



The indoor & outdoor environment

INTRODUCTION

Here at Little Learners Day Care Centre we incorporate an Indoor / Outdoor program for all children, on a daily basis throughout the day, weather dependant. This program is inclusive of all children, and is run throughout the day to engage in different activities, for the learning and development of the children.

All children will participate in the indoor / outdoor program and will be encouraged to use the facilities and resources available at the centre.

Our programs are facilitated for all children, and requests for children to stay indoors, are not possible. Here at LLDC we believe that all children can participate in the indoor / outdoor program, as we have a range of different activities and resources to cater for the needs of all children, and all ages.

This may include – but is not limited to:

- Sand play
- Water play
- Painting
- Physical activity
- Building and construction
- Sensory play
- Quiet time
- Sleep time
- Meal times
- Group time

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

GOALS - What are we going to do?

LLDC will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment, both indoors and outdoors will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

STRATEGIES - How will it be done?

LLDC will ensure that:

- Fencing and barriers which enclose outdoor areas used by children in the education and care service are maintained to ensure they are of a height and design that prevents children of preschool age from going through, over or under the structure.
- Considerations about minimising access to the LLDC by unauthorised people and animals will also inform the height and design of fencing and barriers.
- Sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained, in order to support all children to engage and access the program and develop their developing skills and independence.
- Adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Toilet, washing and drying facilities are developmentally and age appropriate and are located and designed in a way that support safe use and convenient access by children.
- The nappy change areas support safe access and hygienic nappy change routines and that educators and children have ready access to hand washing facilities.
- Education and care environments are well ventilated and have adequate natural light.
- Indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children's safety and wellbeing.
- The play spaces in the education and care service provide children with opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- The outdoor education and care environment has adequate shaded areas to protect children from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- The environment seeks to support convenient access to both indoor and outdoor play activities and to toilet and nappy change facilities according to supervision requirements, children's independence and developmental needs.
- Where possible, gardens reflect the local natural habitat and encourage native wildlife into the education and care environment.

Little Learners Day Care Centre will:

- Ensure that plants are selected to minimise risks to children. No poisonous or dangerous plants will be included in LLDC.
- Collaborate with educators to carefully select and provide adequate numbers of resources, in order to contribute to children's sense of belong and to provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development.

The Educational Leader will collaborate with educators to:

- Equally value both the outdoor and indoor learning environments as places that support children's learning, creativity, social engagement and sense of belonging.
- Seek to develop learning environments that are secure and predictable and that support children to take increasing responsibility for their health, hygiene and personal care.
- Design learning environments that are welcoming and accessible for all children and families, considering cultural diversity, social and physical inclusion.
- Design environments that reflect different cultures, interests, abilities and learning styles.

- Design environments that support small group work in ways that minimise the risk of injury, minimise disruption between activities, minimise conflict between children and reduce prolonged exposure to excess internal and external noise.
- Design outdoor learning experiences that complement and extend the indoor activities and learning experiences.
- Ensure that outdoor environments provide opportunities to learn through play, enabling access to materials that stimulate investigation and reflection, and enriched with natural resources and opportunities to connect with nature.
- Design indoor environments that are enriched by natural resources and opportunities to engage with nature.
- Offer children opportunities to be active, messy and noisy and play on a large scale.
- Encourage and nurture children's interest in the world around them. By providing children with materials, resources and information, educators can help children to appreciate and respect the beauty of their natural and built environments.
- Select resources and design learning environments that foster children's connections with the natural environment.
- Select natural materials and fibres if possible, when purchasing new equipment and resources. These include items such as wooden shelving and natural materials. Such resources enhance the look and feel of nature within the environment.
- Natural and flexible play materials such as sand, leaves and water will be available for children.
- Encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
- Encourage children to care for plants including vegetables, herbs, trees etc.
- Design areas for appreciation of nature, where educators and children can observe the natural play environment and reflect on nature. This will include the introduction of indoor plants into indoor area. Educators and children will be responsible for the care of these plants ensuring they have enough sunlight and water. As in the outdoor garden, plants will be selected to minimise the risks to children.

EVALUATION

LLDC has aesthetically pleasing, safe, flexible and functional play and learning environments. Educators, children and families are supported to consider environmentally sustainable practices. Children's emotional, physical, social, cognitive and spiritual wellbeing are supported by the design and functions of the indoor and outdoor environments. The environment complements the educational and care aims of LLDC, supporting children to have a strong sense of being and belonging, as well as facilitating their growth and development.

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur, and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.