



Statement of Philosophy

Acknowledgement of Country

“We acknowledge the Traditional owners of the land on which we live and learn. We pay our respects to them for their care of the land over countless generations. We hope they will walk with us on our journey as we share friendship together.”

*Nadia Wheatley & Ken Searle
“Going Bush”*

Our Place

Belford Oaks is a 35 place community based children’s service, established in 1988. Situated amongst the beautiful oak trees, fundamental to our name we are central to the local and surrounding community.

We offer a government funded Kindergarten program built into a long day care setting with a rating of exceeding, catering for children aged from 6 months to 5 years of age.

Our service community is comprised of a professional team of qualified early childhood educators, who are dedicated, experienced, informed and deliberate in their teachings. Belford Oaks is overseen by a committee of parents who serve to empower and strengthen our team.

Our Beliefs

The Educators at Belford Oaks believe children develop best in a safe, nurturing, healthy, respectful, caring and inclusive environment. We assist children in developing into responsible, confident, creative and active citizens of their world.

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to children’s learning, we understand that children use many different ways to express their thoughts and creativity. The Educators at Belford Oaks recognize the environment as the third teacher and place great emphasis on exploring the natural environment; this is evident in the educational setting we create for the children, especially the outdoor play spaces. We understand it is our role as Educators to observe and listen to the children, learn about their interests and provide them with beautiful and thoughtful play spaces in which they have the opportunities to construct their own understandings and explore their interests further and contribute to the learning of not only themselves but those around them too.

Our Educators view the child as the protagonist in their education and believe children learn best through hands on play, in an inquiry- based model of learning. Therefore we provide a stimulating learning environment; one that promotes happiness and a desire to learn. We believe children are independent in their decision-making and we strive to encourage their autonomy by providing for choice in all aspects of the program. We believe they are expressive communicators and collaborative learners. We believe children are creative, capable and inquisitive, and have therefore created an open-ended learning environment that caters to and builds on these personal qualities.

The educators at Belford Oaks strongly believe in not over stimulating children; instead we offer inspiring open-ended play experiences and learning opportunities, not controlled by pre-set limitations but with endless opportunities for learning, growth, discovery and development. The educators and the environment at Belford oaks respect the children as strong, capable and resilient by providing them with authentic materials and tools; including natural materials and loose parts. Such materials are carefully selected by educators for their potential to enhance learning and discovery.

We believe the outdoor environment has more to offer than just physical benefits, with the potential to extend on a child's cognitive, social and emotional development. We therefore provide in indoor/outdoor program to nurture these developmental outcomes and to assist in nurturing a child's creative intelligence, language, literacy and numeracy development through multi-sensory play experiences and environments.

We believe home and family are the child's primary educators, because of this we foster collaborative partnerships with families for a holistic approach to learning and a high-quality meeting of needs. Educators value family expertise and together they share in decision making regarding the children's learning and development.

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy of learning means we respect the kitchen as an integral part of our program. We stay informed regarding healthy eating practices and research to ensure we provide 3 nutritionally balanced and delicious meals a day.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), the National Quality Standards (NQS) and a number of theoretical perspectives and contemporary research influence our programs.

Our Commitments

Child safety is embedded into our culture at Belford Oaks. We are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all children and continually educate children about their rights. Educators aim to empower children through active listening and assisting them to develop a sense of belonging and a feeling of safety and security within their environment.

We embrace each child's unique set of values, experiences, thoughts and ideas. Furthermore, we recognize children develop holistically and have different styles of learning.

We are committed to participating in regular critical reflection and professional development combined with in house educational mentoring to enhance our skills and knowledge consistent with change in the early childhood field. Ensuring continuous improvement, best practice and quality outcomes for all.

We are committed to helping children understand the importance of looking after their natural world, and promote sustainable practices through encouraging a responsibility for their classroom, the outdoor spaces, and in turn, the world in which they live.

We acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of children and educators and believe in instilling the powerful message of acceptance, regardless of gender, race, ability, social or family structure. Our early learning environment is reflective of this.

We understand and respect the unique place Indigenous Australian and Torres Strait Islander cultures hold in Australia and we are committed to creating and fostering a strong connection with these cultures.

Goals and Aspirations for 2019

- To introduce summative assessments as a documentation tool to explore other avenues of documentation.
- Continue on with our "Environmental plan" developed in consultation with Talaricco consulting.
- Develop a deeper understanding of personality and what it means to have a certain type of personality.

Reviewed June 2019, next review June 2020