



St Andrew's Little Saints

Early Learning & Outside School Hours Care



Kindy Handbook



Caring, growing and
Learning together



Welcome

Welcome to the Little Saints Early Learning Centre Kindergarten Program. We are proud of our ability to provide high quality care and education for the children at our Centre and look forward to a fulfilling and enjoyable association with your family.

Our Kindy environment is equipped with both spacious indoor and outdoor play areas and is designed to be safe yet challenging for young children. There are many outlets for children's imaginations and experimentation – where flexible learning environments are added to creative indoor playscapes specially designed with children's developmental stages in mind.

Approved Kindergarten



We provide two government approved Kindergarten Programs here at Little Saints, delivered by qualified and experienced Early Childhood Teachers. Our Teachers work collaboratively to provide the same program within both rooms. Approved kindergarten programs are designed to meet government guidelines to support children's participation in quality early childhood education by:

- providing a program for children in the year before Prep (i.e. children who are 4 by 30 June in the year they start)
- providing a program for 15 hours a week for 40 weeks, or 1 school year
- implementing the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline
- providing a play based program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher

“The play-based learning of an approved kindergarten program helps prepare children for school and develop skills that are useful for life”

(<https://www.qld.gov.au/education/earlychildhood/programs/pages/about.html>)

Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline

Under the national *Early Years Learning Framework*, the *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline* (QKLG) is a curriculum document developed to assist teachers to deliver a quality kindergarten program and ensures consistency across the state. The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) developed the QKLG to support kindergarten teachers' professional practice and give teachers specific advice on how to deliver a program that meets national and state quality standards and regulations.

(<http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/pdfs/qklg-factsheet.pdf>)



The Walker Learning Approach

Here at Little Saints we implement the Walker Learning Approach. “The Walker Learning Approach is an Australian designed teaching and learning approach (pedagogy) that authentically personalises learning and is developmentally and culturally appropriate. Learning is real, relevant and meaningful for all children regardless of their age, culture, family context, socioeconomic background or geographical position. The WLA has been developed over 20 years using an action research model. It places the child at the centre and utilises developmental psychology and biology alongside cultural and environmental influences as its pedagogical platform and the basis for practical application across the Australian setting”

(http://earlylife.com.au/info/sites/default/files/WLA%20Pedagogy_Key%20Elements.pdf).

The WLA aligns with the current National Early Childhood Framework (NQF) including the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline. WLA acknowledges and reflects the key principles, practices and outcomes contained within the QKLG as essential elements of play-based curriculum.

The Key Principles Guiding WLA Key Practices

The key principles that guides WLA practice are that:

- All teaching is intentional.
- Not all children are ready to learn the same thing at the same time in the same way.
- Children’s interests are used not for the interest alone, but as a catalyst for engagement.
- Children’s interest, culture and context are respected and used as a springboard to facilitate further understandings and skill development in all areas of learning including literacy, numeracy, the sciences, the arts, language, cognition, social, psychological and emotional development.
- Child development is used as a basis for guiding practices as well as the principles of culture, community and family.
- Learning is personalised and uses the children’s interests alongside additional exposure and concepts and experiences for children to explore their world, concepts, skills and environment.
- The process of learning and skill acquisition is valued - not just, or always the focus of the end product.
- Intrinsic (not extrinsic) motivation is valued and embedded in practice.
- The adult / child relationship is highly valued and the relationship itself is a scaffold in the learning alongside the child.
- Relationship with child, family and community are integral components of the approach.

- The WLA does not require topics or themes but does include opportunities for teachers to include specific concepts.
- Child development is used as a basis for guiding practice.
- Relationships are developed and deepened through a range of key practices including Focus Children
- Learning is real, relevant and meaningful and is contextual to the child, family and community

Literacy & Numeracy

Our literacy and numeracy program incorporates best practices based on current research. Kindergarten provides an informal context to lay the foundation skills and processes for mathematical and literacy learning experienced at formal schooling (Irons, 2008).

What We Do To Promote Language and Emergent Skills

- **Play/Investigation:** How the physical environment is set up can either promote or demote emergent literacy. We promote emergent literacy by: ensuring the teacher is stationed at activities to engage in stimulating conversation; model reading and writing to children; engage in home corner play; provide a 'writing' / drawing area with a variety of resources such as pencils, paper, books, newspapers etc.; set up of offices etc. (Morrow, 1990).
- **Shared Reading:** reading stories with children both in small groups and large groups. Ensuring meaningful discussions about the content, images etc. occur which promote dialogic interactions (active interactions between child and teacher); allowing children time to comprehend the text encouraging both expressive and receptive language; and using books that the children enjoy to promote an appreciation of reading (Centre for Community Child Health, 2008; Harris, 2009).
- **Exposure to Print:** A variety of books will be available at all times for children to select themselves, and will include a variety of genres. During shared reading, the teacher will point to the words as they are read, will talk about the title, author, and illustrator; ask children to predict events; expose children to a variety of print such as road signs e.g. when going on excursions; reading newspapers; labels on food in lunch boxes; use the computer to write/type stories/emails; play silly games with children e.g. holding a book up-side-down (Centre for Community Child Health, 2008; Lawhon & Cobb, 2002).
- **Games and songs:** play word and sound games to encourage phonological awareness (Centre for Community Child Health, 2008).
- **Conversations and technical vocabulary:** use and define technical vocabulary when reading stories to promote vocabulary acquisition for words not heard in everyday speech (Torr & Scott, 2006). Use book reading time, meal times and playtimes to engage in cognitively challenging conversations in small groups as often as possible (Massey, 2004).

Why Not Use Commercial Phonics Programmes?

Although many Kindergartens use phonics programmes with children aged between four and five years, research tells us that it is not appropriate for young children. Best practice has been mentioned earlier for the development of literacy, and commercial phonics programmes do not take into account all of the developmental aspects of emergent literacy. For example, while commercial phonics programmes teach children the letters of the alphabet, they only teach the 26 letters; however the English language consists of approximately 44 different sounds (phonological awareness) which these programmes do not focus on. Similarly, they do not take into account vocabulary acquisition, receptive and expressive language, concepts of print, and oral language ability. Commercial programmes merely focus on alphabetic principle, which is only a small component of emergent literacy.

What We Do To Promote Numeracy

- Prior to school mathematics is informal, focusing on beginning processes for establishing children's reasoning and problem solving these activities include, sorting, matching, identifying and describing attributes, comparing, ordering and seriation. (Irons, 1999).
- Play/Investigation: How the physical environment is set up can either promote or demote numeracy. We promote emergent literacy by: ensuring the teacher is stationed at activities to engage in stimulating conversation; model reading and writing to children; engage in home corner play; provide a 'writing' / drawing area with a variety of resources such as pencils, paper, books, newspapers etc.; set up of offices etc. (Morrow, 1990).
- A structured, systematic and purposeful approach via deliberate, intentional teaching (Anthony & Walshaw, 2009)
- Underpinned by Socio-cultural theory - proactive engagement via scaffolding (Dunphy, 2009; Steele, 2001). Modeling how to arrange blocks in order of size.
- Use a range of assessment strategies to support individual learning needs, interests and backgrounds (Macmillan, 2009).
- Build on prior knowledge - Vygotsky's ZPD (Gifford, 2004).
- Build connections with everyday experiences (QSA, 2010). 'What numbers do I use to phone the ambulance?'
- Incorporate problem solving and high order thinking (Gifford, 2004). 'How many cups of sand do I need to fill my bucket?'
- Build positive perceptions of mathematics (Baroody & Coslick, 1998)
- Language is an essential medium for teaching mathematics
- Embed into daily routines, activities and transitions (Smith, 2009).
- Use a variety of relevant verbal, visual and symbolic language (QSA, 2010).
- Use children's books, songs and rhymes (Smith, 2009). 'Who sank the boat?'
- Resources – carefully selected to support learning (Ginsburg et al, 2008). For example blocks, counters, puzzles, number games, measuring devices.
- Hands-on, engaging and relevant to children's interests (QSA, 2010).
- Technological (Fox & Diezmann, 2007).
- Opportunities for small group, independent and collaborative learning (Mannigel, 1992).

Introducing Our Teachers

Little Saints Early Learning Centre meets all staffing requirements set out by the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care. Each Kindy room is staffed by a qualified Teacher and two Assistant Educators. Where possible shifts are arranged so that one of your child's primary carers will be at the Centre earlier in the morning and one will be there later in the afternoon to discuss any concerns that you may have regarding your child's day. All staff who work at our Centre are dedicated caring professionals who have completed or are enrolled in courses in relation to child development and education. Little Saints has a policy of employing qualified and experienced staff and supporting continued professional development. All staff have a current Suitability Notice (blue card) and are qualified in first aid and complete annual CPR updates. Staff are chosen because of their excellent personal qualities, dedication to their chosen career in child care, and love of children.

Kindy J Teacher

Jane Hirst – Teacher

Qualifications: Dip. Teach Primary, Grad. Dip.
Early Childhood
Suitability Notice - Blue Card
First Aid Certificate, CPR, Asthma &
Anaphylaxis



Kindy D Teacher

Danielle Bignall — Teacher

Qualifications: Bachelor of Education, Bachelor
of Teaching Early Childhood
Suitability Notice - Blue Card
First Aid Certificate, CPR, Asthma &
Anaphylaxis



Environment

Our Kindy environment encompasses two rooms adjoined by large sliding doors and a shared outdoor yard enabling the entire space to be utilised for both collaborative and separated learning opportunities. The architecturally designed building was opened in January 2014. Being a new facility the outside yard is continuing to be established and during the past twelve months we have extended the size of the yard to encompass more space and established trees, added several large logs for climbing and exploration and began the slow process of growing native and edible gardens. Over the course of this year we will continue to make improvements and additions to our yard that will support children's enjoyment, exploration and physical well-being within our natural environment. Our indoor space is organised into Learning Centres that support children's learning and skill development in all areas via investigation - these include literacy, numeracy, science, art, collage, construction, tinkering, sensory, dramatic play, book corner, science and nature.

Our Room Routine

Children are to be delivered to and collected from inside the building by a responsible adult (over 18 years). Parents must sign their children in and out of the centre using the sign-in sheets provided in your child's room. This is a legal requirement.

Arrival procedure

- If you arrive prior to 8am please take your child to the Pre-Kindy 1 yard at the opposite end of the building.
- If you arrive after 8am and there is an Educator in the Kindy rooms/yard please leave your in their care.
- Please place child's bag (including sheets) in the lockers provided outside on the veranda area of your room
- Please assist your child to place their lunch box and water bottle in the fridge and on the drink station
- Apply hat (and sunscreen if you haven't already done this at home)

Departure procedure

- Please collect your child from the Kindy room (if later than 4pm your child may be in the Pre-Kindy 1 yard)
- Please take ALL belongings home each day

What to Bring

- A wide brimmed hat (all year)
- A spare set of clothing, underwear, and socks
- Lunch box – NON INSULATED with meals for the day
- Water bottle
- Sheet bag (e.g. pillow case or draw-string bag) containing a single bed sheet or set of cot sheets for rest time and a pillow, if necessary. Please add a blanket in winter.

Please name all belongings.

Important Information

Lockers

Please place your child's bag and belongings in the lockers provided outside on the veranda area of your room.

Sun safety

Please apply sunscreen to your child each morning. Sunscreen is most beneficial when applied at least 20 minutes before going in the sun which is why we ask that you apply this to your child's skin before arriving at the Centre. Please ensure that your child is also supplied with a sun safe hat and shirt for the day.

Food and Drink

Please provide each day:

- Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea
- Healthy and 'nude' food only
- All meals in non-insulated containers
- Water bottle
- A variety of foods from various food groups
- NUT FREE food
- 'Sometimes' foods will be sent home for your child to consume outside of Little Saints.
- Some examples of 'Sometimes' foods are;
 - Chocolate and confectionary
 - Sweet biscuits, chips and high-fat savoury biscuits
 - Fried foods
 - Pastry-based foods such as pies, sausage rolls or pasties
 - Fast food and takeaway foods
 - Cakes and ice cream
 - Soft drinks, fruit juice, fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk and flavoured mineral water
- Please refer to our Nutrition Policy for more information (ask your Educator)

Illness/Medication

- If your child needs medication whilst at Little Saints it is very important that you fill out a Medication Form. These forms are located in each room and need to be filled out each day that your child requires the medicine. We are unable to administer the medicine if this form is not correctly filled out. Remember to give the medicine to an educator so it can be placed in the staff room fridge or in a high locked cupboard out of the children's reach.
- If your child is unwell or has been sick (vomiting or diarrhoea) in the past 24 hours please don't bring them to Little Saints. This causes other children and educators to become sick and infects the Centre. If you feel you need to administer Panadol or Nurofen before coming to Little Saints then your child is most likely not fit and well to attend that day. Please also advise staff if you have administered any type of medication in the last 24 hours.