

What happens within the Kiwi Group.....

In our Kiwi group programme the structure of our day mainly consists of 'Free Play' as children learn through play and we believe that child-led learning is extremely important and is the key to developing a love for learning. As a basis we like to focus on dispositional learning and we believe this allows us to celebrate each child's individual strengths and interests. Interests usually begin with one or two children but as the investigation develops more children are drawn into these learning journeys. What we find is through shared interests children develop friendships with their peers, learn to express feelings, make contributions to discussions, take ownership for individual and group learning, take turns, independently problem solve, listen to others and respect one another.

Our Kiwi group team are passionate about what we do. We have spent a lot of time designing our programme in consultation with local schools, other teaching teams, past and present families and have attended workshops based around this topic. With all this information we have designed a programme which suits our centre philosophy and further supports our children with their learning journey.

Self help skills and tidy up time

In the Kiwi room we foster taking responsibility for our space and care of the centre resources. This is a key focus we have to learn respect for our things and it also flows into tidy up time where we are all encouraged to contribute before mat times and at end of the day. This also includes taking care of our belongings inside our school bag/seg clothes and lunch box. Toileting and getting ourselves dressed is also fostered to support our independence skills. Additionally as children become more confident at writing their name they are encouraged to label their art work and creations.

Mat time: Each day before lunch we get together for group time

During these times we are focusing on main areas of learning that will give children a solid foundation for school readiness. We set our agenda for the day on a white board (so the children can visually see the tasks that they will be participating in). Key areas include literacy skills, mathematical skills, memory skills, name recognition, our calendar, colours, acknowledging significant cultural events and learning about relevant themes and topics from our current interests. These are all done in a positive, fun and interactive way of learning. Additionally as an ongoing theme we interweave the extension of our social and communications skills. This takes place when children share their news, or creations that they have made or we read social stories around feelings and positive role modelling. This encourages children to become an active member of the group, share their thoughts and ideas and build their confidence to participate in larger group settings. Excursions out in the community are also a highlight we do frequently and include trips to town, library and schools. This helps children to become familiar with their local area and the people, places and things within it.

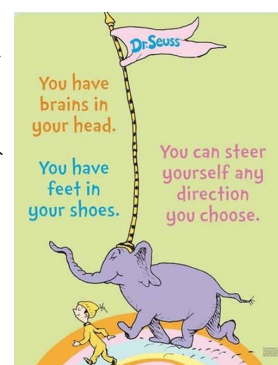
Positive behaviour plan

Within the Kiwi group we have a few different reward systems to reinforce positive behaviour. We do this to coach and further develop positive relationships within the Kiwi room setting with the use of these positive strategies. When an achievement is made we celebrate this as a group to make each child feel a sense of great achievement. 'Super friends' is a key concept that we use to facilitate this and encourages the children to use kind hands, and kind words. This ultimately fills up one another's buckets. (Buckets are what we use to describe our feelings). When someone empties out our bucket we may be feeling sad, angry or frustrated. When we show kindness for others, use our listening ears or are helpful we are choosing to fill up another's/our own bucket's which helps us to feel loved, valued and happy. Strategies include the 'Pom Pom' jar. Which is utilised when we recognise these positive behaviours and a child is rewarded with choosing a pom pom to place in the jar. Once full the Kiwi children as a group can decide on a reward e.g. Excursion to playground for Ice cream. Another system we have is 'Kiwi of the Week' which is awarded every week to a child who has displayed positive attitude towards their learning and others.

Lunch time:

When children enter the Kiwi group they come prepared with the healthy food knowledge that they have learnt from the Tui group. Much like at school we have our lunch outside on fine days either sitting on a mat or at the picnic tables. Our meal times are a time to share in positive conversation and bond as a group. We respect that not every child's eating habits are the same and allow them to choose when they are ready to leave (within reason). The Kiwi group children are also encouraged to bring drink bottles as this is something that will flow through at school.

Our biggest and most important learning agenda is social skills, which is interwoven throughout these learning journeys. Compassion for others, contribution and the ability to express our thoughts, feelings and ideas is what we believe will give children the best foundations to head off to school. Our hope for all our Kiwi children is to feel valued, safe and most of all loved. We want our Kiwi room to feel like a home away from home which provides an array of opportunities for them to build their confidence, develop their skills and interests and gain stronger understanding for themselves and their wider world. We believe this is the best approach to building confident, competent life long learners.



Our outdoor environment, and our value of risky play....

By the time our three and four year old children have reached the Kiwi group they are at that stage of development where they want to take risks and challenge themselves out in the playground. This type of behaviour not only extends on their play experiences, but it allows the child to take complete ownership of their own ability and safety (within reason), where they learn self confidence, emotional resilience, and the ability to assess risk for themselves.

As Kiwi teachers we see so many benefits from this type of play and we totally embrace the independence and empowerment that comes from being exposed to such an experience. We view our role (as teachers) as being the child's support person while they go through the process of risk taking and problem solving which will lead to an understanding of seeing themselves as competent and capable learners. Therefore we will talk with the child as they work and we may pose questions that will get children thinking about safety aspects within their work space.

We will provide for the children the materials that they need to create whatever experience it is that they are wanting to create and then we will stand back and leave them to it, observing from a distance as they work through their process.

Risks and challenges are important for healthy sensory and motor development. Children are naturally curious and seek out opportunities to make sense of their world. When children are given the freedom to create their own play they learn to recognise and manage risk-taking behaviours, experiment with their surroundings, take on responsibility, make mistakes and then learn from them, expand their thinking and reasoning and take charge of their own learning.

So what type of risky play might you see in the centre?? Climbing trees, riding bikes (in and out of the centre), building with loose parts, children creating obstacle courses, using ladders within the playground and many more amazing challenging activities all initiated by the children.

