learning
- Hands on materials that promote active and play based learning
- Open ended materials for enquiry based learning
- Range of literacies, including use of technologies
- Materials that support learning across a range of contexts – play, real-life situations, investigations, routines and transitions, and focused learning and teaching.
- Culturally diverse resources



# St Monica's School Oakey

## Early Years Philosophy

### Implications for Pedagogy and Learning Experiences

Revised 15/06/2006

- ❖ View children as capable and competent learners, therefore need to use what children KNOW and CAN DO as a **starting point for new learning experiences**.
- ❖ Teachers support and encourage children as they learn by building on their **prior knowledge's, making links to new learning, and making implicit knowledge explicit**.
- ❖ Children need opportunities to **construct understandings** of shared symbol systems – writing, mathematical, representations, logos, artistic representations – from personal and shared experiences with **concrete materials** and through **representing their understandings** in multiple ways.
- ❖ Learning experiences should encourage use of as many of the **senses** as possible.
- ❖ Children learn move deeply from **positive and interesting learning experiences**
- ❖ **Plan Do Review** sequences of learning
- ❖ **Inquiry based learning** – with children questioning, theorising, hypothesising, discussing, recalling, interpreting, and with support analysing and deciding on future action.
- ❖ **Negotiated projects** – children work collaboratively with teacher to investigate a topic of deep interest. Together they choose, plan, design, inquire about, communicate and record their learning throughout the project
- ❖ **Teachable moments** – opportunities for explicit learning and teaching that emerge spontaneously as children interact with people, object and representations



# St Monica's School Oakey

## Early Years Philosophy

### Implications for Assessment

Revised 15/06/2006

- ❖ Assessment is an integral part of the learning-teaching process and is not a separate activity. The information gathered is used to
  - Plan for the future learning
  - Build a picture of a child's learning and development
  - Give direction to conversations with the child, parents, specialist teachers and the child's next teacher
  - Record point-in-time judgements using a folio and report system
  
- ❖ Collecting evidence of children's learning may involve
  - Notes of conversations with children
  - Anecdotal records
  - Personalised checklists with comments
  - Digital photographs or recordings
  - Samples of children's work
  - Notes of discussions with other partners
  
- ❖ Work in partnership with teacher, children and parents
  
- ❖ Folios as a way of representing what a child is learning and reporting to parents
  
- ❖ Early years record summarises the progress in a child's learning and is used to report to the child's next teacher.



# St Monica's School

## Oakey

## Early Years Philosophy

### Implications for Continuity

Revised 15/06/2006

- ❖ Establish links for children between their prior, current and future learning.
- ❖ Build continuity through establishing positive relationships with children.
- ❖ Sharing of resources across the Early Years classes
- ❖ Locating Early Years classrooms in close proximity
- ❖ Establishing links with Child Care and Kindy – to facilitate transition from these services to school
- ❖ Involving all Early Years Classes in specialist lessons, school events, shared outdoor environments etc
- ❖ Establishing continuities in curriculum across the early years by building partnerships and communication opportunities for teacher of the early years
- ❖ Building links to middle years – building partnerships with middle years teachers and children.
- ❖ Developing on going school based transition programs from Kindy to prep, prep to year one, year one to year two, and so on. These may include buddy systems, peer tutoring, collaborative projects, teacher “swaps”, multi-age projects, school visits, class visits, parent information nights, assemblies, school liturgies and athletic carnivals.
- ❖ Building partnerships with parents, teachers, children, administration, specialist teacher, parish and community
- ❖ Provide an environment that supports children to learn the ways of the interacting and behaving in the school setting