



Shine Bright Woorinen South Kindergarten's Frequently Asked Questions

Foregrounding Aboriginal Perspectives:

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

- Patty our Wayipungitj (formally Koori Pre-School-Assistant) visits us regularly. She sets up experiences and introduces the children to Aboriginal culture. Each day we say an 'Acknowledgement to Country'. Our bush walks and 'Bush Kinder' promote learning about Aboriginal perspectives. We have an 'Indigenous Garden' with 'Bush Tucker' plants in our outdoor area. Our Service recognises Reconciliation Day and NAIDOC week.
- During the year the children and families contribute to the making of a special piece of artwork to foster a sense of belonging.
- Each child is given a 'Treasure Bag' to collect things in that are important to them and share them with educators.
- The children's knowledge of community grows throughout the year with the inclusion of excursions and incursions in the program, such as 'The Flying Bookworm Theatre Company, 'Melbourne Museum's Outreach Program', 'Reptile Encounters', 'Africa Drumming', Thingle Toodle (road safety education), visits from the Swan Hill Library van, our own kindergarten library, and walking to the local Post Office.
- We visit the Woorinen & District Primary School several times a year and they visit us. We have 'Buddy Reading' with the school children.
- We practice road safety when we walk to the Post office or visiting the local Primary School – 'Hold hands, keep safe' + 'Stop, look, listen, think'.
- We liaise with all the local Primary Schools in our Community and other professionals such as the local Fire Brigade and Police.
- Our Centre is visible in the community. We explore our local community regularly, including nature walks into the bushland behind the Kindergarten. In 2020 a Bush Kinder program was introduced. Bush Kinder has now become a significant part of our Program during Terms 2 & 3.
- Our Service is registered with the ELLA organisation (Early Learning Language Australia). The language that the children learn is Italian.
- Partnerships include families, educators and '**Support Professionals**', all working together so that children with additional needs have opportunities to actively participate in learning experiences and so grow and develop (EYLF 2022), eg Speech Therapists, dietitian from SHDH, Dental screenings, Noah's Ark Early Intervention Services
- Our Service is part of the Victorian Government's **School Readiness Funding** and has access to a range of allied health services and programs which ultimately create better outcomes for children. In 2023 our 4-year-old group will be involved in the 'Resilience Project' with its focus on GEM-Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness. We will continue embedding these concepts in the program in 2024.
- We have a local retiree who looks after our garden – our community is important to us.



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:

- Parents are the **first and most important educators** of their children.
- At the beginning of the year parents complete a short questionnaire which asks for the family goals they may have for their child.
- In the middle of the year families can complete a 'Mid-Year Reflection', giving them the opportunity to comment on their child's development and learning and sharing their goals for their child for the remainder of the year.
- Kindergarten families are invited to attend 'Learning Review Days'. Three days are set aside for this.

Families are important and have opportunity to be involved in our service by:

- Becoming a PAG member (Parent Advisory Group/committee), be part of our 'Help and Play Roster', attend Family and Friends mornings/nights, Special Visitors' Evenings, working bees, odd jobs, sharing interests/collections/hobbies and much more. This is **'to ensure our learning experiences are meaningful'** (EYLF 2022 p.15) for everyone, all cultures and our local community. *"Children perform better academically and socially when their families are involved with their education..... and contribute to one another's wellbeing and learning"*.
- Just as families support our Service educators support families, providing them with resources and links for home learning, parenting, and mental health and wellbeing. We have a parent library.

Opening to Complexity:

We promote child agency by:

- Giving each child time for free uninterrupted play.
- Giving each child opportunities to make choices, for example 'where to play', 'what to play with'.
- Listening to each child's voice, their ideas, interests and needs.
- Fostering in the children an awareness of keeping themselves and others safe. We talk about keeping our environment safe, ie if they see toys, dress-ups etc on the floor/walkways pick them up. This also contributes to positive self- esteems and a strong sense of belonging and agency.
- Implementing routines
 - Routines are important for smooth transitions, helping the children to make predictions about their day giving them a sense of belonging to their environment and promoting independence and their agency.
 - Routines encourage the children to care for their learning environment and belongings (VEYLDF Learning Outcome: Community). They help them to become independent and responsible, for example, to look for a puzzle, make a choice, select and put away when finished.
 - The children are exposed to many **routines** at Kindergarten, including - arrival, story time, mat time, pack away, tidy up, snack time, lunch time, home time.



Every Moment Matters:

Our program, including routines is organised in ways that maximize opportunities for each children's learning.

- Our program is **play based**. Whether inside or outside engagement in play is promoted – this is how the children learn.
- **'Experiences are open ended'** with the emphasis on the doing/learning rather than the end product.

A normal day at our kindergarten usually runs like this:

- When the children arrive, they hang up their bag and put their lunch in the fridge and water bottles on the trolley and wash hands.
- Our routine is flexible. Depending on the weather or the season our session will commence either inside or outside.
 - During the morning snack time is staggered. At approximately 11.30am we come together for a whole group/mat time, for example a story, music, yoga, meditation, discussion, drama, puppetry, group games. This is followed by play either in or out depending on where the session commenced and the weather.
 - Lunch is a routine that we have all together, just like a family at around 1pm.
 - After lunch there is more time for free play both indoors and outdoors and an informal rest and afternoon tea for those who want it. The session finishes with a group time.

Meaningful Documentation:

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

Notice board display in the bag room, text messages, diary and photo album, newsletters, notes in pockets, notices on a whiteboard at the Kindergarten entrance, emails, a Community Book, the children's portfolios, informal conversations, meetings and our 'Learning Review Days'.

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:

- Contributing to their child's goals.
- The children each have a portfolio, documenting their learning and other events in the program. Families have access to their child's portfolio at any time and are encouraged to do so.
- Educators communicate regularly with families informally and if requested a special time can be made to meet with educators. Communication is important.



Keeping the Joy:

We value:

- **Joy.** We nurture joy and as a consequence promote mental health and wellbeing.
- The **contributions children bring** to the program. Each child's innocence, laughter, curiosity and joy in their explorations and learning brings us, the staff great joy.
- **A happy, caring and calm environment for everyone – children, families and Staff.**
- **Collaborative partnerships and respectful relationships** for children, families and staff.
- **The whole child**, ie their physical, personal, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual wellbeing.
- The **importance of play** as a learning tool, as this is how children learn best.

Being Professional:

Educators Strive to:

- Be **inclusive** of all children and families, promoting respect for diversity.
- Provide a **warm, welcoming and stimulating environment** which fosters children's learning.
- Promote and establish trusting relationships and a safe and secure environment for the children in their care. Children feel comfortable and relaxed, and develop a strong sense of belonging.
- Foster a strong sense of identity in all the children – confidence and a positive self-esteem are so important for learning
- Nurture the children's **social development** - we live in a social world!
- Promote the development of **oral language**, which is such an important pre reading skill.
- Provide long lengths of **uninterrupted time** allowing the children to become engaged in play – *explore, experiment and experience.*
- Help children to become **independent and resilient.**
- Foster respect for the **natural environment and sustainability** ideas. Play with nature and in nature offers so much learning and has a significant place in our program.

"Give children a chance to love the earth before we ask them to save it." David Sobel

- Foster a positive attitude to reading and books. The children are read to every day. **(Literacy)**
- Incorporate **Maths** into everyday learning. **(Numeracy)**
- Promote **healthy lifestyles.** The children's health, wellbeing and safety are paramount. Our service is aligned with the following programs: 'The Resilience Project', 'Sunsmart', 'Smiles4Miles' (promoting dental health), 'Be You' (promoting mental health in Early Childhood), and the 'Healthy Together Achievement Program', – Healthy Eating and Oral Health, Physical Activity/Active Play, Sun Protection and Tobacco Control are bench marks that we have already reached. We are now working on Mental Health benchmarks.
- **Extend our own knowledge and professional development**, so as to provide positive learning outcomes.

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