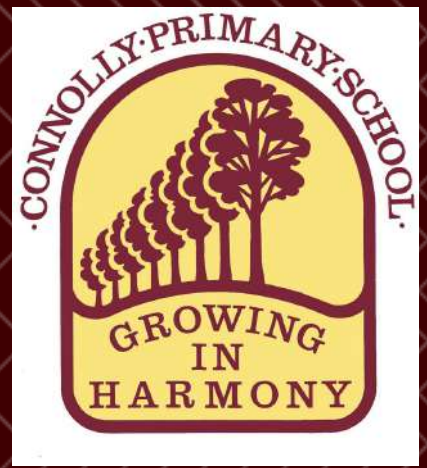


PLAY PHILOSOPHY

CONNOLLY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Our Vision for Early Years Play

All children have the right to play, free to choose what they do – extend and challenge themselves, take risks and enjoy freedom (Article 31 of the UN Convention on the rights of the Child).

At Connolly Primary School, we believe that play provides the most natural and meaningful processes by which children can construct knowledge and understandings, practice skills, immerse themselves naturally in a broad range of learning outcomes and engage in productive and intrinsically motivated environments.

Play is essential to student's overall development. It is a valued process for children's learning, thinking, imagination, story making and communication. The play of children includes many different types including sensory, explorative, physical, creative, symbolic, projective, role and dramatic play, as well as games with rules. All of these types of play are important aspects of children's learning and development (EYLF Educators Guide, p.30).

At Connolly Primary School, teachers use children's interests as a catalyst to encourage connections to learning. We aim to provide creative, open and active learning environments so that children are supported to sustain their learning over the long term and transfer the skills they acquire to a range of different learning situations.



We believe every child is unique and should be viewed, respected and treated as such.



Types of Play

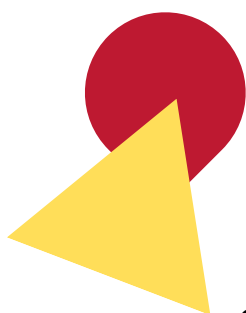
Guided Play

- Guided play involves the purposeful use of co-constructed play that involves teachers and learners working together to achieve explicit learning outcomes.
- With guided play activities, there is a continuum of teacher assistance and support that varies from brief, in the moment shared interaction, to sustained intervention, where the educator actively participates in the play context guiding, listening and responding as the play unfolds (WAPPA, “Defining and Clarifying Intentional Teaching, Guided Play and Child-Directed Play”)
eg. *playing bingo with numbers 1-10*
observing silk worms in science corner and measuring them with unifix cubes



Child-Directed Play

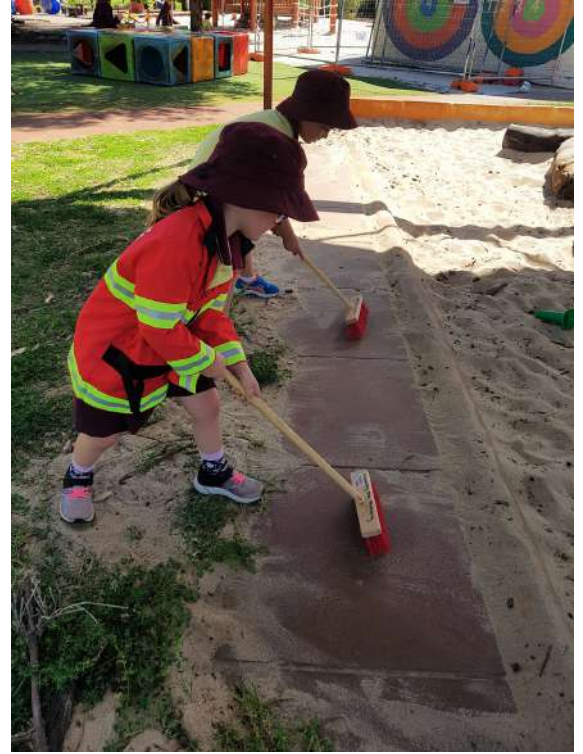
- In child-directed play, the educator creates an environment that offers opportunities for discovery and challenge with the aim of encouraging students to actively construct their own learning experiences.
- Children actively choose how, when, with what and with whom to engage and interact, they select and direct their own learning of skills, concepts, understandings and dispositions by participating in a range of experiences (WAPPA, “Defining and Clarifying Intentional Teaching, Guided Play and Child-Directed Play”).
eg. choosing to go and play in the home corner.



Our play-based learning happens inside the classroom and in our outdoor 'classroom' environments.

Play Investigations

Investigative, inquiry learning is used in early years' classrooms to support the acquisition of key learning outcomes through hands-on, open-ended experiences known as "investigations". Teachers intentionally plan experiences and provide learning environments that build on the interests of children, and supports the acquisition of core curriculum. This approach encourages tuning in and active reflection on learning, as well as the development of oral language and communication skills.



Nature and Loose Parts Play

At Connolly Primary School, we are committed to providing children with natural playscapes that offer an abundance of loose parts such as sand, water, rocks, sticks, mud and man-made loose parts. The research on Nature Play supports the belief that this type of play encourages creativity and innovation as well as "providing an ideal classroom full of teachable moments creative play opportunities, real life experiences and awe-inspiring moments for young children" (Sweatman and Warner 2009, p4). We provide extended outdoor play time to allow for in-depth explorations and shared sustained conversations and collaborations with peers and adults.



Benefits of Nature Play

- Encourages oral language, communication skills and cooperative play
- Improves motivation in play and encourages concentration
- Encourages creative and critical thinking skills and problem solving
- Encourages reasoning and observation skills
- Provides authentic opportunities for learning about science, mathematics, geography, history and English
- Encourages creativity and creative play
- Reduces stress levels and increases emotional well-being
- Improvises social skills and friendship skills
- Engages cooperative play and negotiation
- Reduces conflict in play and improves cooperation
- Improves stability, balance and coordination
- Provides opportunities for challenge and risk within a framework of security and safety
- Cares about the natural world and developing a deeper connection to nature (AISWA 2015 p9)



Risk Management

Children need to experience risks when they play in order to develop the appropriate skills to independently identify and manage risks, both at school and throughout their lives.

At Connolly Primary School, we recognise the importance of providing them with opportunities to challenge themselves physically, gaining mastery over their bodies and allowing them to solve problems, and to develop social competence and resilience (Elliot, 2008; Little & Wyver, 2008; Gill, 2007).

Staff are aware of potential hazards and take all necessary steps to ensure the environment is safe. Adequate supervision and support is given to maintain awareness of children's behaviour and to make children aware of how to manage and assess risk and understand the consequences of actions.

Links to Learning Frameworks

Educators ensure that learning area outcomes are interwoven through play experiences by providing play opportunities that directly link to the following General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum.

Personal and Social Capacity

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. This capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills.

Critical and Creative Thinking

In the Australian Curriculum, students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply use skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school.