

A young girl with brown hair, wearing a blue floral dress, is smiling broadly at the camera. She is sitting at a table with a purple cloth, holding a blue marker. In the background, another child is visible, also sitting at a table and holding a white marker. The setting appears to be a classroom or a community center. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

SDN Children's Services

Educational Program

sdn
children's services

SDN's Educational Program

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is the national early education framework for children aged from birth to five years, which ensures that all children receive quality education programs.

All SDN centres, including our long day care centres, have incorporated the framework principles into our education and care programs, along with our own curriculum. We engage with the EYLF on a daily basis to ensure that our play-based learning programs are of the highest quality and focused on children's individual interests.



Learning starts from birth

All children in our child care centres benefit from a creative, child-focused curriculum developed by our Early Childhood Teachers. Our teachers specialise in creating a curriculum where all children reach their full potential and are well prepared for school. SDN teachers will support your child to develop pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills in preparation for school.





Preschool program for 3 to 5 year olds

SDN's preschool program incorporates the EYLF and is seamlessly integrated into our long day care service, ensuring preschool children receive the educational preparation they need for school, while giving parents the flexibility of full day care throughout the year. Children aged three to five are taught by university-qualified teachers.

What is our Educational Program based on?

Our curriculum is based on the belief that:

1

the first five years matter and last a lifetime

2

being safe, healthy, having material basics and being able to exercise self-control are critical for learning and development

3

the brain develops through use

4

collaborative partnerships are important.





1

**The first five years
matter and last a
lifetime ▶**



Children learn from birth.

The early years period is one of rapid and significant change when early experiences shape identity and change the structure of the brain. This period has a strong impact on current and future wellbeing, which is important for learning.

So, where we can, we make our educational programs available for babies from birth. We design our educational programs for the life-stage, abilities and personalities of infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

We have teachers with university degrees in teaching and education to lead the planning of our educational programs for all age groups, and we assess each child's learning and development as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment, planning, intentional teaching, documenting and evaluating.

We believe that each child has strengths, capabilities, culture, interests, current knowledge, ideas and experiences regardless of their age.

Our educational programs are informed by these and are tailored for each individual child's learning and development needs.

At SDN, relationships are the essential foundation for our educational program and practices.

Feeling that one belongs is very important, and secure relationships in the early years are crucial to developing a sense of belonging and a foundation for lifelong learning. Current research shows the critical impact a child's relationships have on their developing brain during the earliest years of life. Early relationships actually shape the brain's circuitry and lay the foundation for lifelong learning. The nature of the relationships that children experience with their caregivers influences their sense of self and self-worth as well as their ability to learn.

SDN educators demonstrate our RIPAR approaches in their interactions with children. RIPAR stands for *Respectful, Intentional, Predictable, Attuned* and *Responsive* to children, and particular attention is paid to two-way interactions with infants as early communicators.

Children with more positive child–teacher relationships appear more able to make use of the learning opportunities available and are better able to adjust to the demands of more formal education. So best practice in early childhood education requires a strong focus on educators building positive and trusting relationships with children and families.





2

**Being safe, healthy,
having material basics
and being able to
exercise self-control
are critical for learning
and development ►**



The indoor and outdoor learning environment is an important part of our educational program.

Our learning environments are designed to be safe and to support wellbeing, as well as to help each child feel that they belong. Our learning environments also help children to understand what is expected of them and what the rules are while encouraging positive interactions, facilitating learning, and inspiring exploration and mastery of new skills. Our physical environments are planned to balance safety with opportunities for exploration and independence, and for learning about managing risk.

Care moments such as rest and sleep, toileting and nappy change, feeding and meal times, are important parts of the program.

We believe that, given the opportunity and adequate time to respond, each child is willing and capable of being a part of every aspect of their own care moments and that these times can be extremely positive learning experiences. We want each child to feel safe and secure during these moments. We support each child to participate actively throughout every step during care moments in a way that is appropriate for their age and abilities in order to support their social and emotional development.



We create small groups within larger groups; and infants and toddlers have an SDN primary carer who knows and understands them best. Our routines are designed to support small groups to be predictable events, creating a sense of security, while sequences of events and activities are timed and organised to be responsive to the needs of children.





We design the sequence of daily activities to have uninterrupted time to play and explore, to keep each child safe from the harshest sun, to eat nutritious meals and to have sufficient rest and sleep.

SDN educators establish a calm, safe, consistent environment and act in a predictable way so that each child knows what to expect in their day. They provide frequent attuned connection, stimulation, conversation, and play for children of all ages, and support them through all transitions including the transition to school. In the event that a child is upset, frightened, anxious or distressed our educators comfort them. The best learning happens in nurturing relationships.

Our educational program is organised to help each child to be in control of their own behaviour and thoughts (known as agency). Children of all ages will learn to make and communicate decisions and influence events and their world while learning the consequences of their choices and influence.





Nemo's friends
are inside
on a plastic basis

11

Inside

Disney

K

3

*The brain develops
through use ▶*



Children learn through watching, listening, copying and by being engaged and doing.

Play is one important way that a child uses their brain and learns, and is a key part of a child's life. Play is a child's right, providing opportunities to learn, discover, create, improvise and imagine, and physical environments that foster and encourage exploration are critical for a child's development.

The curriculum content of our educational program gives equal importance to both educational and social development for all ages, and is designed to promote learning across five areas: having a sense of identity, being connected with and contributing to the world, having a sense of wellbeing, being confident and involved learners, and being effective communicators. FROM THE AUSTRALIAN EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK





Being able to make social connections lays a foundation for wellbeing, including mental health. Our educators give each child as many opportunities as they can to develop social connection with others, to contribute to group decisions and activities, and to be exposed to a range of ideas and ways of knowing and doing.

SDN educators support every child to participate in learning experiences and staff members will promote inclusion of all children.





Curriculum content includes (but is not limited to):

- ▶ language, literacy and numeracy
- ▶ the creative arts and culture
- ▶ science and technology
- ▶ technical and motor skills, construction and design
- ▶ physical and emotional health and wellbeing
- ▶ relationships and social competence
- ▶ equity, and social justice
- ▶ connecting to the natural world
- ▶ sensory exploration and physical movement
- ▶ critical thinking, investigating and problem solving
- ▶ socio-dramatic play.

Our educators respond to children's ideas and play, and use intentional teaching, which is where adults encourage children's efforts and help them to extend their work by talking with them about what they are doing, by joining in their play and by helping them to solve problems.



4

**Collaborative
partnerships are
important ▶**



SDN believes that families and their community make the most important contribution to each child's learning and development.

Children are learning before we meet them, especially at home, and will continue to learn when they move on to school or other services. So we see ourselves as partners with families and their communities, supporting them as they raise their children.

We encourage families to help us to understand the experiences their child has already had and is having, and what they are planning for their child's future education. It is important that what we do connects well to what each child is learning at home.

Our educators work in partnership with families to identify each child's strengths and interests, choose teaching strategies, design learning environments, and to connect our service-based learning opportunities with home-based learning.

We document each child's program and progress and make it available to families, and our educators share educational aims with them.

There are many important transitions during early childhood that are part of the foundation for future wellbeing and learning. These include the transition from home to group experiences, the transition from one group, educator or physical location to another, and of course the transition to school. We believe that transitions during each person's life are important milestones that can be exciting but can also be stressful, so we work alongside families to prepare each child for these transitions.





Who we are

SDN Children's Services is a not-for-profit organisation that has been delivering quality early childhood education, care and family support since 1905. We are proud of our long history of working with children and their families, working with communities, and supporting the development of practitioners and children's services. With around 700 staff across more than 30 sites in Sydney, regional NSW and the ACT, we are one of Australia's most respected children's services organisations.





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