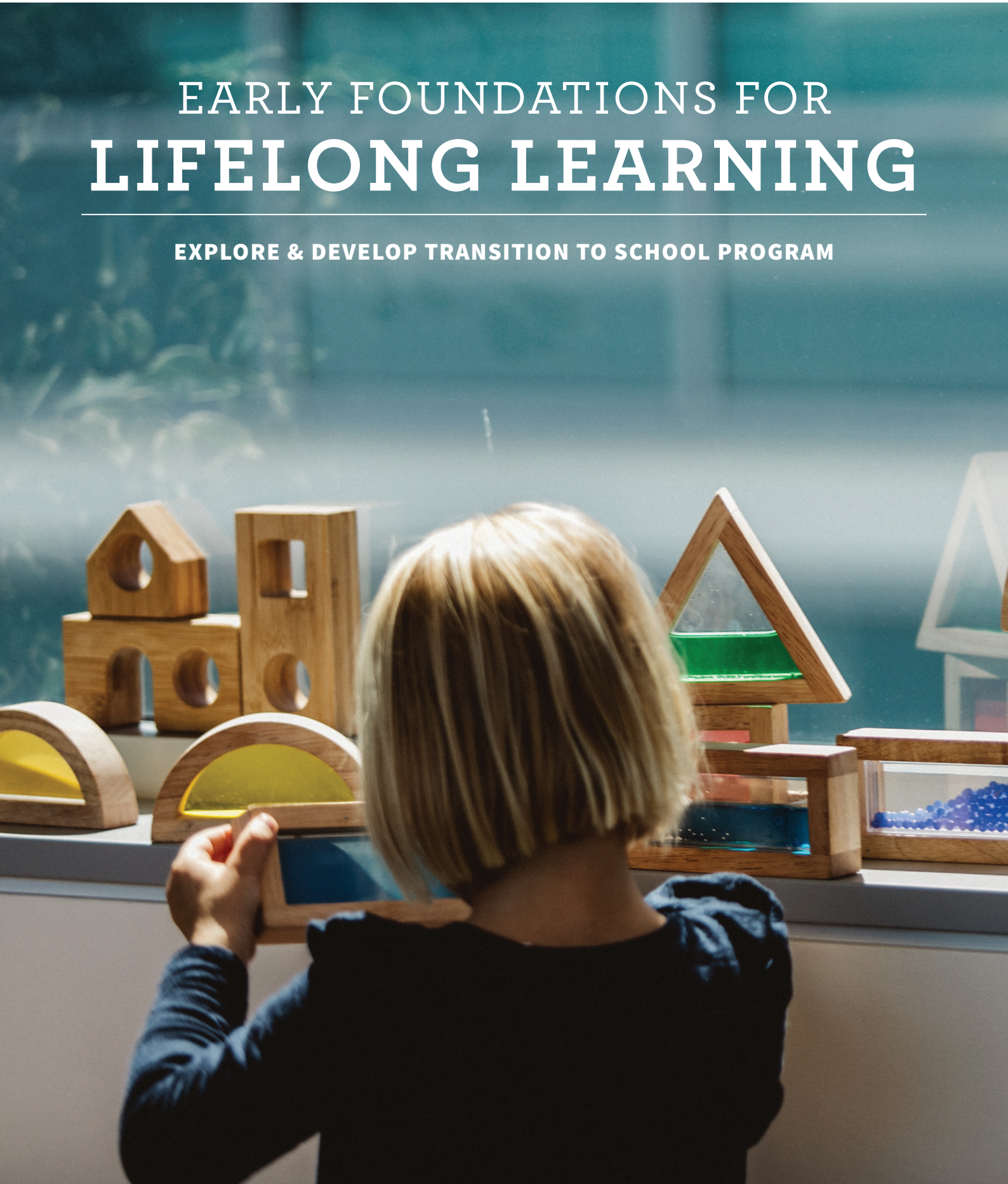


Explore & Develop

Where curiosity leads to learning

EARLY FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

EXPLORE & DEVELOP TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAM





OUR
APPROACH

SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL
WELLBEING

LANGUAGE
AND
LITERACY

COGNITIVE
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PHYSICAL
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EARLY FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

EXPLORE & DEVELOP TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Starting school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and family. Explore & Develop supports the essential foundations for learning for all children and in doing so provides a play-based developmentally appropriate curriculum where children are learning important knowledge, skills and attitudes that will not only prepare them for school but for lifelong learning.

Explore & Develop view children as competent and resourceful learners from birth and aim to extend that learning in partnership with children and families. We allow the children to develop and

mature, to benefit socially and emotionally from the experiences at Explore & Develop. Children are supported to feel a secure sense of “belonging” so they can enjoy “being” a child with rights, agency and decision making capacity, while expanding their learning.

Our focus is on making your child’s transition to school as smooth as possible and giving your child important skills to help them enter school as confident, capable and involved learners. We want children to be achievers and most importantly we want children to be happy and excited about moving forward and facing new challenges.







OUR APPROACH

Our goal is to teach children to be confident and involved learners.

‘School Readiness’ are two words that lead many to think of preschools using formal teaching methods based on worksheets, rote learning and memorising to prepare children for their transition to school. When we talk about school readiness we are talking about the foundation skills children need to assist them in their transition to school and beyond – **they are life skills**. It is through our play-based programs and the children’s natural curiosity and interests that we help children develop the foundation skills in a positive and engaging environment.

What we place emphasis on in preparation for a successful transition to school is:

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS IN THE YEARS BEFORE SCHOOL

School readiness is not an isolated program, it is a process that happens over time. At Explore & Develop we focus on a holistic approach (whole-child) to learning where learning begins in the infant rooms and is embedded in everything we do. Explore & Develop supports Neuroscientific research that confirms the development of the brain is most rapid during the early years. These early years are a crucial period where children develop the foundations of their social, emotional, physical and intellectual wellbeing for life. Our qualified educators plan and provide programs that optimise learning and development across the five Learning Outcomes of Australia’s National Early Years Learning Framework, supporting all children to make progress and lay the foundations for their transition to school and lifelong learning.

EVERY CHILD IS UNIQUE

The unique nature of each child is preserved and respected. Educators take a personalised learning

approach where children learn at their own pace and when they are ready.

INSTIL A LOVE OF LEARNING

Explore & Develop believe that before a child can learn, they must feel confident enough to discover and explore their environment. For example, when children are exposed to literacy and numeracy learning through hands on, practical and play-based experiences, they are more likely to engage meaningfully and successfully with them.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Carefully planned learning environments invite children to explore numerous opportunities. When children have opportunities to make choices, take risks, attempt tasks for themselves, and to take on increasing responsibilities, their sense of themselves as competent members of society grows.





SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

To be confident learners, children need to have the social and emotional skills.

OUR PROGRAMS HELP TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR:

- resilience – the capacity to not only manage stress but to come out of challenging situations comfortably;
- self-regulation – understanding, naming and managing emotions;
- independence and self-help skills;
- positive social interactions and the ability to make and sustain friends but also work and play independently;
- self-expression and confidence to communicate needs and ideas;
- sharing and turn taking;
- entering and leaving individual and group play situations positively;
- understanding and following routines and coping with routine changes;
- an ability to remain attentive and work in a group setting;
- a beginning understanding of empathy, seeing others perspectives and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness;

- a beginning ability to recognise bias and unfair situations; and
- respect for others.

Relationships are an integral part of children's learning. As children create connections with their educators and peers they gain a sense of belonging to their environment. This in turn provides a platform and secure base for them to be able to confidently explore.

Autonomy and independence are continuously promoted through Explore & Develop's beliefs that children are competent and capable beings. When children gain a sense of autonomy, this not only boosts their self-esteem but can also be transferred into other areas of their learning. *If we want to set children up for success they have to feel good about themselves and who they are.*

'We know children start learning from their earliest relationships, so having good early relationships is important to their learning as well as to their happiness. Social and emotional development has been shown to be the most important aspect for children as a foundation for all their learning.'

(Early Childhood Australia – Everyday Learning Series. Vol 2, No.3, 2004)

WRITE

A	a	B	b	C	c	D	d	E	e	F	f	G	g	H	h	I	i	J	j	K	k	L	l
M	m	N	n	O	o	P	p	Q	q	R	r	S	s	T	t	U	u	V	v	W	w	X	x
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LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

OUR PROGRAMS HELP TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILDREN TO UNDERSTAND:

- language is a communication tool;
- language can be fun and creative;
- language encompasses many facets such as verbal, written and body language;
- print has meaning;
- principles of symbols and shapes (letter forms);
- the importance of effective listening;
- hearing and identifying differences in language sounds; and
- to develop a love for books.

While our focus on literacy development is stronger in the preschool years it is important to note that literacy learning begins at birth. Educators focus on using language in all its forms. Singing, talking and reading with infants and toddlers as well as preschool children is crucial. The more children hear language used, and the more opportunities they have to use it themselves, the more they learn about how it works. When children are ready to develop their written literacy this understanding of oral and spoken language is invaluable.

HOW DO WE BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S WRITTEN LITERACY?

Writing is a natural progression that evolves from drawing experience. When educators support children to explore writing they ensure this is done in meaningful contexts so that children develop a purposeful relationship with it. Children need to first begin making marks, lines and circles in various ways – in sand, on paper, in chalk on concrete until they begin to develop the connection that signs and

symbols communicate meaning. During the next stage they explore representations of objects they are familiar with, such as the sun, a face, a flower and begin to recognise their name on the paper. This becomes children's first understanding that drawings have meanings and the letters in their names are symbols which represents themselves. You might hear children recognise the first letter of their name and say 'That's me!' or 'That's my letter!' It is a powerful moment for children.







COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

OUR PROGRAMS SUPPORT THE FOUNDATIONS OF:

- confidence in trying new skills and making attempts at learning;
- an energy and love for learning;
- an ability to think creatively;
- investigating, problem solving, and theorising;
- good memorising and memory recall;
- key mathematical ideas and concepts (sorting, categorising, volume, measurement, one to one correspondence);
- being attentive and concentrating; and
- listening skills.

Mathematical and scientific concepts are embedded into our everyday program, creating mathematical and scientific thinkers. Children are provided with hands on learning opportunities and the resources and materials used within our services are carefully selected to promote children's development.


As children take part in the daily program they are exploring spatial relationships, recognising patterns, sequencing, predicting and estimating, sorting and classifying objects, talking about time and the patterns of the day, measuring and calculating amounts and identifying shapes. It is also through everyday routines that educators are creating opportunities for children to learn these skills e.g. at meal times learning could include putting one spoon next to one plate (one to one correspondence).

The daily curriculum also includes investigating science areas such as water, plants, animals, sound and space. As children engage in inquiry, they are exploring, investigating, making observations and using data from investigations to draw conclusions about their world.

When Explore & Develop educators focus on maths and science, they are also incorporating all other areas of our curriculum e.g. language & literacy, music, art, physical.







PHYSICAL WELLBEING

There is continuing research that children's physical strength and wellbeing attributes to academic success as they are better able to attend to tasks and display sustained attention.

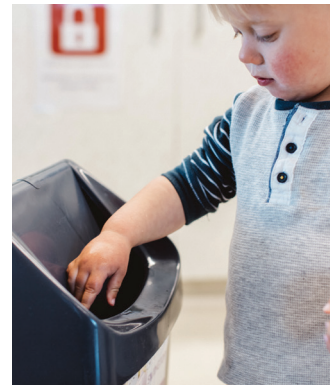
OUR PROGRAMS SUPPORT THE FOUNDATIONS OF:

- fine motor skills – holding a pencil, threading beads and using scissors;
- gross motor skills – climbing, running, balancing and kicking a ball;
- spatial awareness and coordination;
- independence, competence in personal hygiene; and
- care and safety for themselves and others.

From your child's first year with us right up until their final year before school they will be provided with space, time and encouragement to use their whole body and develop the necessary physical skills for their transition to school. For example, a well-developed core gives children the stability to sit for longer periods of time or when children strengthen their coordination skills they have an increased ability to cross the midline which aids them in drawing and writing.

Children are exposed to an array of tools and resources that promote fine motor development. Strengthening hand-eye coordination through manipulating these resources regularly in a variety of experiences develops small muscles.

Our outdoor environments extend and challenge not only children's physical wellbeing but also encourages children to take considered risk. This offers opportunities to develop problem solving abilities and build resilience. It is through risk that children challenge themselves and further their own development in order to grow and learn both mentally, physically and emotionally. Educators instil trust in children as they allow them to develop confidence in their bodies own abilities and limitations.





CONNECTING WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

Children have a right to a sustainable future. They will be the policymakers and leaders of the future, and it is what we teach children now about the environment that will directly influence the long-term health of the planet. Explore & Develop supports the mounting evidence that connecting children to the natural world through early education programs and environments enhances learning, and is essential for healthy development. Therefore Explore & Develop have a responsibility to make education for sustainable development a part of our everyday practice. Educators develop programs and learning opportunities that promote and encourage children to develop connections with the natural world. Beyond this, the natural world provides many opportunities for children to grow and learn in a holistic manner.





EXPLORING ART AND CREATIVITY

ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY

Our programs nurture children's creativity through creative and expressive arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling.

Our physical environments are arranged so that they encourage children's curiosity and sense of wonder. Children are encouraged to come together, collaborate and engage in shared thinking. Materials and resources are open-ended, aesthetically pleasing and entice children to explore and discover. When children are engaging in creative play they are empowered to take risks, seek out and explore their own inner desire to create, express their feelings and ideas, build, pull apart or put together the resources on offer.

It is through these creative experiences that children further develop their speech and language, persistence, concentration, problem-solving abilities, imagination, ability to question, fine motor strength and co-ordination as well as discovering a way to communicate through artistic expression.



“As children progress through their lives they will need to be able to answer questions that have not yet been asked. Creativity will be essential both for imagining those questions and for finding ways to answer them”

(Early Childhood Australia, Research In Practice Series, Creativity and Young Children: Wondering, exploring, discovering, learning)





SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

EXPECTATIONS WHEN STARTING SCHOOL – THEY ARE PROBABLY MUCH SIMPLER THAN YOU THINK!

- Separate easily from parent/carer at school drop off.
- Confidence to ask for help from adults when needed.
- Have basic independence skills – able to put shoes and socks on, toileting independently and unpack their lunches/bags.
- Ability to self-regulate their emotional response in a variety of situations and respond in an age appropriate way to challenges/conflict.
- Able to follow routines.
- Listens to others in a small/large group.
- Initiates conversations with peers and adults.
- Sit with the group e.g. mat time, and remain focussed, ask questions and answer questions.
- Uses words rather than body language to communicate during play, express a feeling or a need.
- Eagerly enjoys learning about new ideas presented to them by another person.
- Understands that numbers have meaning.
- Recognise own name.
- Uses scissors efficiently.
- Able to work on task from start to finish.

The Australian Curriculum and the NSW Board of Studies and Educational Standards (BOSTES) describes in detail the knowledge and skills that teachers are expected to teach and children are expected to learn at each year level in each of

the learning areas. The ‘Prior to School’ stage statement recognises that the **Early Years Learning Framework** (Australia’s National Framework for Early Education and Care Services) sets the scene for successful learning at school and throughout children’s lives. This means that teachers (in a school setting) are encouraged to build on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that children bring to school from their homes, communities and experiences in education and care settings **e.g. Explore & Develop.**





ROLE OF THE FAMILY

Families are children's first and most influential teachers.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

- **Listen and talk** with your child in a respectful way. Listen to all the things your child wants to tell you 'good' and 'bad'. Show them that you are paying attention by asking questions and encouraging them to continue.
- **Read to your child**, and encourage them to appreciate literacy on their own. Provide access to a variety of books and reading material. Initiate conversations about the content, to facilitate comprehension. Share some of your experiences and stories with them. Engage in songs, rhymes, chants and oral stories.
- **Introduce mathematical relationships** into your day e.g. concepts of time – what is happening after breakfast, what needs to be done before lunch; when grocery shopping – what do we need to make Spaghetti Bolognese; setting the table for meals – how many people, what is needed? When mathematics is seen as part of everyday life and enjoyable, children are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards this key learning area at school and succeed.
- **Visit the school.** Take pictures of the school, revisit these photos at home. Discuss the symbols for girls and boys toilets, practise locking and unlocking the cubicle. Participate in the school's Transition to School Orientation program. Watch how comfortable they are at the orientation and discuss how you and your child feel after the event.
- **Show your child where you will drop them off**, where you will be when picking them up, and when you will be there. We encourage all families to visit the school before the previous school year ends. Being on the grounds in the mornings and at dismissal whilst school is in session provides for real time experiences.
- **Let your child be active in decision making** during the preparation period. Provide choices so they can gain some control and ownership with the process e.g. picking out their supplies, lunch box, etc.
- **Establish some rules and directions at home.** Talk about the possible rules and directions that may exist in a classroom and school.
- **Establish a school routine.** This might mean a new bedtime and wakeup routine. A key to success for children is arriving at school before the bell. Practising these routines will help you get out of the house on time.
- **Post a calendar** with the school schedule for the entire family to view. This also helps the new school goer visualise what is happening and when e.g. sport, library, excursion, special treat after school.
- **Establish lines of communication** with the Principal and teachers. If your child has additional needs, ensure that the school is aware of how they can support him/her.
- **Remain calm.** This will help your child to feel more secure and more confident.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BUILD YOUR CHILD'S PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND LEARNING CAPACITY

- Further develop your child's vocabulary about their emotions i.e. label how you are feeling and validate your child's feelings.
- Role model empathy.
- Provide opportunities for your child to practise regulating their behaviour.
- Support your child when they experience setbacks or disappointments – avoid the temptation to shield them from these experiences to build your child's resilience.
- Encourage your child's efforts, focus on the process and not the final result.
- Model and praise confidence.
- Encourage your child to role play social situations such as making new friends and resolving conflicts.
- Provide your child some opportunities to take some risks and make some decisions understanding sometimes they might make the wrong decision, or have a fall. Consider changing your language from 'Be careful' to 'Do you feel safe?'
- Develop open communication with your child to give them the tools to keep themselves safe in tricky situations.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS READY?

There are many factors for parents to consider when assessing their child's readiness for school. Explore & Develop educators are primary influences in your child's development and have a deeper understanding of early child development. It is suggested that families work in partnership with their child's educators in order to gain perspectives and the expertise of educators when making the right decision for their child. Explore & Develop value working in partnership with families as this is central to ensuring continuity and progression in children's learning and development.

For more information on Explore & Develops 'Early Foundations for Lifelong Learning – Transition to School Program' please contact an Explore & Develop Early Childhood Education and Care Service close to you.

www.exploreanddevelop.com.au







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**A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND
EDUCATORS FOR THEIR
CONTRIBUTION TO THIS BOOK.**

Explore & Develop

Where curiosity leads to learning

ABOUT US

- We offer caring and nurturing environments to accommodate the needs of infants through to preschool-aged children.
- We believe that children develop at their own rate and in their own time. This is why we offer daily programs that reflect a calm, relaxed and unrushed environment for growing and learning.
- We help children reach their full potential by providing enriching, meaningful and real opportunities for learning and development through emergent educational programs.
- We believe that children learn as they explore, discover, make, create and imagine. We value constructive play as a tool for learning through our natural environments.
- We celebrate our differences through acknowledgement and acceptance of diversity within our community. We value the insights and traditions that can be shared, respected, and appreciated within our service.
- We welcome and value each family and their contribution. Embedded in our culture is the notion that families are a part of our service and are invited to make contributions to all aspects of its operation.
- We believe that it is important to encourage children to be lifelong learners. As children prepare for their transition to school, Explore & Develop offers specialised programs to support their developing confidence, life skills and abilities.

FOR LOCATIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

