

# Learn about LECS

## Information about our school philosophy

Globally, the early childhood band of development is birth to 8 years. Our early childhood school specifically caters for children in that range of development. All teachers permanently appointed to our school have an early childhood teaching degree. As with all A.C.T. government schools we implement the mandated curriculum frameworks – Early Years Learning Framework, Australian Curriculum and Every Chance to Learn (the latter is being gradually phased out as new areas of the Australian Curriculum are introduced). The way we do this (that is, our pedagogy) is unique and has been deliberately designed to cater for early childhood stages of learning and development.

It is in Kindergarten to Year 2 that the unique pedagogy becomes more visible. Our classrooms look 'different' as we set them up to support daily play. Our daily play period is part of the class timetable. We call it Investigations because it is at that time that we plan for and expect challenging investigation and enquiry for each child.

Our practice is supported by current brain research. It is believed that play shapes the structural design of the brain. Secure attachments and stimulation are significant aspects of brain development. Play provides active exploration that assists in building and strengthening brain pathways. Play creates a brain that has increased 'flexibility and improved potential for learning later in life' (Lester & Russell, 2008, p. 9). During Investigations each child works hard on creating, designing, analyzing and recording their learning.

Investigations time allows our children to explore, identify, negotiate, take risks and create meaning in their learning. The intellectual and cognitive benefits of play have been well documented. Children who engage in quality Investigations are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behaviour, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).

Investigations does not happen in a vacuum. Teachers work hard to link curriculum areas to children's interests. They assess and document children's learning and determine children's strengths and areas for improvement. Then, together with other teachers, they plan carefully how to use play-based activities as one tool to promote the learning and teaching of literacy and numeracy.

One of the greatest benefits of Investigations is to support children's development of social competence. Children can build relationships, learn to resolve conflicts, and negotiate and regulate their behaviours. During Investigations, children usually have increased feelings of success and optimism as they act as their own agents and, with teacher direction, make their own choices. Playing is a known stress release; it is often linked to child wellbeing.

The dispositions for learning, such as curiosity, openness, optimism, resilience, concentration, and creativity are developed in play. Playing is linked to the development of resilience and the beginnings of empathy as children begin to understand other points of view.

If you would like to see Investigations in action, please talk to your child's teacher.

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