Community Kinders Plus
Service Philosophy Statement and Curriculum

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Executive Summary

Community Kinders Plus (CKP) is a not-for-profit early years management organisation that operates over 20 early years services in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. Our role as the Approved Provider and licensee is to ensure that our services operate within their legislative frameworks and that the programs delivered to children and families are of an exemplary level. Our aim is to support, guide and administer operational functions of each service and as a whole organisation, which means that we are instrumental in key decision making, recruitment and management of high quality employees, financial planning and management and strategic development.

We have two underpinning roles within our organisation:

Operations – ensuring that services are operating with the legislative framework and that services remain viable and responsive to their local community. A strong focus is placed upon access to quality education, particularly for children experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability.

Pedagogy – ensuring that services implement education and care programs that are designed specifically for their local community to meet the developmental and learning needs of their children and families.

This document outlines our **4 Core Values** with children and families being central to all that we do. This means that each value has an underlying connection to the children and families we work with to ensure that the community experiences progression, prosperity and happiness. In some communities, this may also mean recovery which is why our Core Values also reflect the diverse environment that are services are located within. Our organisation works within an inclusive approach to being with a strong understanding of the importance of feeling that one belongs, is cared for and valued with anticipation that this very essence is what they will become to others.

This document provides a basis for forming specific learning and teaching programs at CKP services across Frankston and the Peninsula. It incorporates strategic planning discussed in document one, data gathered from a background review and statistical data gathered by the Australian Early Childhood Developmental Census 2015. Learning and teaching approaches will be continually reviewed to align with community strengths, needs and capacities.

Statement of Philosophy

Values

Our 4 Core Values represent our organisation's commitment to action in contributing to the improvement of children's safety, learning and development. The core values are embedded in everything we do from this philosophy statement and curriculum document outlining our educational programs, to our employee assessment and enhancement program.

Core Values Description

Leadership in exemplary practice in the Early Years Sector

All CKP staff, Management and Board value and understand exemplary practice through inspiring a shared vision, modelling behaviours and expectations with observable skills, abilities and encouragement of "personal best". Leadership contributes to a climate and culture of seeking opportunities, addressing challenges, developing sustainability and transforming values into actions.

Research & Innovation

We are active in research, enabling a stronger understanding of quality experience for children and families and how this will impact upon their life-long learning and happiness. CKP is committed to a child centred-family inclusive approach to education, support and learning, underpinned by evidence

based best practice, quality assurance and a continuous improvement approach through outcomes measurement.

Providing Excellence in Education & Care

Dynamic education and care programs are provided which respond to children's learning and development, culture, ability, strengths and interests that support them in their preparation for school readiness and life-long learning. CKP supports children, families, staff and Management to be aspirational in its programming and communication, with an "I can" approach.

Health & wellbeing

Enhance children and their families' connection to:

- community
- wider service supports

Enhance parent/carers knowledge of

- child development
- positive parenting
- physical activity
- nutritional awareness

CKP is an organisation that promotes the health and wellbeing of all children through a commitment to the Child Safe Standards.

Beliefs

Children

We believe that children learn through a variety of styles and dispositions which includes playing, exploring, creating, designing, experimenting, observing, researching, discussing, listening and natural consequences. This means that our programs must be flexible in delivery and responsive to children's learning dispositions and particular preferences of engagement.

We believe that children are diverse and bring with them a range of skills, interests, talents, needs, values and backgrounds that must be taken into consideration when planning and implementing programs for them, as well as assessing their learning and development.

We believe that children have rights and should be taught about their rights. This includes understanding that they have a right to quality education, to their cultural heritage and current cultural existence, to feel safe, to be respected, to be honoured, to be understood, to be heard and to live a happy and healthy life.

We believe that children should be able to learn in environments that promote a sense of calm and peace and support a holistic approach to their wellbeing. These environments should also be safe and support harmonious relationships where children, teachers, educators and families learn together and from each other, and engage in respectful interactions.

We believe that learning environments should be rich in nature, focusing upon the natural engagement of children, sustainability, aesthetics and arrangement to foster children's exploration, imagination, creativity and sense of connection to each other.

We believe in children's ability and right to express themselves in ways that are unique to them. This means that children will communicate, share their understanding and give their opinions through voice, dance, art, construction, actions and engagement.

We believe that children have competency and are capable in their learning which means that they will be able to work towards their achievement in their own unique trajectory with the support of others and themselves. The support of self is also crucial in leading towards ongoing feelings of competence, ability and efficacy.

We believe that children are able to make decisions for themselves and see independence and autonomy as an ongoing journey in personal growth and responsibility. We see that it is important for children to learn to do things for themselves as well as do things for others.

We believe in supporting all children to understand and respect the traditional custodians of the land on which they gather together and engage in learning. Particular attention is paid to the Boon Wurrung/Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation on whose country our services are build and children will learn of their history and stories through respectful engagement with Elders and their people.

Families

We believe in establishing and maintaining effective relationships with families that are collaborative, respectful and reciprocally capacity-building. This means that our knowledge and skills as a partnership are strengthened by authentic engagement with families where we learn from each other and apply our knowledge and skill into daily practice.

We believe that regular, respectful and authentic communication with families is necessary to ensure that our assessment for learning and development, planning and programs are relevant and meaningful for children to engage and enhance their skill development, general knowledge and learning.

We believe in supporting families to take an active role in their children's learning and development which means providing experiences and links to enhance this role.

Community

We believe that the responsibility of raising children is a united duty and therefore we will work tirelessly and authentically with the local and larger community to provide learning environments and programs that support, enhance and inspire children and their families.

We believe that our observations of children alone do not give us the whole picture of the child and therefore our understanding of the children we teach will come from a range of places including the child's family, support organisations and statistical data. This will then inform our planning and arrangements of learning environments and experiences for children.

Data to Consider when Planning
(extract from 2017 Review)

AEDC Results

In 2015, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) was taken to determine the state of Australia's children in relation to their developmental status and progress. This census incorporates an index that determines the level of vulnerability in children within specific localities. It is separated by state, municipality and suburb and can be used to guide planning for future service delivery ensuring they are directly responsive to the needs of the immediate community. The following AEDC results indicate the developmental profile of children in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula regions.

Children who are Developmentally "On Track" in Frankston and Mornington Peninsula regions (AEDC 2015 Results, published 2016)

Area	Physical, health & wellbeing (%)	Social Competence (%)	Emotional Maturity (%)	Language & Cognitive Skills (school-based)	Communication Skills & General Knowledge
Australia	77.3	75.2	76.4	84.6	76.3
Victoria	80.9	78.6	77.5	84.7	78.8
Frankston	79.3	75.7	73.7	82.8	79.5
Frankston North	60.3	65.8	68.5	61.6	67.1
Frankston South	82.5	79.1	76.3	85.8	80.6
Langwarrin/Langwarrin South	87.0	76.4	69.2	86.3	84.8
Carrum Downs	83.6	76.7	76.0	77.8	82.9
Seaford	73.2	76.8	76.2	83.9	78.0
Skye	84.6	78.7	74.9	89.9	82.4
Mornington	79.1	75.7	76.0	87.5	76.7
Mt Martha	87.1	85.2	87.1	89.8	84.0
Hastings	63.5	61.7	63.5	63.5	67.0
Tyabb/Moorooduc	76.7	75.4	77.7	84.3	75.9
Balnarring/Balnarring Beach/Somers	80.0	70.0	90.0	80.0	80.0
Rosebud	79.8	74.2	77.4	81.5	76.6

Rosebud West	67.2	75.9	77.6	81.0	63.8

Table 1. AEDC Results - Children developmentally 'on track'

Children who are Developmentally "At Risk" in Frankston and Mornington Peninsula regions (AEDC 2015 Results, published 2016)

Area	Physical, health & wellbeing (%)	Social Competence (%)	Emotional Maturity (%)	Language & Cognitive Skills (school-based)	Communication Skills & General Knowledge
Australia	13.0	15.0	15.3	8.9	15.1
Victoria	11.2	14.1	14.5	8.9	13.6
Frankston	11.6	15.3	16.9	9.7	14.7
Frankston North	12.3	21.9	23.3	16.4	17.8
Frankston South	12.3	12.8	13.3	10.0	13.7
Langwarrin/Langwarrin South	8.7	15.8	20.4	8.4	13.4
Carrum Downs	8.4	15.6	14.2	11.3	12.7
Seaford	15.5	15.5	15.5	8.3	16.7
Skye	10.6	11.7	19.8	6.4	14.4
Mornington	12.5	16.6	16.6	6.8	17.9
Mt Martha	7.0	10.9	10.9	7.8	13.7
Hastings	15.7	14.8	15.7	19.1	20.0
Tyabb/Moorooduc	17.1	9.8	7.3	7.3	22.0
Balnarring/Balnarring Beach/Somers	3.3	20.0	3.3	10.0	10.0
Rosebud	16.1	17.7	17.7	12.1	19.4
Rosebud West	25.9	13.8	8.6	10.3	25.9

Table 2. AEDC Results - Children developmentally 'at risk'

Children who are Developmentally "Vulnerable" in in Frankston and Mornington Peninsula regions (AEDC 2015 Results, published 2016)

Area	Physical, health & wellbeing (%)	Social Competence (%)	Emotional Maturity (%)	Language & Cognitive Skills (school-based)	Communication Skills and General Knowledge
Australia	9.7	9.9	8.4	6.5	8.5
Victoria	7.9	8.7	8.0	6.3	7.6
Frankston	9.1	9.0	9.3	7.4	5.7
Frankston North	27.4	12.3	8.2	21.9	15.1
Frankston South	5.2	8.1	10.4	4.3	5.7
Langwarrin/Langwarrin South	4.3	7.8	10.4	5.3	1.9
Carrum Downs	8.0	7.6	9.8	10.9	4.4
Seaford	11.3	7.7	8.3	7.7	5.4
Skye	4.8	9.6	5.3	3.7	3.2
Mornington	8.4	7.8	7.4	5.7	5.4
Mt Martha	5.9	3.9	2.0	2.3	2.3
Hastings	20.9	23.5	20.9	17.4	13.0
Tyabb/Moorooduc	2.4	2.4	7.3	7.3	0.0
Balnarring/Balnarring Beach/Somers	16.7	10.0	6.7	10.0	10.0
Rosebud	4.0	8.1	4.8	6.5	4.0
Rosebud West	6.9	10.3	13.8	8.6	10.3

Table 3. AEDC Results - Children developmentally 'vulnerable'

Responding to the historical and current demographic of the regions is crucial in planning for the future of our children and families. Currently AEDC results indicate that:

- Children in Frankston North are almost three times more vulnerable in their physical development, language skills and communication with almost half of the children experiencing vulnerability in one developmental area.

- Children in Frankston South are less vulnerable across many domains than the state and national average. However, there has been an increase in risk of vulnerability in children's social and emotional development in the area.

- Children living in Mornington also experience some diversity in their developmental progress in that some children experience little or no vulnerability in their language development yet also have seen an increase of risk of vulnerability in their social and emotional development.
- Furthermore, twice the number of children living in Hastings (also on the Peninsula) experience vulnerability in all domains with one third of the population of Hastings' children experiencing vulnerability in two or more areas combined.
- Children living in Rosebud West experience considerable risk of becoming developmentally vulnerable.

Accessing Other Data Through Research

Services are encouraged to engage with CKP's research partners to further develop their understanding of children's development (including those they are planning for and/or are in their local community) to ascertain ways of better planning for them. This includes engagement with research projects that are initiated by CKP, tertiary institutes or community organisations working towards the local aims in their municipal early years plan.

Municipal Early Years Plans

City of Frankston (extract)

The following is an extract from the City of Frankston's *Child and Family Plan 2014 – 2018* and focusses upon the priorities in has for children living in the Frankston City local areas. This plan is due to expire in 2018 and it is therefore anticipated that services will seek to review any further plans that will be released in the future.

1. Plan for future growth so Frankston is a family friendly City where children can learn, develop and grow

Strategies for action:
- Plan for the City's growth and sustainability
- Advocate for joint investment in local infrastructure to encourage access to universal services
- Promote clean and welcoming open spaces where children and their families feel safe and connected
- Promote children's sense of community pride and responsibility for the environment
- Ensure children and their families have access to positive recreation opportunities

2. Lead the development of an accessible universal service system that strengthens outcomes for children and their families

Strategies for action:

- Embed a culture of evidence informed planning, practice and evaluation into service delivery
- Promote collaboration and understanding between services to improve integration and seamless service delivery
- Advocate to government for service system improvements
- Ensure families have the information they need
- Engage children in decision-making to ensure their voices are heard

3. Strengthen early childhood development and improve support for children through the middle years

Strategies for action:
- Deliver high quality universal services that are inclusive for all families to give children the best start in life
- Deliver targeted services and programs to support families who are vulnerable, or at risk of becoming vulnerable
- Work in partnership with government, services and the community to ensure children live in healthy and safe home environments with positive family relationships
- Promote early learning and development to strengthen children's early language and literacy
- Connect families to build supportive networks and participate in the community
- Provide leadership on the impact of family violence and other trauma on children's learning and development
- Work in partnership with government, services and the community to improve the health and wellbeing of children
- Promote support for children in the middle years so they can continue to learn, develop and grow

http://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Family_Services/Child_and_Family_Plan

Mornington Peninsula Shire (extract)

The following is an extract from the Mornington Peninsula Shire's **Early Years Action Plan 2008** and focusses upon the priorities in has for children living in the Mornington Peninsula Shire local areas. As this document is almost ten years old, it is anticipated that services will seek to review any further plans that will be released in the future.

Strategy 1: Expansion of Community Health Services to Develop a Children's Team

Strategy 2: Supporting Breastfeeding

Strategy 3: Promoting Early Years Literacy

Strategy 4: Kindergarten Participation

Strategy 5: Linking Schools and Early Years Project

Strategy 6: Expansion of Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Service

Strategy 7: Enhancing Social Supports for Parents

Strategy 8: Enhancing Family Service Delivery to Vulnerable Children and Their Families – Implementation of Family Solutions, Child FIRST Frankston Mornington Peninsula

Strategy 9: Working Towards Becoming a "Child Friendly City

Strategy 10: Celebrating Children

Strategy 11: Somerville Early Years Network

Strategy 12: Rosebud West Early Years Project

Strategy 13: Expansion of Outside School Hours Places Across Mornington Peninsula Shire

Underpinning Theories of Learning and Development

In the 2017 service review, educators felt that the most important theoretical underpinnings for their philosophy were; *Cognitive Development Theory* (Piaget) (57%), *Sociocultural Theory* (Vygotsky) (54%), *Ecological Systems Theory* (Bronfenbrenner) and *Social Learning Theory* (Bandura) (equal 28%), and Attachment Theory (Bowlby & Ainsworth) (17%). As such, these have been incorporated into this philosophy statement as the underpinning theories that inform their work with children.

Theories impact upon the lenses educators use to understand and assess children's learning as well as consider pedagogical approaches to be used in planning for them. This section has therefore been separated into two parts: *developmental and learning theories* and *teaching theories and pedagogical approaches*.

Developmental and Learning Theories

These theories focus upon understanding how children learn and develop. They assist with analysing observations to formulate ideas about the progress that children are making, why they may conduct themselves in the manner they do and what motivates them in learning and engagement.

Constructivist Theories – Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky

Cognitive Development Theory – Jean Piaget

Jean Piaget believed that children learnt differently through different ages and stages of their life.[1] It was therefore critical for educators to ensure that children were not exposed to or expected to engage in methods of learning that they were not cognitively or biologically ready for. This meant that educators needed to have a clear understanding of child development, both typical and the unique trajectory of the child in order to plan accordingly.

> "Are we forming children who are only capable of learning what is already known? Or should we try to develop creative and innovative minds, capable of discovery from the preschool age on, throughout life?"
>
> Jean Piaget

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[1] http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/DLiT/2000/Piaget/stages.htm#pre-operations
Flavell, John H. (1963) *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget* Van Nostrand Princeton, N.J.

This means that teachers and educators will provide experiences that challenge children's thinking in a way that matches their development at the time and ensures that experiences are not too far beyond the child's current capacity. Therefore, teachers and educators will develop a keen understanding of the individual development of each child and become attuned to what they know and can do as well as areas they may struggle in.

Teachers and educators will provide experiences for children where they are able to challenge each other's thinking and learn from each other, developing a sound foundation in perspective-taking skills as well as understanding their current capacity and build upon these.

Social Development Theory – Lev Vygotsky
(also referred to as socio-cultural theory or cultural-historical theory)

Vygotsky believed that child development, in particular a child's cognitive, social and emotional development, was strongly influenced by those around them, now and historically. He further considered that there could be a significant difference between what a child could learn on their own as opposed to what they could learn with others and that this could be measured. This is known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). He argued that knowledgeable others scaffold this learning by supporting them to make sense of the world around them and the tools within it. These 'others' are known as the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO).

> "What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow."
>
> Lev S. Vygotsky

Teachers and educators are mindful of children's unique cultural and lifestyle characteristics and strongly take this into account when observing and assessing their learning, when planning for them and also when engaging with them.

Teachers and educators are aware of children's development and learning capacity and can see what children can do for themselves, what they can do with assistance and goals they strive for. Educators scaffold children's learning both through the learning environment provided and the interactions they engage in, placing children as the priority of their day.

Community Psychology Theories

Ecological Systems Theory – Urie Bronfenbrenner

Individuals develop within a complex system of **five levels** that involves people, settings, events, values and ideologies and the influences that these aspects have upon the individual as they grow. These systems operate in layers but are also intertwined and include:

1. The Microsystem – face to face influences upon the child (e.g. from parents, school, siblings, etc).

2. The Mesosystem – relationships between the microsystems and how situations connect with each other (e.g. home – school, work – parent, etc).

3. The Exosystem – settings that impact upon the institutions the individual has direct contact with however the individual themselves does not have direct contact (e.g. education department, contractor of health services, etc).

4. The Macrosystem – the ideologies of the overall society in which the child lives (e.g. social policy, freedom of speech, etc)

5. The Chronosystem – where the child is understood and influenced by change over time, which includes transitions the child makes, as well as how changes in the environment impacts upon the child in this space and time (e.g. transition to school, natural disasters, migration, divorce and family breakdown, etc).

> "In order to develop normally, a child requires progressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. Somebody's got to be crazy about that kid. That's number one. First, last and always."
>
> Urie Bronfenbrenner

Teachers and educators understand the influences on children's lives are complex which can impact upon them each day and over time. They therefore observe and understand the child in context of their complex multi-layered environments and experiences and plan accordingly.

Teachers and educators understand that the way they prepare and arrange their learning environments as well as the interactions they have with children influence them greatly and therefore the relationships they build between the child's family and the service are also crucial to ensure that the child's learning and development is contextual.

Teachers and educators are mindful to keep up to date with the changing nature of society and the ideologies that exist, evolve and merge. Critical discussions and reflection are a daily part of the educator's life as they make sense of shifting mindsets, social capital and philosophical viewpoints.

Behaviourist Theories

Social Learning Theory – Albert Bandura

Bandura questioned that conditioning alone (e.g. rewards and punishments, praise, etc) could motivate a child to change or adapt their behaviour or learning to become a social being. He believe that this was not completely reliant upon the conditioner (person creating the stimulus, reinforcements and punishments) and instead believed that children could learn and modify behaviours by watching others and copying the actions modelled by others, including parents, teachers, other adults and children. This is called *observational learning*. In order to learn from modelling however, children needed to engage in four processes which are:

1. **Attention** – being able to pay attention to the behaviour modelled to them
2. **Retention** – being able to remember the behaviour, what it looked like and any reactions to this behaviour
3. **Reproduction** – being able to reproduce the behaviour as they have seen it modelled to them
4. **Motivation** – wanting to be able to engage in the behaviour in the first place which may be influence by the consequences received to the person who was modelling them.

Another important aspect of Bandura's theory is his discussion on efficacy, particularly *perceived self-efficacy*. Perceived self-efficacy is the belief in your ability to be capable in achieving particular goals which is also strongly linked to children's agency, where they are able to make decisions upon things that affect them. Perceived self-efficacy therefore has a profound effect upon children's emotional states as they grow and experience life; it determines whether they see themselves as competent and capable or not. A strong sense of perceived self-efficacy supports children to develop higher levels of motivation of achievement and wellbeing where children develop the ability to be self-reflective rather than shaped by external others (Pajares, 2005)[2].

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[2] Pajares, F. (2005). Childhood and Adolescence: Implications for Teahcers and Parents. In *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents,* 339–367. Information Age Publishing

> We develop "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations."
>
> Albert Bandura

Teachers and educators support children's ability to see themselves as competent and capable understanding that both mistakes and successes can be seen as learning. This supports children to develop a strong sense of perseverance utilising an "I can" approach. Teachers and educators also model this mindset, demonstrating that they too learn from mistakes and successes and have an authentic belief in themselves to learn and improve.

When supporting children, teachers and educators are mindful that children may be watching, including how they engage and socialize with other children as well as consequences to actions which might inform how they socialise and engage in the future.

Evolutionary Theories

Attachment Theory – John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth

Children are born naturally pre-programmed to be attached to others (be it mother, father, grandparent, educator) as this will help them to survive. Attachment type behaviours were 'instinctive' and are activated when separation is threatened in some way. Secure attachments lead to developing positive relationships with others later in life as well as higher academic achievement. Insecure attachments lead to overall psychological insecurities that can negatively impact upon a child's ability to self-regulate, form relationships and build upon their cognitive functioning. It is therefore important for children to develop strong attachments with others, particularly in the first five years as insecure attachment may be seen as irreversible beyond this period.

> "Life is best organized as a series of daring ventures from a secure base."
>
> John Bowlby

> "In hatred, as in love, we grow like the thing we brood upon. What we loathe, we graft into our very soul."
>
> Mary Ainsworth

Teachers and educators are mindful of the importance of a smooth transition into the service and work hard to build strong relationships with families and their children, particularly when planning for their child's routine and engagement with experiences and others. Attachment and learning is in partnership.

Teachers and educators are consistently attentive to children when they seek their support and guidance to ensure that they build a strong sense of trust and security in their education and care setting. Teachers and educators provide a safe place for children and develop a strong sense of trust between each other.

Teaching Theories and Pedagogical Approaches

From the review, the three most preferred pedagogical approaches were The Reggio Emilia Approach 62.5%, Nature Kindergarten (Scandinavian Approaches) 43.75%, and The Montessori Method 21.88%. Respondents included also that their approach to teaching was not formed from one theory or pedagogical understanding, but took on the view that many approaches contributed to high levels of learning and teaching.

The Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia Approach was formed in Italy after the Second World War, focusing upon teaching children about their rights, respectful for diversity and to live within a democratic framework. Loris Malaguzzi, along with an active group of parents and community members, in response to the atrocities that occurred during the world wars, developed an educational system that was devoted to the building of democratic values in society. The purpose behind this was to ensure that their civilised world could see the world through 100 lenses and express this through 100 languages.

Key ideas in this approach:

1. *The Image of the Child is Paramount*

What this means is that how we see children, influences the way we interact with them. We also role-model this to the child which can also influence how they begin to see themselves.

"Each one of you has inside yourself an image of the child that directs you as you begin to relate to a child" (Loris Mallaguzzi).

2. *Children have the right to express themselves through 100 Languages*

Children demonstrate capacity to express themselves in multiple was and it is their right for their voice to be heard in whatever way this may be. This includes through verbal dialogue, group time discussions, visual arts, dance,

drama and storytelling, poetry, prose, construction, design and play. Acknowledging and respecting these 100 languages reminds us that there are many ways to see and understand the world and many ways of being.

3. *Progettazione*

This term is translated as *planning or design*, and is a flexible approach to thinking and working where there is a strong belief that learning can be constructed with children. The role of the learner therefore blends with the teacher and embraces the viewpoint that teachers and children can learn and teach each other rather than teachers and educators being the only keepers of knowledge and understanding. Teachers, educators and children therefore plan together and design the curriculum content and methods of implementation. This also incorporates a level of reflexivity where children begin to assess their own learning and understand that their reflective practice may or may not be limited by their own views and therefore through reflection of multiple viewpoints they can improve and further develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

4. *Partnerships*

Community and family partnerships are essential in both understanding the 'context' of the child and making education and care programs relevant and meaningful for the child, their family and the community. This also means that children develop a strong connection to their community so that they are able to build their resourcefulness and at the same time see themselves as valued contributors.

5. *Environment as the 'Third Teacher'*

The environment acts as the third teacher and builds upon the importance Maria Montessori (see below) placed upon arrangement, order, aesthetics and aspects of independence children need to have as the move freely through the varied experiences and opportunities for learning. This pedagogical approach therefore strongly influences the design and arrangement of the learning spaces, both inside and outside.

Nature Kindergarten/Preschool (Scandinavian Approaches)

Nature Preschools (Nordic)

Many teachers and educators see **the 'indoors' and the 'outdoors'** as opportune environments for learning and developing cognitive skills where they can role-model good practices to children and embrace nature. In Melbourne, new innovations have been introduced in response to the importance of re-connecting children with nature, based upon the pedagogies of the *NaturSkola* (Nature School) and *NaturFörskola* (Nature Preschool) in Scandinavian countries, the UK and New Zealand. Initiatives such as *Bush Kinders* and *Beach Kinders* where children are taken out to natural surroundings to explore and experience their learning with their educators have emerged in many sessional preschools, including some of the settings already operated by CKP. This innovation supports children to connect with nature and learn of the ecological and geological aspects of the earth as well as local folklore, forming stronger connections with local Aboriginal groups. Other

experiences where services are unable to access natural habitats for extended periods demonstrate innovation and connection to nature through creating bush tucker gardens, also incorporating wide-open natural spaces within the early childhood setting itself and incorporating natural materials into the indoor environments. The importance of developing resilient, nature attached children correlates with better academic and wellbeing outcomes in future life.

> "More recent research has suggested time spent in more natural environments (whether it's a park, a wilderness, or a nature-based classroom or play space) stimulates the senses, improves the ability to learn, and helps students connect the dots of the world."
>
> Richard Louv 2012[3]

CKP services aim to incorporate a pedagogy of *Nature-attachment* to both indoor and outdoor environments with the following aims. This approach combines attachment theory with nature preschool philosophies to form a stronger connection between humans and the environment.

Teachers, educators and children develop resourcefulness in supporting the natural environment to thrive through observation, care and nurturing, whilst reaping benefits from the natural production of anti-oxidants through home grown cultivated vegetable and herb gardens.

Teachers, educators and children plan ways to incorporate exploration of the natural world both inside the service premise and outside natural park, beach and bushlands where children can learn to explore safely naturally formed environments.

The Montessori Method

Through her work as a physician, Maria Montessori became increasingly interested in how children learn and engaged in years of research where she conducted clinical observations of children. Her research findings concluded that the learning that children experience comes directly from their environment, which places extreme importance upon the way in which learning environments are arranged and engaged.

Key features of her theory are as follows:

1. *The Prepared Environment*

This means that the learning environment is planned for, organised and prepared for the specific children who will be using the space including the teacher and educator's intricate knowledge of what the child knows and can do and what they are ready to learn next. Thought and effort is used to

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[3] Richard Louv (2012) 'The more high-tech our schools become, the more they need nature' *Science and Children*. 49.7 (Mar. 2012): p8. National Science Teachers Association http://www.nsta.org/

create settings that also promote independence and activity where children have room to move as well as time and space to learn that is uninterrupted.

Learning spaces, including shelving are orderly with items stored categorically so that children can independently access and use them and replace them (tidy and put away) when finished. Learning environments are developmentally appropriate and responsive directly to the specific children who are using them.

2. Montessori Materials

In this environment, materials are provided on self-selection shelving where children have direct access and they are presented to children in an inviting way, anticipating that children will choose to engage with them rather than being prompted. Each set of materials focus upon one particular area of learning to enable children to develop the building blocks of more complex thinking. For example, a tub of blocks may include one colour only of different sizes. This focus is therefore about size and measurement. Another box may have blocks of many colours but are of the same size. The focus here is upon learning about colour. As children develop skills in classification, complex blocks are placed inside. This means that children will now have access to blocks of different size and colour. A further extension to this once children have mastered their understanding of these two categories, could be shape. Children then begin to categorise in colour, size and shape leading to more complex logical thinking skills.

3. *The Process of Normalisation*

This **does not** refer to typical development or developmental 'norms,' or even conformity, but instead refers to the freedoms of choice and opportunities of full immersion of **interest** provided for children where they experience contentment, self-regulation and peace. It is intended for the children to develop their love for learning through their natural learning dispositions which becomes their own process of normalisation; their own sense of normal.

Curriculum Framework

The curriculum provided for children in CKP services reflects the organisational core values, philosophical statements and teaching approaches as described previously. Furthermore, as a result of the 2017 review, the following curriculum areas have been developed as a guide for educators and teachers to use in their planning and curriculum design. They include seven key learning areas:

1. *Mathematical Learning*
2. *Language, Literacy and Literature*
3. *Science, Technology and the Environment*
4. *The Arts*
5. *Physical Development*
6. *Wellbeing*
7. *General Knowledge*

1. Mathematical Learning

Recent research indicates that incidental and explicit teaching of mathematical concepts support children to develop better concepts in numeracy, now and for the long term. Mathematical concepts however can be enhanced through play-based and every day experiences that build children's confidence and competence in mathematical thinking. This includes developing an understanding of measurement, time, numbers, shape, location (visualising), and patterns using the 11 mathematical conceptual ideas from Phillipson, Gervasoni and Sullivan (2017) in their newly released book *Engaging Families as Children's First Mathematics Educators*.

"1. Compare objects and describe, in everyday language, which is longer, shorter, heavier, lighter, or holds more, hold less; **(more or less)**

2. Play with, name, describe, and organise 2D shapes and 3D objects; **(shapes)**

3. Use words and ideas to describe where things are positioned, for example, inside, outside, above, below, next to, behind, in front of, up, down, here, there, north, middle, across, opposite; **(where is it?)**

4. Describe, copy, represent and extend patterns found in everyday situations; **(patterns)**

5. Use time words that describe points in time, events and routines (including days, months, seasons and celebrations); **(using time words)**

6. Compare the duration of everyday events using mathematical language and arrange connected events in the usual sequence that they occur; **(exploring time)**

7. Say number names forward in sequence to 10 (and eventually to 20 and beyond); **(how many)**

8. Use numbers to describe and compare collections; **(using numbers)**

9. Use, progressively, perceptual and conceptual subitising, counting and matching to compare the number of items in one collection with another; **(look and compare)**

10. Show different ways to make a total (at first with models and small numbers); **(add some more)**

11. Match number names, symbols and quantities up to 10" **(matching numbers)** (p. 260).

> **Subitising** – the ability to instantly recognise the number of objects in a small group without having to count them. (e.g. dots on a die)

Facilitating Learning and Development in Mathematics	
VEYLDF Learning & Development Outcomes	Core Areas of Development
Learning: create and use representation to organise, record and communicate mathematical ideas and concepts make predictions and generalisations about their daily activities, aspects of the natural world and environments, using patterns they generate or identify, and communicate these using mathematical language and symbols contribute constructively to mathematical discussions and arguments	**Cognitive:** memory skills including retention, recall, long and short term memory; comprehension and perception; critical and creative thinking; knowledge acquisition
Communication: demonstrate an increasing understanding of measurement and number using vocabulary to describe size, length,	**Physical:** Fine motor skills to manipulate objects; gross motor skills to use strength and coordination in building and designing

volume, capacity and names of numbers use language to communicate thinking about quantities to describe attributes of objects and collections, and to explain mathematical ideas take on roles of literacy and numeracy users in their play notice and predict the patterns of regular routines and the passing of time begin to sort, categorise, order and compare collections and events and attributes of objects and materials in their social and natural worlds	**Language:** receptive language skills (syntax, phonology, nouns, verbs – to understand complex concepts) and expressive language to explain these very concepts and clarify arguments and ideas

2. Language, Literacy and Literature

Oral Language skills are key to children developing confidence in being able to communicate with self and others and transfer their learning to ideas they learn through and about literature as well as how they become literate. Oral language also means developing understanding and use of complex systems used within language including the following:

Syntax: The study of the rules for the formation of grammatical sentences in a language including patterns and phrases.

Phonology: The study of sound in languages (science).

Semantics: The study of meaning in words and language. Interpretation. The relationship between the word and what it stands for.

"Semantics is the aspect of language function that relates to understanding the meanings of words, phrases and sentences, and using words appropriately when we speak" Dr. Caroline Bowen (Speech-Language Pathologist)

Semiotics: the process of meaning-making (indicate, metaphor, analogy, symbolism)

Pragmatics: Knowing how and in what way to use language socially.

Literacy, on the other hand and in its simplest meaning is the ability to read and write. The term literacy is not used here in isolation because reading and writing is only a small portion of this learning; in fact, the most important aspect of literacy is *understanding*. We can piece letters together and read words or even write our name, but it is of no use to us if we do not understand what we are reading and how to apply it to our lives. This is why we do not use rote learning to inspire children's interest in learning to read and write, but a number of experiences that incorporate play and exploration linked to children's interests. This learning area brings together skills helpful in learning how to read, write and understand what it is we are reading and writing and how this can be used in so many ways in our life. With a strong connection to the interdisciplinary arts, children explore much more than words but also link the content to other aspects of their life such as social and emotional development, identity, social justice and empathy as well as reaching into the realms of magical thinking where children draw upon their creative visions for content. What emerges is *the literary child*; one who is preparing to (or can) read and write as well as understand the quality of form in literature and how key messages can be delivered to others through literature. The literary child will understand good writing from poor writing and make conscious decisions about the quality of text, including the text they create.

Facilitating Learning and Development in Language, Literacy and Literature	
VEYLDF Learning & Development Outcomes	Core Areas of Development
Learning: develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practise the actions of others, either immediately or later explore the purpose and function of a range of tools, media, sounds and graphics	**Cognitive:** memory skills including retention, recall, long and short term memory; comprehension and perception; critical and creative thinking; knowledge acquisition of letters, words according to the developmental trajectory of the child
Communication: use language and representations from play, music and art to share and project meaning attend and give cultural cues that they are listening to and	**Physical:** Fine motor skills to manipulate objects for drwing and pre-writing skills Muscle development and coordination in mouth, tongue and

	jaw for speaking and managing correct sound production
understanding what is said to them	
are independent communicators who initiate Standard Australian English and home language conversations, and demonstrate the ability to meet the listener's needs	
show increasing knowledge, understanding and skill in conveying meaning	
listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context	
view and listen to printed, visual and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments and/or questions	
begin to understand key literacy and numeracy concepts and processes, such as the sounds of language, letter–sound relationships, concepts of print and the ways that texts are structured	
explore texts from a range of different perspectives and begin to analyse the meanings	
actively use, engage with and share the enjoyment of language and texts in a range of ways	
recognise and engage with written and oral culturally constructed texts.	**Language:**
use language and engage in symbolic play to imagine and create roles, scripts and ideas	receptive language skills (listening and understanding)
	expressive language (expressing, sound production)
share the stories and symbols of their own cultures and re-enact well-known stories	Semantics (meaning)
	Pragmatics (social cues)
begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning	
use symbols in play to represent and make meaning	
begin to make connections between, and see patterns in, their feelings, ideas, words and actions, and those of others	
develop an understanding that symbols are a powerful means of communication and that ideas, thoughts and concepts can be represented through them	
begin to be aware of the relationships between oral, written and visual representations	
listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhyme	
draw on their experiences in constructing meaning using symbols	

3. Science, Technology and the Environment

Learning about science, technology and the environment provides children with an opportunity to develop complex thinking skills combined with high level knowledge of how the world works, what makes things move, how we can design things to make life better or easier and how we impact upon the world. The idea behind this curriculum area in early childhood is for children to ignite their scientific curiosity, explore questions and experiment and/or research to seek answers. In addition, children demonstrate strong levels of creative thinking to engage in design. It also provides an avenue for inquiry based learning/emergent thinking where children engage in short and long-term projects to investigate a concept, create and develop an idea and/or test a process. This curriculum

area also provides strong connections for children with the natural and artificial world understanding aspects of biological sciences, physics, chemistry and sustainability. Concepts include (but are not limited to) the following:

FORMS OF SCIENCE			
Biological Sciences	**Physics**	**Chemistry**	**Sustainability**
Living Things & Life Cycles	Motion	Chemical Reactions	Waste
Bodies	Energy & Force (electricity, magnetism)	Heat/Cold temperatures	Water
Plants & Ecosystems	Waves (sound, light, etc)	Chemicals	Earth formation
Senses	Gravity	Elements	Global warming
Microscopic Organisms	Dark Matter	Weather (also physics)	Environmental Protection

Facilitating Learning and Development in Science, Technology and the Environment

VEYLDF Learning & Development Outcomes	Core Areas of Development
Community: broaden their understanding of the world in which they live demonstrate an increasing knowledge of and respect for natural and constructed environments explore, infer, predict and hypothesise in order to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants and animals show growing appreciation and care for natural and constructed environments explore relationships with other living and non-living things and observe, notice and respond to change develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things	**Cognitive:** memory skills including retention, recall, long and short term memory; comprehension and perception; critical and creative thinking; knowledge acquisition of conceptual ideas problem-solving including convergent and divergent thinking
Learning: participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations explore their environment manipulate objects and experiment with cause and effect, trial and error, and motion use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learnt from these experiences make connections between experiences, concepts and processes use the processes of play, reflection and investigation to problem-solve	**Physical:** Fine motor skills to manipulate objects and tools for science experiments and technological designs Gross motor skills for experiments in moving and requiring whole body coordination and strength

apply generalisations from one situation to another	
try out strategies that were effective to solve problems in one situation in a new context	
transfer knowledge from one setting to another	
use their senses to explore natural and built environments	
manipulate resources to investigate, take apart, assemble, invent and construct	
experiment with different technologies	
use information and communications technologies (ICT) to investigate and problem-solve	
explore ideas and theories using imagination, creativity and play	
use feedback from themselves and others to revise and build on an idea.	
Communication: contribute their ideas and experiences in play and small and large group discussion interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, clarify and challenge thinking, negotiate and share new understandings begin to sort, categorise, order and compare collections and events and attributes of objects and materials in their social and natural worlds	**Language:** Vocabulary (scientific) Descriptive and analytical language

4. The Arts

The Arts provide children with the opportunity to experience a sense of freedom in their artistic expression through music, drama and dance. This type of art form sees the arts both independently and combined which means that drama and dance can combine to form a whole expression or be experienced separately. All three can be combined to which we often refer to as musical theatre. There is no correct way to incorporate this or create combinations as it is dependent upon the child's natural way of expression through this medium. The exploration of the interdisciplinary arts however can be strongly linked with other learning such as literacy and emotional development as children, together in their play, explore character formation, plots and alternative endings to their stories. They

explore ways in which to represent their scene through costume, set design and props. This expression also brings together strong skills in socialisation as children learn to negotiate themes and stories, choreography and materials for their play. Agency and competence shine in children who immerse themselves in holistic expression through the interdisciplinary arts and at times we can see the metamorphosis of the hesitant child to one of confidence and strength.

Creative agency provides an avenue for children to make decisions about their art experiences, what they will make, how they will make it, why they will make it and what they will learn from the making. What is crucial to this experience is the provocation to stimulate children's thinking and motivation to 'make' and 'express.' Without provocation, we may be learning nothing or become passive recipients of knowledge rather than high level thinkers with understanding. Creative agency in the arts fosters high level thinking necessary for understanding more complex learning as children grow and develop. Most artworks end up as a product, but what is most important is the process of the making where the child defines the beginning and the end. In this way, the product becomes that of the child. It is not defined by the adult who is requesting a 'replication' of their own artwork or craft idea – it is not necessarily a true opportunity for creative expression when the expectation is replication. In saying this, replication may be used to explore concepts of art technique, such as learning how to draw a butterfly through the focus of shape and line, or learning how to make a pinch pot with clay. The focus once again however is the process and our teaching becomes the technique rather than the expectation of a perfect replication. In planning for art experiences, it is therefore imperative that the objectives of the experience focus upon the process of the making and what children will learn and develop while they are making, including what cognitive functions can you see happening and what understanding they are gaining.

10 Things that Creative Arts Teach Us:

Highlights from Dr. Geraldine Burke (adapted from Eisner, E. (2002). The Arts and the Creation of Mind, In Chapter 4, What the Arts Teach and How It Shows. (pp. 70-92). Yale University Press.

1. The arts teach children how to make good judgements about relationships; it is not about the imposed 'rule' of a curriculum, but their own interpretive judgements about those rules.

2. The arts teach children that problems may have more than one solution or that there may be many answers to the same question.

3. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives and that we can see the world through many lenses and many perspectives.

4. The arts allow that complex problem-solving may not have an answer or an ability to be 'fixed' but under certain circumstances can be 'changed.'

5. The arts make vivid the fact that our expression does not come down to numbers and letters; nor literal aspects of our art. Children's level of cognition is not defined by these alone.

6. The arts teach children that small differences can have large effects.

7. The arts teach children to think through things before we act and that with thought we can make our imagination come to life.

8. The arts teach and provide an avenue for children to say what cannot be said and immerse their understanding and expression of feeling in their work.

9. The arts enable children to have an experience like no other where children can discover who they are and what they can feel.

10. How the curriculum of the ELC positions itself in the arts symbolises to the child what adults believe to be important. If your early childhood curriculum does not provide avenues for children's expression through arts, then their philosophy may not demonstrate they value the child's right to a voice.

FORMS OF ART			
Visual Arts	**Dance**	**Drama**	**Music**
2Dimensional – drawing, painting, printing	Movement – the way the body moves in rhythm, beat	Storytelling and composition – characters, plot	Technical concepts – pitch, tone/timbre, melody, dynamics,
3Dimensional – sculpture with clay, wire, construction	Interpretive dance (improv)	Improvised (Improv) verses retell	Genre – pop, classical, country, rock, indie, etc

Textiles	Choreographed dance	Genre – comedy, drama, fantasy, action, etc	Instrumental – using instruments, exploring sound
Installation, ephemeral and Eco Art	Folk and structured dance	Live versus videoed	Responding and Performing
Elements (line, shape, space, form, etc) and Principles (balance, proportion, emphasis, etc)	Fitness	Production – casting, Costume design, props, sets, etc	Ceremonial

Facilitating Learning and Development in The Arts	
VEYLDF Learning & Development Outcomes	Core Areas of Development
Identity openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others explore aspects of identity through role-play begin to initiate negotiating and sharing behaviours explore different identities and points of view in dramatic play express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively	Social Development: sharing, turn-taking, fairness, social justice, empathy, responding, understanding, viewpoints and perspectives, acceptance, negotiating; play in small and large groups in imaginary play sequences;
Community: cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences build on their own social experiences to explore other ways of being begin to understand and evaluate ways in which texts construct identities and create stereotypes	Cognitive: memory skills including retention, recall, long and short term memory; comprehension and perception; critical and creative thinking; knowledge acquisition of conceptual ideas problem-solving including convergent and divergent thinking cognitive expression
Wellbeing: share humour, happiness and satisfaction recognise the contributions they make to shared projects and experiences engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity, including dance, creative movement and drama use their sensory capabilities and dispositions with increasing integration, skill and purpose to explore and respond to their world demonstrate spatial awareness and orient themselves, moving around and through their environments confidently and safely manipulate equipment and manage tools with increasing competence and skill respond through movement to traditional and contemporary music, dance and storytelling of their own and others'	Emotional development: Regulation Expression (including facial expression) empathy, efficacy, kindness, understanding and expressing feeling; able to calm self, accepts when things don't always go their way, stand up for beliefs and thoughts experience of therapeutic sensations including a sense of calm and peace

	cultures

	Physical:
Learning: initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practise the actions of others, either immediately or later experience the benefits and pleasures of shared learning exploration explore ideas and theories using imagination, creativity and play use feedback from themselves and others to revise and build on an idea.	*Fine motor skills* to manipulate objects and tools for the purposes of creating and making: Holding pencils, drawing and writing, cutting, sticking, threading, using a variety of brush strokes (hand coordination), *Gross motor skills* for fluency and stamina in moving and requiring whole body coordination and strength; Jumping, running, walking, hopping, stepping, skipping, dancing, clapping, clicking, waving, whole arm movements rhythm, twirling, spinning,
Communication: use language and representations from play, music and art to share and project meaning exchange ideas, feelings and understandings using language and representations in play express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context view and listen to printed, visual and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments and/or questions sing chant rhymes, jingles and songs use language and engage in symbolic play to imagine and create roles, scripts and ideas share the stories and symbols of their own cultures and re-enact well-known stories use the creative arts, such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and story-telling, to express ideas and make meaning experiment with ways of expressing ideas and meaning using a range of media develop an understanding that symbols are a powerful means of communication and that ideas, thoughts and concepts can be represented through them begin to be aware of the relationships between oral, written and visual representations use information and communications technologies as tools for designing, drawing, editing, reflecting and composing	Language: Vocabulary (scientific) Descriptive and analytical language expressive language (through song, prose and poetry; strong elements of semantics and pragmatics explored)

5. Physical Development

Children learn to engage with their environment through movement. Movement is a crucial element to one's survival. Our bodies need to move actively every day in order for our internal systems to function properly, store and use energy as required and ensure that cyclic systems are in continuous operation (e.g. digestive system, circulatory system, etc). Movement requires coordination, skill and ability that develops with targeted approaches and repetition for progression and mastery. Children require experiences that challenge their gross motor, fine motor and sensory skills for full movement

and coordination integration. This enables them to be confident and competent movers in their environment where they are able to manouvre through spaces and use equipment efficiently and effectively.

A child's physical development also considers how they take care of their body. This means that children will understand their natural physical needs, but also to use their sense of wellbeing to nurture these needs which include that of a sound and balanced diet, healthy physical activity and appropriate hygiene as well as sleep, rest and peaceful moments.

The VEYLDF pays a small contribution to the skills required for successful movement including the following:

Wellbeing (in relation to movement)

- engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns
- combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity, including dance, creative movement and drama
- use their sensory capabilities and dispositions with increasing integration, skill and purpose to explore and respond to their world
- demonstrate spatial awareness and orient themselves, moving around and through their environments confidently and safely
- manipulate equipment and manage tools with increasing competence and skill
- respond through movement to traditional and contemporary music, dance and storytelling of their own and others' cultures

Wellbeing (in relation to physical health)

- recognise and communicate their bodily needs (for example thirst, hunger, rest, comfort, physical activity)
- show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition
- show increasing independence and competence in personal hygiene, care and safety for themselves and others
- show enthusiasm for participating in physical play and negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.

In this section, particular attention is paid to specific gross motor, fine motor and sensory development skills.

Facilitating Learning and Development in Physical Development[4]		
Gross Motor Skills (from kids sense	**Fine Motor Skills (from kids sense**	**Sensory Integration Skills** (the ability to use senses to receive information

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[4] The developmental checklist has been extracted from Occupational Therapy Services known as Kid Sense SA.
https://childdevelopment.com.au/

SA)	SA)	and integrate across all physiological aspects of development; the brain receives, organizes and responds to the environment approapriately) (from Kids Sense SA)
4 – 5 Years (typical)	**4 – 6 Years**	**General**
Balance Standing on one foot for up to 5 seconds. Imitating simple bilateral movements of limbs (e.g. arms up together). Walking on tip toes. Walking along a line.	**Bilateral Integration:** Using two hands together with one hand leading (e.g. opening a jar lid with hand while the other hand helps to by stabilising the jar).	**Visual sense:** is the ability to understand and interpret what is seen. The visual system uses the eyes to receive information about contrast of light and dark, colour and movement. It detects visual input from the environment through light waves stimulating the retina.
Coordination Walking up and down stairs with alternating feet. Jumping 10 times in a row, maintaining the distance of jumps. Hopping on one foot. Safely performing a forward roll. Jumping over an object and landing with both feet together.	**Crossing Mid-line:** The ability to cross the imaginary line running from a child's nose to pelvis that divides the body into left and right sides	**Auditory Sense:** is the ability to interpret information that is heard. The auditory system uses the outer and middle ear to receive noise and sound information. They receive information about volume, pitch and rhythm. It is important for the refinement of sounds into meaningful syllables and words.
Climbing Climbing onto/down from furniture without assistance. Climbing on jungle gym and ladders.	**Hand and finger strength:** An ability to exert force against resistance using the hands and fingers that allows the necessary muscle power for controlled movement.	**Gustatory Sense:** is the ability to interpret information regarding taste in the mouth. It uses the tongue to receive taste sensations, and detects the chemical makeup through the tongue to determine if the sensation is safe or harmful.
Bicycle Skills Pedalling a tricycle.	**Hand eye coordination:** The ability to process information received from the eyes to control, guide and direct the hands in the performance of a task such as handwriting.	**Olfactory Sense:** is the ability to interpret smells. It uses the nose to receive information about the chemical makeup of particles in the air to determine if the smell is safe or harmful.
Ball Skills Kicking a ball forwards. Throwing a ball overarm. Catching a ball that has been bounced. Catching a ball with hands instead of using arms and body.	**Hand Dominance:** The consistent use of one (usually the same) hand for task performance which allows refined skills to develop.	**Tactile sense:** is the ability to interpret information coming into the body by the skin. It uses receptors in the skin to receive touch sensations like pressure, vibration, movement, temperature and pain. It is the first sense to develop (in the womb), and as such is very important for overall neural organisation.
	Hand division: Using just the thumb, index and middle finger for manipulation, leaving the fourth and little finger tucked into the palm not participating but providing stability for the other 3 fingers.	**Proprioceptive Sense:** is the ability to interpret where your body parts are in relation to each other. It uses information from nerves and sheaths on the muscles and bones to inform about the position and movement of body through muscles contracting, stretching, bending, straightening, pulling and compressing.
5 – 6 Years (typical)	**Object Manipulation:** The ability to skilfully manipulate tools (such as the ability to hold and move pencils and scissors with control) and the controlled use of everyday tools such as a toothbrush, hairbrush, and cutlery.	**Vestibular sense:** is the ability to interpret information relating to movement and balance. The vestibular system uses the semi-circular canals in the inner ear to receive information about movement, change of direction, change of head position and gravitational pull. It receives information about how fast or slow we are moving, balance, movement from

		the neck, eyes and body, body position, and orientation in space.
Balance Standing on one foot for 10 seconds.	**Body Awareness (Proprioception):** Information that the brain receives from our muscles and joints to make us aware of our body position and body movement, so we can accurately control our movements.	
Coordination & Spatial Awareness Walking up stairs while holding an object. Jumping forwards 10 times without falling. Skipping forward after demonstration. Running around obstacles. Walking backwards heel-toe. Walking along a line. Hopping on one foot. Safely performing a forward roll. Jumping over an object and landing with both feet together.		
Climbing Hanging from a bar for at least 5 seconds.		
Ball Skills Kicking a ball. Stepping forward with leg on same side as throwing arm when throwing a ball. Catching a small ball using hands only.		

6. Wellbeing

Holistic health in relation to wellbeing and learning provides an opportunity for children to fully explore their emerging selves and understand that in different aspects of our lives we can have one or multiple identities. Many aspects play a strong part in our identity formation which includes our social

history such as our family, extended family, friends and neighbours as well as what we know and learn about ourselves as we respond to situations and circumstances in our lives. Young children are still developing a language base to express this knowledge of themselves but it does not mean that they do not have the feeling or internal understanding of themselves already. Of prominence is a child's development of ethical thinking, empathy and compassion towards others as this is not always something that develops naturally but can be nurtured as they grow and learn to care for others and themselves.

Wellbeing also involves the child building a strong sense of efficacy. This refers to Bandura's theory as described earlier and works to support children's feeling of confidence, competence and a belief in themselves that they can achieve and be all they can be. Healthy wellbeing in early childhood also leads towards good mental health later in life where individuals have resilience and coping mechanisms to work through the unexpected and develop a balanced life. It is through a balanced life of physical and mental health that children can also start to develop a stronger sense of self-regulation, efficacy and mindfulness where they are able to persist with difficulties and cope better with challenges and the unexpected. Wellbeing has a strong focus upon emotional development and regulation as well as building resilience.

Facilitating Learning and Development in Wellbeing	
VEYLDF Learning & Development Outcomes	Core Areas of Development (extract from EYLF Milestones)
Identity build secure attachment with one and then more familiar educators sense and respond to a feeling of belonging communicate their needs for comfort and assistance openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others respond to ideas and suggestions from others demonstrate increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others are open to new challenges and make new discoveries take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation approach new safe situations with confidence persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful feel recognised and respected for who they are reach out and communicate for comfort, assistance and companionship celebrate and share their contributions and achievements with others express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively	**Emotional Development** ▪ understands when someone is hurt and comforts them ▪ attains gender stability (sure she/he is a girl/boy) ▪ may show stronger preference for same-sex playmates ▪ may enforce gender-role norms with peers ▪ may show bouts of aggression with peers ▪ likes to give and receive affection from parents ▪ may praise themselves and be boastful ▪ begins to self-regulate emotion and express this more appropriately

empathise with and express concern for others display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others	
Community begin to recognise that they have a right to belong to many communities cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences take action to assist other children to participate in social groups express an opinion in matters that affect them build on their own social experiences to explore other ways of being demonstrate a sense of belonging and comfort in their environments practise inclusive ways of achieving coexistence notice and react in positive ways to similarities and differences among people develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness are empowered to make choices and problem-solve to meet their needs in particular contexts begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour	**Social Development** - enjoys playing with other children - may have a particular friend - shares, smiles and cooperates with peers - jointly manipulates objects with one or two other peers - develops independence and social skills they will use for learning and getting on with others at preschool and school
Wellbeing demonstrate trust and confidence remain accessible to others at times of distress, confusion and frustration share humour, happiness and satisfaction seek out and accept new challenges, make new discoveries, and celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others enjoy moments of solitude recognise their individual achievements make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others acknowledge and accept affirmation assert their capabilities and independence while demonstrating increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others	

7. General Knowledge

Data from the AEDC and allied health projects conducted by CKP in conjunction with their research partners and tertiary institutions, indicated that children are significantly struggling in their general

knowledge capacities. Further research is required to ascertain why this might be, however it may be speculated that theoretical approaches to early childhood programs have focused strongly upon children's interests and capacities alone, rather than what knowledge and understanding others can bring to children regarding their general knowledge and also how development is consistently facilitated across the services. Particular topics found to be important and of value across the workforce, families and management included the following:

- Understanding Families
- Understanding Community (people who help us)
- Understanding and Experiencing Culture
- Knowing Safety and Feeling Safe
- Social Justice – gender, equity, rights, respectful relationships
- Transitions

The following table describes suggested ideas in relation to these topics of teacher directed discussions and opportunities of learning.

General Knowledge Area	Description	Core VEYLDF Outcomes	Core Developmental Areas
Understanding Families	Children are supported to understand their family including their parents/guardians, extended family, siblings, etc. Children are also supported to understand that families are diverse and include different members.	feel recognised and respected for who they are explore different identities and points of view in dramatic play share aspects of their culture with other children and educators use their home language to construct meaning develop strong foundations in both the culture and language/s of their family and the broader community without compromising their cultural identities develop their social and cultural heritage through engagement with Elders and community members	**Cognitive** comprehension and perception; critical and creative thinking; knowledge acquisition of conceptual ideas comprehension and memory skills divergent and convergent thinking (applied to understanding anti-biased concepts)
Understanding Community (people who help us)	Children are supported to understand their local community including emergency services, support services, schools, community services and general local business. This can include understanding the roles of hospitals, doctors and allied	begin to recognise that they have a right to belong to many communities explore the diversity of culture, heritage, background and tradition and that diversity presents opportunities for choices and new understandings	**Social** develops independence and

	health; fire, police, ambulance and SES; postal and other government services as well as family and cultural groups.	practise inclusive ways of achieving coexistence discover and explore some connections amongst people discover and explore some connections amongst people	social skills they will use for learning and getting on with others at preschool and school
Understanding and Experiencing Culture	Supporting children to develop an understanding of culture and how this can bring us together in groups as well as how we can learn from each other's culture and groups. Children develop contextual knowledge in relation to the culture of themselves and their peers as well as the traditional custodians on the lands they learn upon.	explore the diversity of culture, heritage, background and tradition and that diversity presents opportunities for choices and new understandings become aware of connections, similarities and differences between people listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing practise inclusive ways of achieving coexistence share aspects of their culture with other children and educators use their home language to construct meaning develop strong foundations in both the culture and language/s of their family and the broader community without compromising their cultural identities develop their social and cultural heritage through engagement with Elders and community members display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives	**Emotional** understands when someone is hurt and comforts them empathy, efficacy, kindness, understanding and expressing feeling; able to calm self, accepts when things don't always go their way, stand up for beliefs and thoughts **Language** Semantics (meaning) Pragmatics (social cues)
Knowing Safety and Feeling Safe	This supports children to know and understand their rights, particularly rights to safety and health. Experiences can include family safety, a right to a voice, road safety, water safety, safety around animals, safety with equipment and environments.	build secure attachment with one and then more familiar educators establish and maintain respectful, trusting relationships with other children and educators are happy, healthy, safe and are connected to others show increasing independence and competence in personal hygiene, care and safety for themselves and others show enthusiasm for participating in physical play and negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and	

		wellbeing of themselves and others.	
Social Justice – gender, equity, rights, respectful relationsips	This includes supporting children to be aware of stereotypes and biases and how this impacts upon themselves and others in their development of being and identity. Issues of fairness, rights and equity should be discussed with a commitment to developing an anti-biased approach within the curriculum.	practise inclusive ways of achieving coexistence become aware of ways in which people are included or excluded from physical and social environments develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour begin to understand and evaluate ways in which texts construct identities and create stereotypes empathise with and express concern for others display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives	
Transitions	This supports children in understanding the process of change, including daily routines, environments, and of significant importance, identity. This includes transitions to the early years setting, transitions throughout the day and the year, and transition to school.	use effective routines to help make predicted transitions smoothly show interest in other children and being part of a group transfer knowledge from one setting to another notice and predict the patterns of regular routines and the passing of time	

Assessing and Documenting Children's Learning and Development

Documentation forms an evidential base for recording the participation and progress children are making in education and care programs, particularly towards the learning outcomes as described in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Under the legislation of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, services are required to record assessments for learning and development and to make these available to families upon request. These assessments include intricate planning for children ensuring the experiences support them to progress and develop using a planning cycle. Families provide valuable feedback in relation to their child's learning and development and this in turn forms a unique partnership in planning for children. Educators and families therefore engage in a systematic approach to documenting and sharing children's progression, including the utilisation of the specific developmental domains (cognitive, social, emotional, physical and language skills) and learning outcomes (identity (outcome 1), community (outcome 2), wellbeing (outcome 3), learning (outcome 4) and communication (outcome 5). Teachers and educators may also plan in relation to the organisational core values as an integrated approach to their curriculum.

Planning for children is holistic which means that multiple aspects of development and learning are incorporated into each experience the child has and therefore educators record their progression in a holistic manner, but track in a systematic method. It is also reflective of the theoretical frameworks that are incorporated into content areas and teaching approaches.

Tools and assessment documents are developed in consultation with the teachers and educators of CKP services as well as pedagogical leaders, management and the board. This includes the following:

- Assessment for learning and development
- Formative assessments and planning
- Summative assessments and reporting to families
- Transition Learning and Development Statements

It also may include the following:
- Literacy and numeracy assessments
- Oral language assessments
- Physical development assessments

- School readiness assessments and planning