



Huntly Kindergarten's Frequently Asked Questions

Foregrounding Aboriginal Perspectives:

We build relationships and engage with the local community in the following ways:

- *Seeing evidence of our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Islander people and their culture from the street with our mosaic stepping stones and native bush tucker garden*
- *Seeing evidence of our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Islander people and their culture in our entrances with womin-dji-ka signage on our door, an acknowledgement plaque on the brick wall in our gated entrance and both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on display on both kinder room doors*
- *Seeing evidence of our respect for Aboriginal and Torres Islander people and their culture in our play spaces with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on display, Dja Dja Wurrung language names displayed on the native animals of our window art and large Bunjil art work on the walls in both rooms. Inside and outside we have equipment and materials featuring Aboriginal artwork and symbols; alphabet friezes, stools, sitting mats, outdoor mats, puzzles, dolls clothes, messy mats, etc*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander books are always on our bookshelves, we listen to Aboriginal music during relaxation times and learn lyrics and actions to Aboriginal songs.*
- *Each day children acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Djaara land of our Kinder; the Dja Dja Wurrung people.*
- *Staff and Parent Advisory Group meetings begin with an acknowledgement of country.*
- *Staff actively seek out opinions and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families throughout the year and include them in our educational program and QIP eg we celebrate Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week with children at our service*
- *Staff and children continue to build their knowledge of the names and stories about the land we are on by reading stories, watching videos, sharing insights, inviting guests, referring to websites and attending training.*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, KESO's and KPSA's attend our services when possible.*
- *We value outdoor learning; offering indoor-outdoor programs at the centre, having natural play spaces and materials inside and taking indoor equipment and activities outdoors to enjoy.*
- *We get out on Country, we learn with Country, we know what it teaches us and it helps to calm, heal and restore us. We immerse all 4-year-old kinder children in a Bush Kinder program for 3hrs per week learning about seasonal change, native flora and fauna, culture and respect for Djandak (the land) in Terms 2, 3 and 4 each year.*

Collaborative Generative Thinking:

The expertise of families is recognised, and they share in the decision making about the children's learning and wellbeing, this occurs in the following ways:

Families have opportunity to be involved in our service by:

- *Being valued in their knowledge of their child's developmental needs*
- *Having agency and voice in the educational program by contributing ideas and feedback*
- *Having regular input into their child's assessment and development, beginning with orientation interviews and the development of an Individual Education Plan then at Learning Review Interviews during the year.*
- *Receiving learning stories via Storypark, using them to generate discussion at home and leaving comments for staff*
- *Being invited to work with children and conduct activities based on their passions and interests*



- *Attending picnic teas and celebrations throughout the year such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc*
- *Being welcome to approach educators at any time before, during or after the session or to make an appointment for a more appropriate time*
- *Attending incursions and excursions with us*
- *Being involved in the Parent Advisory Group or Bush Kinder sub-committee*

Opening to Complexity:

We promote child agency by:

- *Operating an indoor/outdoor program at times during our sessions*
- *Involving children in decision making about our program and activities*
- *Documenting children's voices in our educational program*
- *Long periods of explorative, creative, uninterrupted play both indoors, outdoors and in our bush kinder setting*
- *Fostering and expecting independence; packing own bags, looking after own things, packing equipment away*
- *Celebrating unique skills and passions and recognising children as capable members of our groups*
- *Providing responsibility to be 'special helper' or 'teacher of the day', etc*
- *Supporting children to solve their own problems together through open ended questions and modelling*
- *Letting children lead the learning and arrive at their own theories then scaffolding to promote growth*
- *Fostering advocacy within our community by involving children in important issues such as litter in our bush kinder*
- *Implementing the 'Zones of Regulation' to support children to identify and manage their feelings*

Every Moment Matters:

Our program, including routines is organised in ways that maximize opportunities for each children's learning. A normal day at our kindergarten usually runs like:

- *We welcome families in each room on arrival*
- *Children arrive and take responsibility for unpacking their bags and washing their hands*
- *Depending on the weather, indoor or outdoor play with some open-ended learning stations set up but opportunities for children to resource their own learning through nature play, loose parts or requesting equipment/materials from educators*
- *Mat time starts with an Acknowledgement of Country, includes songs, stories and finger rhymes and a check in with visual aids of our routine*
- *Wash hands and snack together*
- *Play continues; either indoor, outdoor or indoor/outdoor. We value sensory play (water play, bush kitchen, play dough/clay/kinetic sand), physical challenges (obstacle courses, gym equipment, bike riding), risky play (tree climbing, woodwork), stimulating tasks (puzzles, marble runs, construction, problem solving) and craft.*
- *Children have opportunities to play collaboratively with peers, enjoy quality time with educators or times of quiet solitary play and deep reflection*
- *Wash hands and lunch together*
- *Relaxation; lying on backs on the carpet with eyes closed listening to quiet music*

The rest of the routine depends on the length of the session – short day or long day.

Our kindergarten groups are named after local flora and fauna:

- *Echidnas: 3-year-old kinder, a rotating group of 22 for 15 hours a week*
- *Sugar Gliders: 4-year-old kinder, a group of 30 for 15 hours a week*



- *Rosellas: 4-year-old kinder, a group of 30 for 15 hours a week*
- *Whirrakee: A combination of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds, a rotating group of 30 for 15 hours a week*

In Terms 2,3 and 4 all 4-year-old kindergarten children participate in Bush Kinder for a 3hr session each week. Children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring and learning in a natural environment. No toys, no art supplies. We resource our play by the seasonal opportunities the bush provides.

Our Bush Kinder site is located between Brunel St and the Midland Highway on land owned by Huntly Primary School. It is a lovely piece of bushland in the middle of Huntly within walking distance of Kinder. The goals of Bush Kinder are:

- *To provide opportunities for explorative, creative, unstructured and uninterrupted play for children in a natural setting*
- *To connect children and families to their wider community through the bush setting that exists in Huntly*
- *To foster a generation of children who are socially and environmentally responsible*
- *To encourage qualities of confidence, persistence and resilience in children and families*
- *To provide freedom for children to play imaginatively without additional artificial props*
- *To provide the opportunity for learning, discovery and wonder*
- *To adopt an approach to play that encourages self-assessment of risk*
- *To provide opportunities for children to challenge themselves physically, mentally and emotionally through the practice of gross motor skills, thinking strategies, scientific understandings and emotional skills.*
- *To encourage social interaction, team work and cooperation*
- *To enhance physical and mental health in children*
- *To provide environmental knowledge and skills to equip children to become custodians of their local natural environment, now and into the future*

We make use of KIS additional assistants as required in each group to assist with inclusion for all children. We also use some of our School Readiness Funding to employ additional educators throughout the year.

Meaningful Documentation:

Our Educational Program is shared with families in many ways, here are some of them:

- *On display in the room*
- *Reflections and stories posted on the online platform, Storypark*
- *Conversations with families*
- *Emails to families*

Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation, we share this with families and seek their involvement by:

- *Working together at Orientation Day, Learning Review Days and incidentally throughout the year to share observations, discuss strengths, needs and set goals.*
- *Posting stories and reflections on Storypark and having two way conversations online via the comments*

Keeping the Joy:

We value:

- *Respectful relationships*
- *Nature play and bush kinder*
- *Learning through play*
- *Children as competent and capable learners*
- *Independence and life skills*



- *Partnerships with families and community involvement*
- *Diversity and inclusion*
- *Collaborating with our community*

Being Professional:

Educators Strive to:

- *Form meaningful relationships with children and families*
- *Continually improve our practice*
- *Have high expectations of children's capabilities*
- *Provide a stimulating environment for children's learning*
- *Bring out the best in each child*