



# Children's Experiences and Learning Policy

Indooroopilly Montessori Children's House  
Date: Sept 2006  
Dates Reviewed: Nov 2007, Feb 2008, **February 2009**

## **Rationale**

We understand children have a natural curiosity, which provides the urge to explore their world. In order to facilitate this, we prepare the environment thoughtfully reflecting on the individual needs of the children. The environment allows children space to play actively, interactively and quietly. Resources are easily accessed and the children have an input into choosing resources and their arrangement. As children explore and experiment with language, relationships, ideas, equipment and materials they learn about themselves and the world.

## **Implementation**

- ◆ Staff encourage each child to make choices and participate in play
- ◆ Staff promote each child's ability to develop and maintain relationships
- ◆ Staff promote each child's language and literacy ability
- ◆ Staff promote each child's problem solving and mathematical ability
- ◆ Staff promote each child's enjoyment of and participation in the expressive

## **Staff encourage each child to make choices and participate in play**

Staff take an active role in supporting children to make choices, to access resources and to extend and explore their ideas. Staff give children the opportunity to learn and develop new skills that will enable them to further explore.

The prepared environment is carefully planned with input from all staff and the children. The environment is constructed so children can make choices and be independent. Materials are arranged so that they invite curiosity, creativity and problem solving. The Montessori materials have a full range of sensory aspects.

Children are supported to investigate, question and discuss their thoughts and ideas. This is done incidentally in small and large group time.

Staff regularly review teaching strategies and their interactions with the children both individually and as a group. A portfolio of work is kept for each child as part of the documentation process.

### **Staff promote each child's ability to develop and maintain relationships**

Children's interactions and relationships influence their interpersonal and intrapersonal development and thus, their concepts of self and self esteem.

Genuine and trusting relationships allow children to feel accepted and valued within their social communities which in turn empower children to become competent communicators able to express their needs and thoughts as well as develop appropriate ways to respond to a variety of situations.

Staff carefully observe the children and their interactions with peers, the way in which they develop relationships, problem-solve and articulate needs. These are considered when planning from the "Guided Choices" curriculum.

Staff and management at IMCH have developed the Guided Choices curriculum which incorporates behaviour teaching and management and the "You Can Do It" curriculum in conjunction with Dr. Margie Carter, a 'behavioural change specialist'. The parents are also supported through workshops, seminars and written documentation.

### **Staff promote each child's language and literacy abilities**

Language development involves understanding and communicating with others by using a wide range of skills. This includes verbal and non-verbal gestures, spoken and written expression. Children's ability to communicate is evident from a very early age.

Effective communication is dependent on staff modelling clearly and correctly; listening carefully; observing objectively; responding appropriately and giving feedback in a positive manner.

Children are encouraged to talk in a 1:1 situation and small and whole group situations. Staff are aware of individual children's temperaments and natural styles of communicating. Staff support and respect children who have English as a second language or are bi/tri-lingual. Open-ended questions are asked allowing children to communicate their thoughts and feelings, facilitating growth and further enquiry.

Staff interactions and questions will increase in complexity; involve re-ordering of perceptions, sequencing, reasoning and problem solving as children develop skills and interests.

Children's language and literacy development are supported and facilitated through reading/listening activities; 'stories' written and shared; co-operative writing; displays; Montessori pre-reading and reading materials.

Languages other than English are offered to children in the form of books; stories; songs and visitors. These will also reflect the specific children's cultural heritage.

Additional needs personnel are used for children with special communication needs in collaboration with Group Leaders and Centre management.

The environment will include a wide range of good quality books and posters, both fiction and non-fiction. The environment will encourage children to look at (read) books.

**Source:**

QIAS. Quality practices Guide (2005) pp 42 – 43

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**Communicating with Babies**

Communicating with babies in a responsive and respectful manner forms a foundation for secure attachment. Through interactive and responsive play, babies form trusting relationships with adults and a sense that their world is a safe and secure place.

When working with infants, we need to be much closer, as they need to explore our faces and hear us babbling and cooing back to them. Tone of voice is important.

Appropriate physical contact such as hugging is very comforting to children and helps them feel secure and valued. Non-verbal communication needs to be congruent with verbal and meta-verbal (tone responses). When tone and words don't match the child is easily confused because he/she is getting a mixed message.

When working with babies, caregivers need to initiate and 'answer' the babbling and cooing communications.

Infants cry to communicate when they are tired, hungry, afraid, startled, sick or in pain. The caregiver needs to respond immediately to identify the cause of the crying and act to meet the infant's needs.

As infants grow into toddler-hood, it is essential that caregivers respond to the toddler's verbal and non-verbal communications by spending time responding to and interacting through questioning and feedback.

Collaborating with families by sharing genuine interest and respecting home language and practices underpins the development of secure relationships.

Conversations should be initiated and maintained through the daily routines and experience in which children engage. All interactions with children that occur through routine care and other experiences need to be explained to them eg. Nappy change time, talk through the process as it happens.

**Source:**

A Practical Guide to Working with Children. Egle, C. (2006)  
Enhancing Children's Development. Dav. E. (2004)  
QIAS. Quality practices Guide (2005) pp 42 – 43

## **Staff promotes each child's problem solving and mathematical abilities**

Developing maths / logic and problem solving abilities is an on-going integrated part of the children's day. It involves the capacity to recognize patterns, abstract symbols e.g. numerals and geometric shapes, and see relationships and connections between separate and distinct pieces of information.

We assist children by providing opportunities for: classifying: matching: ordering: sequencing: patterning: problem-solving: counting: analysing: lateral thinking: conservation and games.

Staff through their observations of children in both the indoor and outside environments document their observations and allow for revising within their programming and environments.

Staff prepare the environment to stimulate curiosity and exploration in addition to providing activities which allow for more complex thinking and problem solving.

Staff ask questions in incidental, small and large group situations that are open ended and allow for more complex questions, problem solving and investigating. Staff scaffold children's attempts to anticipate, explore and understand. Children play games/songs with staff and each other, e.g. "I spy – Simon Says".

When children are actively engaged with an activity, staff do not interfere.

All areas of the programme are evaluated and reflected on for future planning for individual children and class activities.

Before children begin to work with the Montessori maths materials, they are well prepared through their interactions in the practical life and sensorial activities.

The maths apparatus isolates one concept and these concepts integrate to form the basis for a further step in the child's mathematical understanding.

### **Source:**

QIAS. Quality Practices Guide 2005 (pp44-45)  
National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.(2009). *Planning and Evaluating Children's Experiences Policy*. Retrieved 15 February 2009.  
[http://www.ncac.gov.au/policy\\_development/policy\\_templates.asp](http://www.ncac.gov.au/policy_development/policy_templates.asp)

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## **Staff promote each child's enjoyment of and participation in the expressive arts**

The expressive arts allow children to hypothesise, inquire and process information that has meaning for them. The expressive arts include construction, music, dance, movement, visual experiences and expression, drama and storytelling.

The environment at IMCH is visually pleasing and provides opportunities for children to explore and choose creative activities and experiences over time.

The staff stimulate children's thinking and self-expression by asking open-ended questions in relation to children's work and play experiences. The children are involved in decision making about interests and ideas.

Staff consider the environment and allow for flexible and spontaneous art expressions to take place.

Promotion of expressive arts will be integrated through programme planning and documentation. This will also allow staff to evaluate and reflect on practices.

The diversity of individual needs and cultures are identified and reflected in planning.

Children are encouraged to share and discuss elements of the expressive arts with staff and peers.

The programme at IMCH incorporates the following:

Music is featured as background to the day; as an incidental event; as programmed time, e.g. learning new songs/dances; with music specialist; listening and playing instruments; creating sounds, rhythms and actions.

Language /Literature is part of everyday. Staff read stories; poems; tales from other lands; scribe the children's stories; make photo storybooks; display books; storytelling (formal/informal); listening post.

Art / Craft is part of the children's day. Staff offer children a wide range of different mediums: paints, crayons, textas, pencils, chalk, charcoal, coloured paper; clay, dough; different textures. Children have opportunities to talk about and display their work. Staff encourage children to notice and talk about aesthetic aspects of the environment.

The programme includes excursions / visitors to the centre which serve as stimulus for children's creativity.

Families are invited to share in the children's creative expression.

Staff has opportunities to undertake professional development to extend their understandings and abilities with a range of expressive arts.

**Source:**

QIAS. Quality Practices Guide (2005) pp46-47.

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**Staff promote each child's physical abilities**

During the first years of life rapid physical growth takes place. Children develop an awareness of the growth of their bodies and their abilities within the environment. Physical ability is related to other areas of children's learning and growth.

A well-developed sense of body awareness and proprioception allows children to express themselves in dance, music, drama, sport/games and non-verbal communication. Gross and fine motor skills include strength, balance, flexibility, co-ordination and rhythm.

Sensory awareness also helps children to understand their bodies. The Montessori sensorial materials help refine these qualities in addition to aiding manipulative experiences and abilities.

Staff promote fine and gross motor development in the indoor and outdoor environments in both programmed and incidental opportunities. Staff encourage problem solving to extend their physical abilities.

Outdoor equipment offers opportunities to develop and refine rolling, sitting, crawling, climbing, balancing, jumping, swinging, reaching, grasping, catching, throwing. The environment is organized in a safe manner with appropriate safety features e.g. soft-fall; mats etc. Staff ratios are carefully maintained.,

The indoor environment allows for a huge variety of fine-motor development activities.

Staff talk openly to the children about their bodies and the ways in which physical activities are an important aspect of health. Staff models positive attitudes about physical health. Respect for and acceptance of everyone's different abilities is supported.

Physical ability development is observed, documented and planned for in the programme and integrated into other areas e.g. music, expressive areas etc. Staff consult specialists, outside resource personnel and families in implementing their programmes.

**Source:**

QIAS. Quality Practices Guide (2005) pp48 – 49.