

## LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Our educational philosophy at Eastern Suburbs Pre-Primary School is that play is an essential element of the learning and development process of young children. Play facilitates a holistic development of the child, rather than a focus on only one specific area.

We support all our children in growing and learning through play from the very start of their time at our school. This is done in age-appropriate ways, taking into account the children's different needs and development trajectories, starting with baby stimulation through play with appropriate toys such as mobiles (movement and colour), rattles (sound and movement control), soft climbing toys and gentle songs and lullabies.

As children grow through their formative years, they learn through play in the following ways:

- Communication and language skills are developed with simple games such as Hide and Seek and repetitive sing along songs time with their peers.
- The foundation of maths and science are learnt through building structures with blocks, and knocking them down again, puzzles and number songs.
- Games such as peek-a-boo help develop cognitive skills and an understanding of presence and absence.
- Curiosity and problem-solving skills are evolved through treasure hunts and detective games.
- Fine motor skill development (which is the toning of small muscles needed for cutting and writing in later school years) is achieved through drawing, tearing, cutting, and picking up smaller objects.
- Gross motor skill development (which is the development of the bigger muscles) comes from playing with balls and swings, running, and climbing. We believe that the children need a lot of time playing outdoors in big spaces. Balance is also an essential development area that is learnt from these activities.

As children play in groups and classes, they learn about social adaptation, communication and tolerance through their interactions with each other.

Play is something that comes naturally to a child and so learning happens incidentally and continuously in a way that is fun for the child, not forced.

Children are also given choices when it comes to play – what are they going to play, how are they going to play, and with whom, all of which stimulate motivation and involvement. This also develops healthy decision-making skills and conflict-management skills needed later in life.

The general wellbeing of the child is increased as play is a joyful activity.