

The Kindergarten



'We want more for our children than healthy bodies, we want our children to have lives filled with friendship and love and high deeds. We want them to be eager and willing to confront challenges. We want them to grow up with confidence in the future, a love of adventure, a sense of justice and courage enough to act on that sense of justice. We want them to be resilient in the face of setbacks and failures that growing up always brings.'
Martin Seligman 1995

Educational Philosophy

Here at Fawkner Park Children's Centre, we aim to provide a happy, relaxed and safe atmosphere for our children and families. We are passionate about developing a love for learning, aiming to both stimulate and challenge our children. Our Kinders leave Fawkner Park as curious and enthusiastic lifelong learners, thanks largely to the inquiry based curriculum we provide.

We are committed towards providing an inclusive environment, where diverse social and cultural backgrounds and abilities are respected and celebrated. Our teaching and resources reflect our commitment towards gender, cultural and social equality. At Fawkner Park, our main priority is to create a sense of community where children, staff and families feel safe and supported.

Our Curriculum

At Fawkner Park we deliver a play based emergent curriculum. We plan activities and set targets based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, using the children's interests as a means to achieve targeted intentions. We believe that play is the work of children. With a commitment towards hands-on, inquiry based learning, we cover all areas of the curriculum in as practical a way as possible. Our children benefit from a program that aims to incorporate both child-led learning and adult directed experiences, with children taking the lead as much as possible. This approach ensures that our children become independent and active learners.

In the Kinder room, we follow the Early Learning STEM principles for teaching Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Exploring STEM concepts helps children develop strong skills in many areas, such as problem solving and communication that prove useful in everyday life. With our enquiry lead curriculum, we use the STEM principles to introduce concepts such as hypothesising, risk taking and inquiring. It is through these principles that our children explore patterns, locations and the natural world. They investigate, construct, predict and cooperate, developing many key dispositions for learning as they go.

In addition to this, we have introduced an Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program into our Kinder room. We believe in the benefits of teaching children a language other than English and are excited to be teaching Mandarin to our Kinders. The program is led by a Master Degree qualified teacher who is a native speaker. The program uses an interactive tablet app and inspires children by driving a genuine interest in a new language and culture. Children are able to expand their knowledge of how language works and apply those skills to other literacy tasks, such as listening carefully to the sounds in words. These skills become very useful

when children learn to read and write, as language learning improves memory, concentration and critical thinking.

Our literacy program follows the same principles as the rest of our curriculum and is very much about hands-on, play based learning. We provide a language rich environment, designed to support emergent writing and develop early reading skills. In addition to the emergent, incidental learning that takes place, our teachers are also trained in more structured phonics programs that can be implemented if and when children start showing a natural interest and ability. Although being able to read and write simple words is not an expected skill when starting in Prep, many Kinder aged children begin to show a natural interest in early reading and writing, so this is very much nurtured within the room.

Extra-Curricular Activities & Special Events

At Fawkner Park Children's Centre we offer our children a range of extra-curricular activities, events and incursions. A number of sessions run weekly throughout the year:

Music and Movement: Hey Di Ho Music teachers visit the centre twice a week, leading interactive singing, dancing and musical instrument activities. Children learn popular songs from their own and other cultures, as well as in sign language. They explore musical instruments and patterns of movement, working towards a Christmas concert at the end of the year.

Sporty Stars: Once a week a trained coach delivers half an hour of focused physical activity to the Kinder and Pre Kinder rooms. Children learn a range of basic skills, such as kicking, throwing and catching, as well as exploring the skills needed to participate in team games. In addition to this, children take part in Soccer lessons once a week with a qualified Soccer coach. Skills such as dribbling and passing are explored and children are taught how to be a good team player.

Calisthenics: Led by a trained Calisthenics teacher, the Kinder children can choose to take part in these dance sessions two-three times a week. The children are taught set choreography, as well as getting the chance to create their own patterns of movement as well. The Kinders perform two or three dances at the end of year Christmas concert.

Events Calendar

To complement our rich cultural program, we deliver a large number of incursions and excursions throughout the year. These sessions expose our children to new experiences, new people and different cultures.

Regular excursions include visiting the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Botanical Gardens, Prahran Market and the Melbourne Museum. Planned incursions can vary from year to year, but usually include theatre performances, Koori culture workshops, musicians from different cultures, chick hatching programs, dog safety education, professional storytelling, animal farms and insect encounters.

Further Information

We are happy to show you around our wonderful Centre and to make time for you to meet our staff. For further information please contact our Administration Support, on 03 98202758 or via email at info@fpcc.net.au

School Readiness Program

Transitioning from Kindergarten to school is a big step for both the child and their family. At Fawkner Park Children's Centre we have been developing our School Readiness Program over many years and feel confident that we send our Kinders off to school completely equipped to deal with this new and exciting phase.

What does 'school readiness' look like?

Believe it or not, being 'school ready' is much less about whether your child can write their name and count to ten. Seeking advice from Prep teachers and Head Teachers, we have learnt that 'school readiness' refers less to academic readiness and more towards being socially and emotionally ready for the transition to school. Skills such as: can my child follow instructions, can they listen without interrupting, are they able to be patient and share toys with others, are they able to separate from me with ease, are all fundamental in being ready for school. In terms of academic readiness, think about whether your child can sit and listen for 10-15 minutes, whether they hold a book the right way up and whether they can manipulate scissors with increasing control. At Fawkner Park Children's Centre we incorporate all of these skills into our daily program and focus on preparing these abilities over the course of the year. We have a succinct approach to developing social and emotional maturity and work with an extremely supportive 'Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy', all of which add to our children being truly 'school ready'.

Phonics programs

Our Kinder room is staffed by experienced, degree qualified teachers who understand the many facets of child development. Although an ability to read and write simple words is not an expected skill when starting in Prep, at around the ages of four and five many children begin to show a natural interest and ability in early reading and writing. Our room is set up to encourage and nurture these developing abilities, with our teachers believing that a language rich environment is vital. For those children showing a keen interest and desire to learn more, we have the program flexibility and educator skill set to incorporate phonics programs into our daily routine. Our teachers bring with them a wealth of knowledge and are able to pick the 'best bits' from a range of phonics programs: Little Learners Love Literacy and Jolly Phonics to name a couple. Working with those children who are truly ready, we begin by introducing single letter sounds and move onto digraphs (ch sh th) and sight vocabulary later on in the year, as their skills progress. Guided reading will take place for the most able readers. Writing areas are set up throughout the year for children to access freely, ensuring that emergent writing is facilitated and planned for.

Partnerships with schools

At Fawkner Park Children's Centre we have an ongoing and supportive relationship with South Yarra Primary School. Many of our children feed into this school and we benefit from this



relationship in many ways. Towards the end of the year we arrange transition days where Grade 5 children visit our Kinder to work with our school leavers, regardless of which school they are going to. We find this experience undeniable supportive for our children, who love spending time with the 'big kids'. It helps to alleviate those feelings of anxiety around seeing older children in the playground and instead helps our children to see how much they can learn from these children. In addition to this, we take our school leavers to visit South Yarra Primary, to give them a sense of what to expect and how a primary school looks and feels.

For children not going to South Yarra Primary School, we are able to arrange phone calls with Prep teachers in order to handover and give helpful insights into the children they will be meeting in the new year. Kinder teachers also write Transition to School Statements for every school leaver and send these to their primary school. These are detailed documents that report on your child's achievements, successes and areas of growth.

Other ways we help ...

Towards the end of the year we really set our mind towards preparing the children for school and developing skills you may not have even considered!

We hold a 'Lunch Box Week' where we encourage children to bring a packed lunch to Kinder every day. This simple exercise is designed to introduce a few key concepts to our children: the children learn how to select and save food throughout the day, preparing them for the challenge of eating some food for morning tea and the main bulk for lunch. In addition to this, it introduces the skill of being able to manipulate Tupperware boxes and open packets. For some children, this is a much more difficult task than it sounds, so preparing them in advance is very supportive. As well as the children, it gives families the chance to 'practice' preparing lunch boxes as well, helping you to identify which foods work well for your child.

Another popular week held in Kinder is 'School Uniform Week'. The Kinder children absolutely love getting dressed in their new school uniform and showing it off to their teachers and friends. We find that this really instils a sense of excitement in the children and helps them to see starting school in a very positive light.

Starting school doesn't have to be a daunting or stressful time for you and your family. At Fawkner Park Children's Centre we work in partnership with you to make sure that your child is truly ready for the challenges and excitements involved in starting school.