

Katoomba Leura Preschool Philosophy: Values and Visions

The image of the child

We value and honour children's play and playful inquiry as both a process and context for learning and human expression. Through play, children are able to express their emotions, curiosity, wonder, questions and theories about the world around them.

We trust in children's abilities to make decisions, assess risks and exercise their agency. We value the rights of each and every child and commit to advocating for these rights. Children are seen as capable and valued members of the community with both rights and responsibilities as active citizens. We encourage children to notice and speak out about unfairness and act to change it.

We acknowledge the Darug and Gundungurra people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we play and learn, and believe in children's right to learn about the histories, cultures and worldviews of Australia's First Nations peoples.

Relationships

We believe that respectful and collaborative relationships are the cornerstone of belonging for children, families and educators. Belonging is essential for children to experience feelings of safety, security and self-confidence, and we acknowledge and celebrate the crucial role of family in children's lives. We are committed to supporting each child's sense of belonging through their relationships with others, in both human and 'more-than-human' worlds. We believe that respectful relationships require a commitment to equity and social justice and strive to ensure that all members of our preschool community feel seen, heard and appreciated.

We believe in the importance of an 'unhurried environment' as a context for learning and relationship building. Long, sustained periods of play support children to collaborate, negotiate, develop confidence and engage in meaningful dialogue with others. Routines and rituals at preschool are designed to facilitate connection and belonging between all children.

Places and Spaces

We believe that the environment acts as a 'third teacher,' playing a crucial role in supporting children's play and learning. We value the importance of beauty in children's lives, and therefore believe that spaces should be uplifting, inviting, engaging and reflective of the preschool community. Learning spaces are intentionally organised to allow children to experiment with open-ended, creative and flexible materials.

Our outdoor environment includes plants, trees, rocks, sand, mud and water and supports children's risk taking, exploration and connection with nature. Children are supported to learn with Country, developing meaningful and reciprocal relationships with the land through daily sustainable practices and ongoing Bush Preschool experiences.

Inquiry and collaboration

Children learn best when they are supported to problem solve, make connections, and build upon theories through holistic, integrated and hands-on experiences. We trust in the children's ability to think deeply and collaboratively about 'big questions' and express themselves through the hundred languages. We value creative practices such as mark making, music, movement, sculpture, construction and dramatic play as a vehicle for children's expression.

Teachers and educators are co-researchers alongside children. We believe our role is to make visible children's voices through active listening, questioning, dialogue and documentation. We join our attention to the children's, and walk alongside them in the inquiry process.

Teachers and educators engage in ongoing inquiry and critical reflection as a foundation for organisational growth, professional learning and consistent high-quality practices at preschool.