



# The Kindergarten Year at Mother Duck





“Nothing without joy.”

Loris Malaguzzi, 1995



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## **Foreword - Karen Prestedge BEd(EC)**

Chief Executive Officer

### **“What Does the Kindergarten Year at Mother Duck Look Like?”**

Firstly, I would like to share a little bit about myself, I am the CEO of Mother Duck Childcare Centres. I have worked at Mother Duck since 1998. My first role was as the “Preschool Teacher” (there was different terminology) at our Carindale Centre. I had just completed my Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) and whilst most of my university friends went to work in Early Primary, I declined a position with Education Queensland as I was so passionate about the birth to five years sector.

I accepted an owner/operator position at the newly purchased Manly in 2000, and then progressed to the role of CEO in 2010. Whilst I have progressed in my career, the Kindergarten Year is something that I have always felt is close to my heart and something I am extremely passionate about still today.

From my original degree I have remained abreast of Early Childhood Education throughout my 20 + year career. I am extremely passionate about professional learning, growth, and development and this is also a part of the Mother Duck culture. I do not believe any other Early Childhood Education facility in South East Queensland has the same commitment to time, resources, and money that we put into the further professional development of all our Educators.

The Mother Duck Management Committee decides all the operational decisions at our Centres. It is democratic and all members on the Committee (apart from the original founder) hold Early Childhood qualifications. Our Mother Duck Management Committee and dedicated Educators have been working on the “Reconfiguring Quality Project” under the direction of Dr Deborah Harcourt over many years which has resulted in many positive changes in our service delivery and outcomes for children.

I would also like to share with you that I am a single Mum to a teenage daughter. Next year she commences her Senior schooling and I am excited for this new journey for her. However, I can still remember the anxiety that I experienced in her Kindergarten year and on school entry. It was the most anxiety I have ever felt in her entire schooling as I was, just like you, wanting the best start for her to her formal schooling years.

Whilst “school readiness” is important, I would also like you to look past Prep entry further to “readiness for life”.

*“Healthy development in the early years (particularly birth to three) provides the building blocks for educational achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, lifelong health, strong communities, and successful parenting of the next generation.”*

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/guide/what-is-early-childhood-development-a-guide-to-the-science/>

Whilst our society values formal schooling above early childhood education, the truth is your child has already formed the foundation for all future learning from Birth to three years old. I hope you can take the time to watch the TED Talk from Sir Ken Robinson below. Please remember to keep in mind not only Prep entry, but preparation for life. . .

[https://www.ted.com/talks/sir\\_ken\\_robinson\\_do\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_do_schools_kill_creativity?language=en)

We have created this document to provide you with information about the Kindergarten year at Mother Duck Childcare to assist you to make the most informed choice possible. When reading this document, please reflect not on “What Do I Want my Child to Be?” but rather “Who Do I Want My Child to Be?”

Much Love,

Miss Karen

## How Does Learning Occur in Early Childhood?

The Council of Australian Governments created the first ever National Framework for Early Childhood Education in 2009. This document is titled:

### **“BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia”**

*“The Framework draws on conclusive international evidence that early childhood is a vital period in children’s learning and development. It has been developed with considerable input from the early childhood sector, early childhood academics and the Australian and State and Territory Governments.*

*The Framework forms the foundation for ensuring that children in all early childhood education and care settings experience quality teaching and learning. It has a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development. The Framework has been designed for use by early childhood Educators working in partnership with families, children’s first and most influential Educators.*

*“Early childhood Educators guided by the Framework will reinforce in their daily practice the principles laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). The Convention states that all children have the right to an education that lays a foundation for the rest of their lives, maximises their ability, and respects their family, cultural and other identities, and languages. The Convention also recognises children’s right to play and be active participants in all matters affecting their lives.” P5*



This document applies to all Early Childhood Education and Care Services across Australia. The Framework is required to be implemented in all Early Childhood settings which includes Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Stand Alone Kindergartens and Private Schools. The Framework has been created by the highest-level Early Childhood experts across the country and has been informed by international research. From a parent's perspective it is important to reflect upon what programs they are choosing, and is play at the centre of the program?

In addition to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG) describes a set of five learning and development areas that align to the five broad learning outcomes identified in the EYLF. More information on this can be found on the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority's website.

[https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/p\\_10/qklg\\_eylf\\_alignment.pdf](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/p_10/qklg_eylf_alignment.pdf)



The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG) provides advice for planning, documenting, and assessing children’s learning and development, sharing information with parents/carers and, with consent, schools. Mother Duck Childcare provide Queensland Government Approved Kindergarten Programs, with a requirement to have appropriately qualified Teachers and implement the QKLG.

The continua of learning and development is embedded in the QKLG and used by educators to assess children’s level of familiarity with the learning situation and level of support needed to demonstrate learning. The continua are described using three phases — emerging, exploring and extending. The continua document is a tool to support children’s learning, and also used when assessing children’s learning. Teachers refer to the continua to make consistent judgements on each child’s progress, and at the end of the year when completing the transition statement.

The Queensland Government’s **Kindy Counts** describes Kindergarten as “an educational program available to children in the year before school.”

*At kindy, your child will:*

*“make friends, share and play with others*

*express themselves through art, dance and dramatic play*

*learn through new experiences*

*become more confident and feel strong*

*communicate ideas and feelings*

*build on their knowledge and explore new ideas, helping their confident transition to school.”*

<https://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/about/>



## 21st Century Skills

A huge dilemma for families and Educators is how can we prepare our Kindergarten children for the future when we don't even know what society is going to look like? The future of today's children is so unpredictable. In the future they will be required to be creative, have problem solving skills and an ability to adapt to change. Children need life-long skills that will enable them to succeed in a variety of situations throughout their time in school and adulthood.

Please take the time to watch this TED Talk Dr. Laura A Jana.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/dr\\_laura\\_a\\_jana\\_skills\\_every\\_child\\_will\\_need\\_to\\_succeed\\_in\\_21st\\_century](https://www.ted.com/talks/dr_laura_a_jana_skills_every_child_will_need_to_succeed_in_21st_century)



These skills are already accepted in primary and secondary schools and are more widely seen as a necessity for children's success. We have these 21st Century skills in mind when educating children. Through our daily program, teaching practices and environments, particularly our Studio configurations, we allow for these important skills to be developed.

**“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”**

Alvin Toffler (American writer, futurist, and businessman)



**A quote\* to reflect upon...**

## **I Remember . . . .**

**5% of what I hear**

**10% of what I read**

**20% of what I hear and read**

**30% of what I watch someone else do**

**50% through discussion with others**

**75% of what I do**

**90% of what I teach others**

\* This quote is based upon Edgar Dale's Cone of Experience, with the percentages later added by another person.

Whilst the percentages have not actually been tested in research,  
the essence of this quote forms the foundation good early childhood teaching practice

<https://www.td.org/insights/debunk-this-people-remember-10-percent-of-what-they-read>

## What Does a Kindergarten Day Look Like at Mother Duck?

### Structure of the Day.

Significant parts of the day	What this means for children	What this means for Educators
Welcoming children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are greeted by familiar Educators and children.</li> <li>• Children will have an opportunity to assist Educators in setting up resources and materials.</li> <li>• Children have opportunities to self-select from a range of experiences (e.g. doll play; construction; home play; water and mud play; block play; etc.).</li> <li>• Children make a smooth transition from family to the Centre.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators are on hand to greet children and families.</li> <li>• Educators use this opportunity to share information and stories of learning with families.</li> <li>• Educators have a range of invitations for self-select experiences ready for children, and that have been prepared with children.</li> </ul>
Morning meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement of Country to respect the traditional Custodians, their Country and their history.</li> <li>• Children have an opportunity to reflect/self-assess on past events.</li> <li>• Children have an opportunity to share previous ideas and learning.</li> <li>• Children are invited to share their plans for 'thinking and doing' for the morning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators have documentation that supports children's reflections.</li> <li>• Educators make children's previous work accessible.</li> <li>• Educators support children's planning for the morning.</li> <li>• Educators have planned for accessible resources and materials to support children's thinking.</li> </ul>
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have access to a large block of uninterrupted time for thinking and doing.</li> <li>• Children have access to materials and resources they need.</li> <li>• Children work in small groups on experiences of mutual interest and satisfaction.</li> <li>• Children can self-select a time for morning tea/snacks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators are on hand to launch new ideas with small groups of children.</li> <li>• Educators are supporting children's play with appropriate materials and resources.</li> <li>• Educators are prepared with the tools to document children's thinking and learning.</li> <li>• Educators are supporting children's play with appropriate questions and acknowledgements, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "I noticed that you"</li> <li>- "Can you tell me more about your thinking?"</li> <li>- "I wonder how you decided to?"</li> <li>- "Can you explain how your brain helped you think about this?"</li> <li>- "You seem to be running out of ideas here. How can I help you?"</li> <li>- "I was thinking about how you talked about ..... yesterday".</li> <li>- Shall we see what other ideas are coming to your mind?"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Lunch and rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children can expect to assist in setting and clearing tables for lunch and to self-serve portions.</li> <li>• Children can expect to sit in a shared, tranquil space for lunch with their friends.</li> <li>• Children can expect to have quiet and relaxed conversations with Educators and children.</li> <li>• Children will transition to rest or quiet activities to recharge their bodies and brains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators will engage calmly with children in preparing for lunch as a learning opportunity.</li> <li>• Educators will ensure that the dining space is clean and inviting as a social space.</li> <li>• Educators will sit with children and enjoy lunch time conversations.</li> <li>• Educators will support children to independently transition to rest or quiet activities.</li> </ul>
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have access to the morning's projects to continue on if they wish.</li> <li>• Children have an opportunity to complete and reflect on the day's work.</li> <li>• Children have access to a range of materials and resources to self-select play experiences indoors and outdoors.</li> <li>• Children can self-select a time for snacks.</li> <li>• Children will have an opportunity to work quietly with an adult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators will acknowledge the afternoon as a part of the planned curriculum and will have appropriate materials and resources available for children to self-select.</li> <li>• Educators will support individuals and small groups, in specific skill development.</li> <li>• Educators will use this opportunity to talk with children about the morning's work, assisting children to self-assess their learning (based on their documentation).</li> </ul>
Farewell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have an opportunity to share the day's work with family.</li> <li>• Children are ready for the transition from the Centre to their family.</li> <li>• Children will have an opportunity to prepare materials and resources for the next day.</li> <li>• Each child is farewelled as an individual.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators share something of the child's thinking and learning with their family.</li> <li>• An Educator is on hand to farewell individual children.</li> <li>• Educators support children in preparing materials and resources for the next day.</li> </ul>





## What do we do differently in the Mother Duck Kindergarten Year and Why?

**Why No Group Times?...** A few years ago, group times were considered an important part of the Kindergarten Program. All of the children were gathered on the mat to passively listen to the Teacher read a story and engage in direct instruction of the class. The group time would normally take at least ten minutes to gather the children on the carpet, with some not willing to sit, and others staring off into space. I am sure from your own early childhood experience you remember being made to sit on the mat like this. Do you remember what you were taught over all those days, weeks, and years of this type of schooling?

*I personally remember sitting on the mat in Kindergarten, but I don't remember what I was taught. I do remember growing mint in the garden at my Kindy, drawing with felt pens with my friends, and (much to my Mother's horror) learning how to climb a tree!*

*What do you remember from your early schooling?*

*What did you enjoy?*

*What didn't you like?*

**“Group times? What a waste of my life”** Jack aged 4, 2015

This does not mean that we don't take the time to read to children during the day. We always do this throughout the day. But rather than being an “enforced” time to listen to a story, we welcome children to come and listen at their leisure, stimulating a love of reading.

## We do Morning Meeting...

The Morning Meeting is an important part of the Kindergarten Day where small groups of children gather at the same time during the day and discuss their plans for the day with Educators and their peers. This provides an opportunity for the children to express their ideas which not only immediately engages them in the meeting, but also increases the Educators knowledge of children's interests, ideas and thinking. This provides a wonderful opportunity for discussion with others to enhance children's learning.



The most important component of the morning meeting is “Think, Say, Draw Do.” This process encourages children to talk about their ideas, then put them on paper, and regularly check back on their plan with their play and exploration. Throughout the Kindergarten year we scaffold the children to become more collaborative with their planning to encourage creative thinking, communication, collaboration, teamwork, and social skills. These skills are recognised by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) as 21st Century Skills.

This ensures that children will be ready for the requirements of “sitting on the mat” at school, but the learning that takes place in and after the morning meeting is far richer than a teacher directed method.

**Why No Traditional Phonics Programs?...** Traditional phonics programs were used by Mother Duck Childcare many years ago before we discovered a better way. These programs rely on direct instruction and “rote learning”. Do you remember memorising your times tables as a child? Was it an enjoyable experience?

At Mother Duck we certainly explore literacy and numeracy in early childhood, but we do this in a better way. . . .



## We Focus on Literacy and Numeracy as a Way to Communicate

The EYLF recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) in early childhood education. At Mother Duck Childcare we recognise that literacy and numeracy require foundational learning prior to introducing these concepts.

*“From the moment a baby is born, from that very first cry, the urge to communicate is a biological imperative. As human beings, we simply must make our wishes, thoughts, feelings, and needs understood by the people around us. At first this is primarily about survival – making sure we are fed and kept warm. But communicating through language is also part of what being human is all about. The ability to use symbolic forms of expression (letters, words, numbers, symbols) is what separates us from the rest of the animal kingdom. It enables the complex patterns of thought that have led to great literature, to vital scientific discoveries, and to amazing technological advances.”*



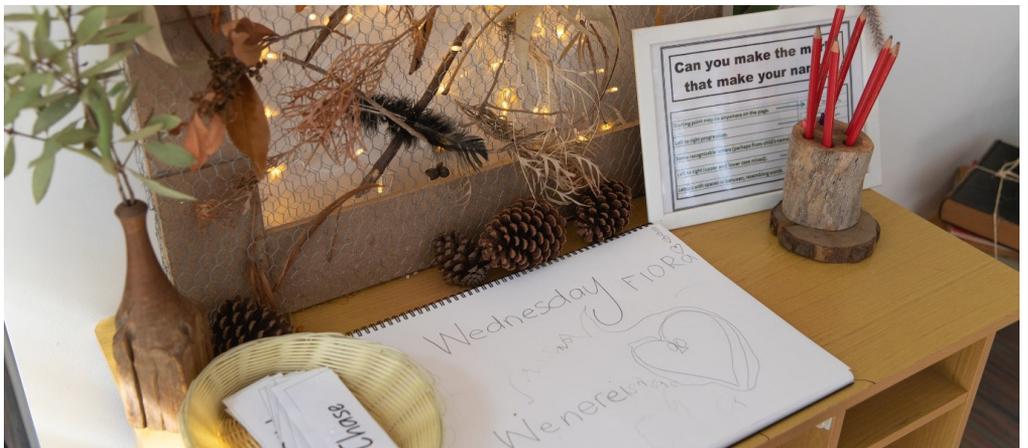
<https://www.teachearlyyears.com/learning-and-development/view/the-road-to-writing-physical-skills>

If you reflect on learning through play, it's all about using symbols. When a child picks up a small block and puts it to their ear and starts talking, we all know the block is not a telephone, but it IS a symbol! Your child has already experienced an abundance of these opportunities at Mother Duck prior to entering Kindergarten. Remember healthy development from birth to three provides the building blocks for academic ability.



Literacy and numeracy learning are most effective when there is a “reason”. Simply counting items for rote is not only boring but it has no purpose for the child. Instead, counting “how many” bowls are needed to be placed out for mealtime has purpose, and our Kindergarten Teachers carefully plan many ways for this incidental learning to take place throughout every day.

Writing (or attempting to write) their name on arrival, during mealtimes, on creations/ explorations provides real reasons to write our name rather than “so I can be ready for school”. The morning meetings and Think, Say, Draw, Do provide an abundance of opportunities to use symbols in a meaning and purposeful way.



Learning to write is not only a cognitive skill, but it's also a physical skill just like learning to walk. The following physical skills are required when learning to write, and the ways they have been developed, and will continue to be developed at Mother Duck.

- **Gross Motor Skills.** Developed by using obstacle courses e.g. climbing, crawling, large muscle play with large “loose parts”, gardening e.g. digging, carrying buckets with water/soil, and large block play
- **Bilateral integration (Crossing the mid-line).** Developed with ball play, pouring water from jugs.
- **Fine-motor control.** Developed with visual arts activities including painting, drawing, clay, small blocks, loose parts.
- **Developing dexterity.** Self-dressing e.g. buttons, zips etc. Cutting and using tape with box construction, Balancing small blocks, Clay work.
- **Holding a writing tool.** Drawing using a variety of tools. Commencing with chubby crayons/ chalk/felt pens/pencils to gradually thinner/longer tools.
- **Core Strength.** “The body’s core refers to the muscles surrounding the abdomen, pelvis and back. If a child has poor core strength, they will therefore have difficulty controlling fine motor skills, such as handwriting”

<https://occupationaltherapy.com.au/importance-core-strength-children/>

Core Strength can be developed through Balancing beams. Yoga activities. Sitting at the desks/ tables when drawing/writing/engaging in play. Clay work instead of playdough as clay is harder to work with, but over time will build more muscle strength.



## **Why No Classroom with one Kindergarten Teacher and Assistant Educator?**

In the past we had 22 Kindergarten children in one classroom with a Kindergarten Teacher and Assistant. The Kindergarten Teacher was “in charge” of the program and the Assistant helped to wash the paint brushes. This meant the teacher was observing all the children and providing only one perspective of each child’s learning. Space was limited as we needed to fit all the learning spaces in one classroom, which meant the opportunities for children to engage in large play across areas was very limited.



## **We Provide Studios...**

Over the past five years we have moved from the model described above to Studio learning, and the benefits for children have been numerous. Firstly, there are a team of Educators (including the Kindergarten Teacher) in the Studio. All the Educators in the space are required to observe and document children’s learning and share this in a planned weekly meeting lead by the Educational Leader of the service. Of course, our Kindergarten Teacher shares the unique knowledge they have gained through their studies, but this “capacity builds” all Educators in the Studio. This means that all Educators are working together in the educational program which results in a richer program for the children. This also provides “multiple perspectives” on each child’s learning and development.

The larger Studio spaces provide richer play spaces to extend children's learning, and to work on "projects" over several days to re-visit learning. The QKLG Learning and Development Area of Active Learning with the Key Focus "Building positive dispositions towards learning" describes a skill in the extending phase as a child that "independently plans, selects resources and carries out projects" 2018 p22

Earlier in this document we reflected on how information can be received, and the most effective ways for retaining that information, and that teaching others provides a higher level of learning for the teacher. Multi-age play provides opportunities to allow for older peers to be the teacher to younger peers which benefits both the teacher and learner. The QKLG Learning and Development Area of Connectedness with the Key Focus of Building Positive Relationships describes "independently showing concern for the needs of others" as another extending phase skill.



Further to this, our Kindergarten Teachers all agree that the benefits of having children attend the Studio across the two years is substantial. It means that the first year has provided the foundation of creating their identity in the play space, as well as become familiar with the resources, traditions, or rituals in the space. The second year then provides a "consolidation" year where deeper learning can occur.

I often hear a fear from families "If my child does a second year, won't they get bored?". A play-based curriculum means that children will never be bored as learning and teaching is integrated. Although we have a "Structure of the Day" the learning occurs differently every day.



### **Why No Set Hours over Set Days?**

For many reasons stand-alone Kindergartens and Kindergartens attached to Private Schools operate set days of the week, over set times 40 weeks of the year.

### **We Operate 12 Hours a Day, 5 Days a Week, 52 Weeks of the Year**

Whilst our operating hours are a benefit for families to support their busy lives, this also supports children. The set hours and set days system in other services can mean that the learning is limited for a child compared to a child attending our Centre over longer days, five days a week. There is simply more time for learning.

Most of the children that commence in our Kindergarten programs have attended Mother Duck Childcare in younger Studios. Whilst the obvious advantage of being in a familiar environment assist our children transition to the Kindergarten Studio with relative ease, there are many other things our Educators do to ensure children are “Kindergarten ready”.

In consultation with our Educational Leader, all Educators in all Studios reflect on what skills and rituals they need to be developing right from the Infants’ Studio, to provide children with “Kindergarten readiness”. This includes ensuring mastery of materials before Kindergarten entrance e.g. the ability to work with clay, use drawing implements and introduction to scissors occurs BEFORE children progress to the Kindergarten Studio.

This also includes the “rituals” children are a part of throughout the day. One example is children from a very young age assist setting up the meals space and cleaning up after themselves, to have the skills required for the important Kindergarten year.



During the second part of each year the Educators in the Kindergarten Studio and Studio prior spend time in each other's spaces working with the children to ensure they are developing the necessary skills for "Kindergarten readiness". Also, this means that all children have benefited from this. At another service many children may be experiencing their first time away from home and require a lot of additional support from the teacher with settling into the Kindergarten Program.

### **Why No "Facebook Style" Online Documentation For You To Access Each Day?**

Many other Centres use software for children's documentation that is like a blogging or social media type platform. They advertise these as a benefit for children's learning and to provide up to date information to families about children's progress. Approximately six years ago when these software platforms became popular in the Early Childhood sector the Mother Duck Management Committee did extensive research into the software systems, how they worked, costs, as well as the benefits and detractions for the education we provided.

One of the major concerns was the time that it would take for our Educators to capture the multitude of images and to upload to ensure each child has had an individual "post" each day

The Mother Duck Management Committee's main concerns were children's safety as Educators were distracted in undertaking tasks on the software instead of engaging in active supervision.

With our Educators being provided with another task health and hygiene standards were likely to

deteriorate and, most importantly deep connections with children based on trust would be at risk as the Educators would be task focused on ensuring a set number of “posts” were uploaded each day.

When posts are being created to meet quotas rather than reflect learning, educators are choosing to upload images of children’s day based on when they have spare time. This provides a false record of the child’s learning as it doesn’t accurately record what is an achievement for the child, and the opportunity for Educators to share meaningful moments where both the child and Educator place value on the child’s progress have been lost. This can then erode children’s self-esteem and intrinsic motivation.

We also understand that technology is an inevitable part of our lives today. Whilst technology is used as a research tool in our Kindergarten Studios, we are keenly aware of the impact our Educators have as role models for our children in their first five years of life. We strongly believe we have a social responsibility to minimise Educators’ use of devices during their interactions with children, and to ensure the Educators have time to truly be present with the children.



## **What Educational Documentation Do We Do at Mother Duck?**

Our Educators believe in being “fully present” with children which involves being deliberate in observing the child/ren and being intentional on how to scaffold the child/ren in their explorations.

We describe this as “listening with intent” which is a strategy used by our Educators to:

- Become fully present in the moment.
- To look for a “teachable moment”.
- Scaffold the children’s exploration in their learning through conversation, open-ended questioning, assisting to access additional tools/resources.



During morning meetings and throughout the day our Educators engage in discussions with children, to further develop a strong understanding of each child’s abilities and strengths and then intentionally support each child to use their strengths and ideas to gain self-confidence amongst their peers. Our Educators regularly support children to engage in peer scaffolding, providing opportunities for older children to support younger children throughout the Studios as well as in mixed aged play. Furthermore, our Educators are responsive to children’s needs, ideas and play by:

- Providing a positive and supportive emotional environment.
- Showing enjoyment with children as they engage in play, and daily rituals.
- Listening with intent to children and developing a knowledge of each child as an individual what are their likes/dislikes.
- Responding with sensitivity to meet the children’s needs.

- Scaffolding children’s learning through their interests and thinking.
- Provisioning of resources to allow children’s exploration and experimentation.
- Displaying resources and materials in inviting ways to communicate to children their explorations are valued and
- Encouraging appropriate risk taking in children’ learning.

Each Educator who works directly with the children in the Kindergarten Studio has a responsibility and accountability to listening with intent throughout their work.

The following questions assist each Educator to guide their listening:

- Who are these children?
- What ideas do they have?
- What skills are they working on?
- How does the environment support their thinking?
- What strategies work best to support their thinking?
- Who are the Educators in relation to the child?
- What roles do the Educators play?



Each Educator will have an A3 clipboard and sheets of the A3 tool to record “noticings” throughout their day. This must be a handwritten (not electronic) document. There are no set rules for how many noticings, each Educator should record what they think is significant.

Studio Meetings are a one hour scheduled meeting attended by each Educator who works regularly in the Studio, along with the Educational Leader each week.

**Education and Care Services National Regulation 74 states:**

*“The approved provider of the education and care service must ensure that, for the purposes of the educational program, the following are documented—*

*(a) for a child preschool age or under—*

*(i) assessments of the child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences, and participation in the educational program; and*

*(ii) assessments of the child’s progress against the outcomes of the educational program.*

The tracking tool is completed as part of the Studio meeting, short phrases to summarise learning, the summary comes from the listening tool, NOT in addition to. The date of the noticing should be recorded for each child to easily identify the relevant noticing, making it easier to report on individual children’s learning. This tool is used to provide the evidence for Formative and Summative Assessments.

The Studio Journal is available for families to view at any time. The purpose of this document is an organising tool. It tells a clear and easy to follow story of the work you are doing alongside children and colleagues. This document houses the critical reflection from the Studio meetings, and any other documentation regarding the planning of the Educational program. This may include (but not be limited to), artefacts such as children’s work, photographs, research articles, plans of indoor and outdoor play spaces. The Studio journal should be on display for families, to ensure Regulation 75 from the Education and Care Services National Regulation is met.

*“The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that— information about the contents and operation of the educational program for the service is displayed at the education and care service premises at a place accessible to parents of children being educated and cared for by the service;”*

Planning for the Possible Inquiries are then completed over time in the Studio meetings once a possible inquiry has been agreed upon through the Studio meetings. Once a possible inquiry has been identified during studio meetings, educators record their planning and thinking on a Planning for the Possible tool.

This framework guides our thinking and is added to over time as the educators and children make new discoveries in their play.



### **What Specific Information Will I Be Provided About My Child’s Learning?**

On commencement in the Kindergarten Studio all families will be provided with an opportunity for a “Meet and Greet” with key Educators. These meetings are provided at regular scheduled times throughout the year, and in addition families can request a meeting at any time.

Families are provided a written formative assessment for their child at two intervals in the year. These assessments are written to the five EYLF Outcomes to inform each family of their child’s progress.

Meet and Greets will be provided to all families who wish to discuss their child’s formative assessment.

A Summative Assessment at the end of the Year will be provided in the QCAA format of a Transition Statement. It is a requirement of the QKFS that a Transition Statement is provided for each Kindergarten-aged child. You will be requested to provide written permission for a completed and approved transition statement to be shared with their child’s Prep Year teacher and/or other relevant staff by signing a transition statement consent form.

You will also receive a Weekly Studio Snapshot which informs all families about the learning across the Kindergarten Studio. At Mother Duck Childcare we are aware of our responsibility in promoting the 21st Century Skills of Collaboration and Teamwork for our future citizens.

The Studio Snapshot aims to provide information of all children's learning in the Studio and move from an "individual focus" to a "community of learners". We encourage our children to celebrate the success of their peers and hope that our families see the importance of role modelling this with their children also.

Lilian Katz (2002) offers this observation:

*"Each of us must come to care about everyone else's children. We must recognize that the well-being of our own children is intimately linked to the well-being of all other people's children. After all, when one of our children needs life-saving surgery, someone else's child will perform it. When one of our children is harmed by violence, someone else's child will have committed it. The good life for our own children can be secured only if it is also secured for all other people's children. But to work for the well-being of all children is not just a practical matter-it is also right!"*



## Preparation for Formal Schooling

Our Kindergarten program aims to prepare children for life, which includes the “next step” of entering formal schooling. This includes encouraging children to develop 21st Century Skills including:

- Critical Thinking: reflecting/evaluating, decision-making, reasoning and analytical thinking.
- Creative Thinking: curiosity and imagination, creativity and innovation.
- Communication: Oral and written communication including using symbols.
- Collaboration and Teamwork: relating to others, participating, and contributing.
- Personal and Social Skills: resilience, adaptability and flexibility and ethical understanding.
- ICT: accessing and analysing information.

Our discussions and collaboration with local schools and Prep Teachers have confirmed these skills as the most advantageous for the Transition to Prep.

## What is Image of Child?

Preparing children for the 21st Century includes embedding ethical (and moral) understanding. Children are often seen as weak, a person with needs rather than rights. When working with young children, we reflect on our “Image of Child”

Image of Child...

*“...refers to what people believe, understand, and assume about the role of children in education and society. This image includes how people think about children’s capabilities, development, motivations, purpose, and agency. Social, cultural, and historical experiences influence a person’s image of the child”.*

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-image-of-the-child-and-reggio-emilia-perspectives.pdf>

“Image of Child” is something you will hear our Educators regularly refer to in their daily practice. What this really means is that at Mother Duck Childcare our Educators are committed to children’s rights.

Our work with Image of Child is influenced by the work of our colleagues in Reggio Emilia, who view *“The child as citizen: the competent child, the child as possessor of rights”* p18

[https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/reimagining-childhood.pdf?acsf\\_files\\_redirect](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/reimagining-childhood.pdf?acsf_files_redirect)

The Australian Human Rights Commission state that children as well as adults have human rights. Those rights are as follows. Children have the right to:

- be treated fairly no matter what
- have a say about decisions affecting them
- live and grow up healthy
- have people do what is best for them
- know who they are and where they come from
- believe what they want
- privacy
- find out information and express themselves
- be safe no matter where they are
- be cared for and have a home
- education, play and cultural activities
- help and protection if they need it

“All people have human rights. Rights are things that every person needs to survive, to be treated fairly and to reach their full potential. Rights are important because they list very specific things that we have and need to live with dignity and be treated with respect. Human rights are an important part of our everyday lives and they matter for everyone no matter where you come from, your age, culture, religion or any other status.”

<https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/information-for-children>



## What Can I Do At Home To Help My Child With Preparation For Formal Schooling?

- Reading your child stories each day. This should be a pleasurable experience, not a lesson. Facilitate a love of reading and learning with your child. Local libraries are free to join and have an abundance of good quality children's picture books.
- In many aspects of the day at Kindergarten, the children are encouraged to use their self-help skills, such as preparing their meals and washing up after themselves and putting on their own sunscreen. How can you do this at home? This assists children's collaboration, teamwork, resilience, bilateral integration and manual dexterity.
- Have children assist with things like pouring from a jug, cooking, dressing themselves etc. Whilst this all takes additional time in our rushed schedule it's providing important opportunities to build dexterity with their small muscles.
- Guide the children through discussions to develop the confidence to 'bounce back' when challenges arise, this will encourage children to develop resilience and adaptability.
- Have children assist in real life activities that involve using numeracy. Counting the number of people coming to family dinner. How many forks and knives will we need?
- Have children assist you with reading/writing for a purpose. E.g. assist with the shopping list whether on a piece of paper, an app on your phone or supermarket online ordering.
- Encourage children's independence by looking after their own belongings and being organised, and the notion to 'have a go' at putting on clothes, shoes and even tying laces.
- Encourage the Think, Say, Draw, Do process with children's home projects, and maybe even model these yourself.
- On collection of your child from the centre take the time to look at your child's planning book. Look at what they have worked on and listen to their ideas BEFORE you respond with what you see. Valuing their work and emerging skills will boost your child's self-esteem and intrinsic motivation to see themselves as "a learner"

We understand the anxiety of raising young children, the daily pressures of young working families and that often families can receive differing messages about what is most important for their young child's learning and development. The approach for the Kindergarten year at Mother Duck Childcare is based on reliable and current research, with the Franchisee and Franchisor companies all lead by real early childhood professionals. We are totally committed in providing every child in our Centres (and of course the Kindergarten Program), the best outcomes for life-long learning.



## NOTES

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