

ARIAH PARK PRESCHOOL

Philosophical Statement

This statement is supported by all the centre's policies.

The Ariah Park Preschool's philosophy is an **inclusive** and **holistic** one that expects and respects **diversity** in all its many forms. To this end **family collaboration** is considered essential and a 'parents as partners' view is adopted. Local cultural contexts also constitute part of the centre's frame of reference as evidenced by its responsiveness to and support of the rural/farming community it is a part of, and its recognition of **environmental sustainability**. In this way the centre promotes a view of children as the collective responsibility of the community they live in.

The centre's educational program is **child centred**, developmentally based and acknowledges the learning and developmental needs of individual children within the needs of the group as a whole. As such it is a **play based** approach that assumes active and exploratory learning can be **socially constructed** or **individually based**. It fosters **lifelong skills**, recognises the importance of **dispositions** towards learning (such as curiosity and persistence when problem solving) and also, the need for young learners to be intrinsically motivated to learn. The centre uses a spiral curriculum framework that enables new learning to be firstly consolidated and later, extended as it is applied to different situations. The educational program is meaningfully contextualised in terms of children's social and cultural backgrounds and life/play experiences to this point of their lives, yet also aims to be of a **transformational** nature in that it exposes children to different experiences and challenges where they can apply new knowledge or newly gained physical skills at higher levels of understanding or ability.

Children are treated with respect and their **self-esteem** as learners is preserved. They are encouraged to take a responsible role in their own learning and also, to develop **tolerant** and constructive relationships with others while at the same time acquiring the necessary skills to assert their own understandings and rights in appropriate ways. The centre recognises the importance of positive dispositions like these as contributing to the **lifelong skills** of being able to make sound independent choices, develop empathy for the needs of others, and act responsibly.

Of paramount importance is the centre's commitment that children enjoy their preschool years and find it to be a relaxing and exciting adventure in a secure, safe and happy environment.



Note: the centre's philosophical statement has evolved from various theoretical bases that underlie practice in the early childhood field, plus much early childhood research. To this end it incorporates the historical philosophies of Froebel, Dewey, Montessori and Malaguzzi's Reggio Emilia perspectives (plus others), the psychological bases of constructivism (Piaget's theory as has been developed through the research of Bruner, Bickhard, Fischer amongst others) and social constructivist approaches (Vygotsky's work as has been developed through the research of Fleer, Katz, Rogoff and Bickhard amongst others), theoretical perspectives about dispositional cognition and development (Katz's work and that of Perkins, Jay & Tishman), and social learning/social cognition theories that developed from the early work of Bandura, Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg through to the more contemporary research of Damon, Gilligan, Maccoby and Selman, amongst others.

Reviewed 7th March 2014. Signed