



Grafton Childcare

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Providing, Curiosity, Awe and Wonder in Early Childhood

Welcome to the Journey

At Grafton Childcare we are passionate about early years, inspiring our little ones to be the 'thinkers and doers' of the future. We have embarked on an incredible new approach which inspires children through curiosity, awe and wonder.

Through this approach, children learn through the use of authentic resources, recycled materials and loose parts. Our mindful and passionate team will be looking to create amazing play spaces for our children, where they have the opportunity to become inquisitive capable learners.



The Curiosity Approach

We are delighted to announce that we have embarked on The Curiosity Approach accreditation scheme. We are working towards gaining recognition for providing beautiful play spaces and learning opportunities for our children here at Grafton Childcare.

The Curiosity Approach is a wondrous ethos that focuses on Curiosity, Awe and Wonder in Early Childhood. We are excited to start this incredible journey and are thrilled to share it with you. Over the coming year, we are looking to reflect on our current practice and standards and strive to make changes to our environment. Looking to use even more authentic resources, loose parts and an approach that provides wondrous learning opportunities for our incredible little learners.

The Curiosity Approach is an ethos/approach where we will be focusing on and celebrating magical moments in early years, providing passion, and the invitation to learning, which will promote Curiosity, Imagination, and Awe and Wonder for our children. It's exciting news and we hope you will join us on this incredible journey over the next year.

Denise &

The Grafton Team



What's it all about!



1. Curiosity, Awe & Wonder, - providing w o n d r o u s opportunities to learning & development
2. Passionate motivated staff, who are curious adults too. Dedicated to inspiring our incredible little learners
3. Beautiful play spaces, which offer endless opportunities to learning and development.
4. The introduction of authentic materials, and loose parts, which teach children **HOW** to think and not **WHAT** to **THINK!**
5. Calm, tranquil environment allowing children time and space to learn
6. Creating the **thinkers and doers** of the future. preparing children for

A Modern Day Approach, Giving Children The Wings To Fly.

Over Stimulation

But why are we moving away from bright colours and 'Plastic Fantastic'?

A stimulating environment to play in and explore helps our children learn and grow.

But sometimes too many activities add up to overstimulation.

It's all about finding a balance that we believe is right for our children here at Grafton Childcare.

Authentic Materials

Instead of using plastic pretend child-sized toys, we use the real thing. Resources which value children's play.

Here at Grafton Childcare we are moving away from plastic manufactured toys - which are miniature and child size. By giving children 'real' authentic resources to play with, it opens up a wealth of opportunities for learning.

These resources offer a range of textures to explore and investigate. In comparison, plastic feels the same, smells the same and all looks the same. By providing an eclectic collection of resources, we believe our children are given a wider range of experiences. opportunities for critical thinking, exploration and discovery.

Calm

Through The Curiosity Approach™, we aim to provide a home-from-home environment, through a calming tranquil space. Neutral colours, natural materials, cosy places for our children to sit and look at books or engage in deep learning.

Current thinking is that bright colours, brightly painted walls and rooms crammed with walls full of displays, laminated sheets and number lines to over stimulate children can lead to over sensitivity, anxiety, and loss of concentration. We aim to provide excellent learning opportunities to support your child's happiness and well-being.



Let's Reflect

Here at Grafton Childcare we need to reflect on our own environments. To think outside the box and view our play spaces through the eyes of the children within. We are working tirelessly to improve the experiences and learning opportunities for our children. To ensure children never feel over anxious, stressed or over stimulated. We aim to provide spaces children feel happy, content, safe and secure to play explore and investigate. to be motivated, stimulated, curious, inquisitive learners, who are given opportunities to reach their full potential and the 'wings to fly'.

We are striving to provide thoughtfully presented resources - inviting children with subliminal messages to come explore, investigate and play? Inspiring curiosity in early childhood.

We are in the process of swapping things around so that more of our resources are easily assessable, allowing opportunities for self-selection, promoting independence and more opportunities for free choice? We offer children the opportunities to access authentic resources, loose parts, and recycled materials, but intend to expand this? So that the children can access more resources that allow our children the opportunity to learn how to think, not what to think.

We are at the moment reflecting on questions, such as does our play space feel homely, inviting and not institutionalised?

Sensory Overload



Question: Have you ever been to the 'clothes sales', keen to go to seek out a deal? You enter the store and immediately the atmosphere changes.

Music plays methodically in the back ground, not hearing it, not interested in it. However, it is there filling your ears relentlessly. Clothes hang everywhere, brightly coloured miss-matched items, all dragged out from every season and displayed to catch your eye and attention. No order to the arrangement, no purpose, just there to show you everything that has been on offer, over the past few months and sometimes years. Clothes or other random items fill every shelf, surface, just in case it meets your style or it might interest you in some way.

A whole array of different, random pieces to meet the wide variety of tastes, sizes, styles and ensure the store meets the diverse needs of its wide ranging customers. Stuff is everywhere, messy unorganised chaos, as people toss items aside, with no regard for their value or replacing it back on the hanger it once came from or the shelf it once was displayed on.

People move quickly, their behaviour rude, curt and with no regard for the fellow shoppers that share this environment. The music still drones on, like a constant ear worm - ever relentless, ever playing! The artificial lighting is set to bright, glaring constantly to show case the items within. The shopper next to you pushes you out the way to grab the item on the shelf, shoving her pointy elbows in your side as she makes a grasp for that last remaining sale item.

How are you feeling? Can you relate to such a shopping experience? Did you want to get OUT pretty sharpish? Did you want to escape as quickly as you entered, not interested, not engaged, not focused on the wealth of items on offer?

Were you experiencing sensory overload?

Items We Are Collecting

Cardboard tubes
 Ribbon & Lace
 Large Pebbles
 Acorns & Conkers
 Corks & Shells
 Fir Cones & Feathers
 Pegs & Small Logs
 Red & Pink Milk Bottle Tops
 Large Metal Washers
 Seed Pods
 Sunflower Heads
 Buttons
 Small Photo Frames
 Costume Jewellery
 Wooden Curtain Rings
 Wooden crates

Do you have any of these items at home, that you would like to donate to our Loose Parts collection? If so we would be very grateful, thank you.



Loose Parts Play

Loose parts are items that can be used in a multiple of ways with no pre-determined outcome. Our children can choose how to use these items. They can combine them, line them up, join them together, transport them. developing opportunities for creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving. Opportunities for counting, sorting. mathematical concepts and so many more learning outcomes.

Our children can use the items for construction, building, joining them together, developing skills of problem solving and critical thinking. Through the use of items we are opening up a wealth of opportunities to experience a range of textures, size, shape and variable weights. All of these help our children to develop mathematical concepts, providing opportunities for conversation and questioning.

Our loose parts can be used holistically across all areas of Grafton Childcare and are stored in the two Community Playthings storage units in the dining room so that our children can access and select them independently.

Loose parts have no fixed outcome which means there is no right or wrong way to play or use these items. Which in turn ensures learning is not prescriptive with adult determined outcomes. Our children can take ownership of their play and it opens up endless possibilities to learning and development. By using and interacting with these items our children are developing essential manipulative skills, building their dexterity and fine motor skills in preparation for later pencil control.

Their focus is on the process of learning and being actively engaged, instead of creating an end result e.g. a picture. Through the use of loose parts we are celebrating play as fundamental to our children's learning and development. Children should be researchers in their own learning, highly motivated to engage and develop their concentration skills and levels of perseverance.

Loose parts ensure children are taught HOW to THINK,
 not WHAT to Think!

The Benefits of Authentic Resources

Aesthetic Qualities

What does it look like? Feel like? Smell like? Do they have a unique quality of their own?

Unique & Unusual

Choose resources that are unusual and unique. Items that are eclectic and offer visual beauty and stimulus.

Trust

With guidance and support you should allow the child to work with "real" breakable objects.

Holistic Approach

A holistic approach to child development, mind, body, heart & soul

Encourage Exploration

Using authentic resources will encourage exploration for the child, taking thinking to a higher level.

Nature Collections

Some of your resources can be collected from nature. Sea shells, leaves, cones, pods, feathers and stones etc

Thinking

Authentic Resources are selected to stimulate deep level thinking and provoke curiosity, awe and wonder

Imagination

Consider materials that require the child to use their imagination or their experiences, let it come to life in the hands of the child.

Curiosity

Children are intrigued by so many phenomenas, they are drawn to sparkles, smells and sounds. It is our job as Educators to create a magical and wondrous place to learn.

Exciting Times

Here at Grafton Childcare, we continue to strive to offer excellent standards of care and education. By joining The Curiosity Approach™ Accreditation scheme we look to continue reflecting on our practice and the opportunities we offer our children.

We very much hope that our parents can support us by saving loose parts and anything listed overleaf. Our main goal is to ensure that our children reach their full potential, in a stimulating caring and safe environment. Giving your child the opportunity to follow their own learning style through curiosity, awe, wonder and fun. Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet and we very much hope you will be able to support us.



Join Us On Our Journey

"Be curious. Endlessly Curious. Go on asking questions. Never stop wondering why or how one thing links to another. How something changed. How one thing turned into another.....Be curious".

Michael Rosen - Make Believe Arts Patron



With thanks to Stephanie Bennet & Lyndsey Hellyn founders of the Curiosity Approach who provided source material and inspiration for this Newsletter.