



Wingate Avenue

Quality Improvement Plan 2022



SE-00003094

PR-00001919

Our History

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-operative is built upon the Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation. The Wingate team would like to acknowledge their continued connection to the lands and waters and thank them for caring for country for thousands of generations.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and recognise that Aboriginal Sovereignty was never ceded.
Always Was, Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land.

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative first opened its doors in 1975, having been transformed from an old basketball stadium and has been providing education and care to children within the local community ever since. The service shares its location with the Wingate Avenue Community Centre and co-located services including the Moonee Valley legal team, local Maternal and Child Health Nurse and additional services including English classes and social supports.

The centre has recently finished a large scale renovation, with new, purpose-built environments that have been architecturally designed to optimise children's learning and development, with a strong focus on access and inclusive spaces.

We are classed as a Not For Profit Centre with part of our operating requirements under our lease agreement with the Department of Housing, to engage 50% of our enrolments from the residents of the Ascot Vale Housing Estate, which the Centre is located on. This is a commitment that we are proud to fulfill and the diverse community it encourages is one of our many strengths and assets.

Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative is governed by a committed group of parents who are better known as our 'Committee of Management' (COM), working collaboratively with our centre director, Alison Owen to make business decisions about the centre and guide the overall vision and strategic plan that advocates for all children to have access to a safe environment that focuses on high quality learning opportunities for all.

When families enroll at Wingate Avenue, they sign up as a 'member' of the centre and have voting rights when assisting with appointment the Committee of Management.

Our Committee of Management is made up of 5 members, including the three integral roles being the Chairperson, Treasurer and secretary. Smaller working groups are identified based on current happenings and needs of the centre and provide additional opportunities for families to use their unique skill sets to support the operations of the centre.

Seeds (0-12m)



Lead Ed: Cassie



Gayatri

Seedlings (12m - 2y)



Lead Ed: Naomi



Jess



Breaks: Mulu

Sprouts (2y -3y)



Lead Ed: Natalia



Michelle



View



Natasa

Meet Our Team!

Stalks (3yo Kinder)



Kinder Teacher:
Jules



Suman



Kenna

Blossoms (4yo Kinder)



Kinder Teacher:
Ashley



Sarah



Tayla

Support Team



Mau



Ann



Selam



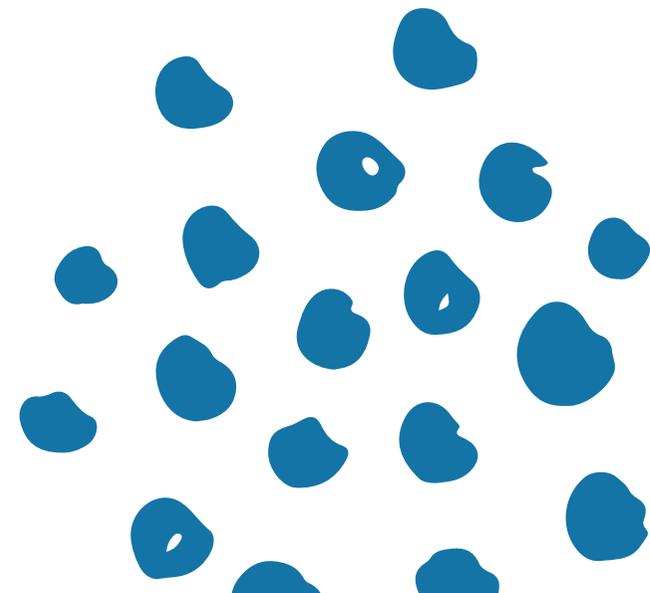
Zara



Melody



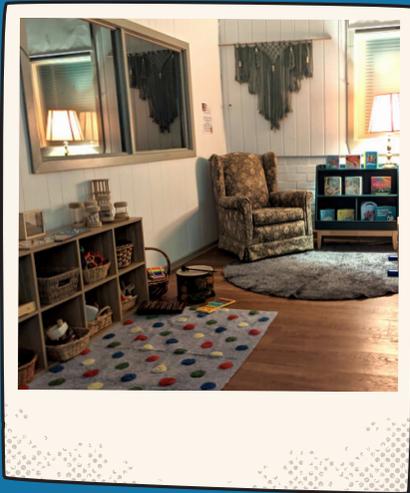
Grace



Our Educational Spaces

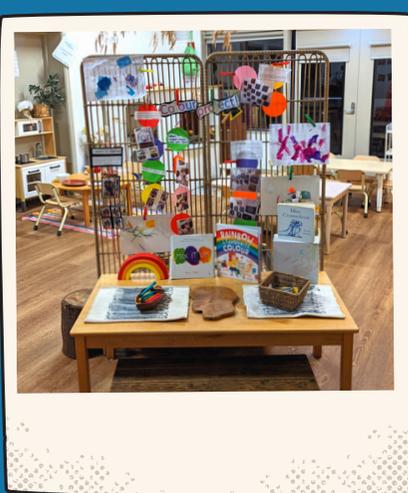
Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative has five individual classrooms that are reflective of the age and developmental needs of children enrolled at the service.

Our room names were created in consultation with families in 2016 and were designed to reflect the children's learning and developmental journey throughout their first formative years before beginning schooling.



Seeds

0-1
10 places



Seedlings

1-2
12 places



Sprouts

2-3
11 places



Stalks

3-4
15 places



Blossoms

4-5
22 places

Our Philosophy

In relation to Families, we believe:

- That Families are seen as a Child's first teachers and the most important influence in their learning and development.
- That ensuring that all Families are supported to have access, input and inclusion in the program is a vital element of our practice.
- That ensuring a supportive orientation process for Families lays the foundation for engaged and responsive relationships between Families and Educators.
- That fostering a mutually respectful partnership with all Families is key to ensuring Children have the best possible outcomes in their learning.
- That honest, open and respectful communication with Families is a key element of our practice.
- That collaboration with Families, acknowledging diversity, religious beliefs and cultural identities are all integral in building a sense of security and belonging for all.
- That Families have the right to be consulted and encouraged to review Centre policies, practices, and philosophy in ways that are accessible to them and cater to their needs.
- That Children should have the opportunities to develop partnerships across ages and spend time with their siblings.
- That a safe and confidential environment should be accessible for all Families to discuss the development and wellbeing of their Children.

In relation to Children, we believe:

- That Children are seen as unique individuals who are rich in knowledge, competent and confident in their learning, global citizens and creators of culture.
- That each Child's needs, experiences, abilities and interests are uniquely theirs, requiring respect and inclusion.
- That Children are active participants in creating their own learning and environments, and are co-constructors alongside their educators.
- That Children's inherent connection to the natural world shall be encouraged and celebrated so that they have the opportunity to explore all natural elements without restriction.
- That the learning we offer is Child-directed, interest-based and freely chosen. Appropriate risk-taking is encouraged and celebrated.
- That offering Children an emergent Curriculum stimulates their love of learning, exploration, investigation and embeds social concepts.
- That when Children are encouraged to make choices about their day and are included in regular discussions about their environment and setting up learning environments, they become confident in their own abilities and develop a strong sense of self.
- That Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and recognising all areas of learning and development is equally important and inter-connected is how we embed equitable practices within the Centre.
- That Children should not be discriminated against as outlined by the UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

In relation to Educators, we believe:

- That Educators incorporate diverse pedagogical practices, reflecting varied perspectives, all of which contribute to each Child's wellbeing and successful learning.
- That a positive team approach is fostered when all team members are provided with encouragement, support & respect as individuals as well as valuable members of the Centre.
- That Educators are deserving of opportunities to grow and develop their practice and skills in the same way that Children are, and that professional development opportunities are how Educators can be supported to be continuous learners and critically reflect.
- That deep critical discussions and collaboration between Educators allow for individual growth and professional enquiry.
- That Educators are advocates for themselves, Children and Families, who are courageous in their practices around equity, education, inclusion and respect.
- That Educators promote a safe and confidential environment for all Families to discuss the development and wellbeing of their Children.
- That all employees should have a strong understanding of and act in accordance with the Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics and UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Philosophy

In relation to our Community & Environment, we believe:

- That it is the Centre's duty to not only acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung as the Indigenous Caretakers of the Land upon which it resides but to also embed a culture of respect and understanding within the Centre for Indigenous perspectives and experiences.
- That the Community of the Centre is especially unique and is celebrated for that diversity through incorporation in both our Curriculum and Environment.
- That the Centre fosters reciprocal partnerships with local Community services, organisations and networks in order to provide ongoing and authentic support for all people engaged with the Centre.
- That the Community is to be treated with dignity and respect by the team and encouraged to engage with Wingate in a variety of ways.
- That Children benefit from the opportunity to explore their local Community from a young age, a practice that is celebrated through regular excursions and connections within our neighbourhood.
- That it is the Centre's duty to continuously improve practices and procedures that embed sustainable and eco-friendly values in all aspects of the Centre's management.
- That Children have the right to opportunities to explore dirt, sand, water, grass and all-natural elements without restriction.
- The Child's choice of indoor and/or outdoor play is highly valued and promoted by all Educators, and an Indoor/Outdoor program is provided year-round regardless of the weather.
- That a safe environment will be prioritised over any element of the philosophy, program or policy.
- That the use of recycled and repurposed materials and resources should be provided and promoted throughout the service wherever possible.
- That we should all play a strong part in minimising our environmental footprint and encouraging positive attitudes toward sustainability

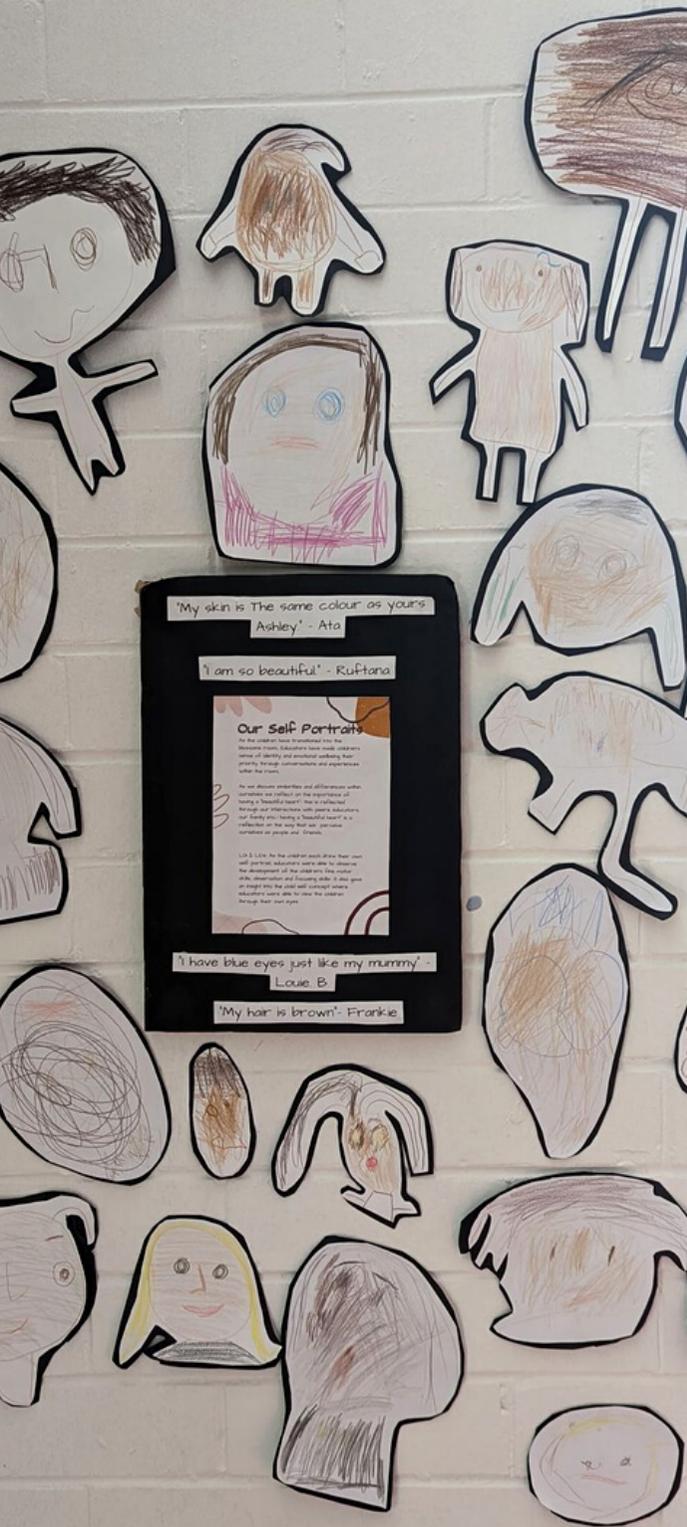
Our Strengths

- Strong community engagement and embedded relationships with support networks for families, both official and grassroots
- Environments that reflect our philosophy and encourage children to explore nature, with a focus on sensory and physical play that comes from the collected evidence that many children within our local community do not have access to a yard or outdoor area
- Reciprocal relationships with our families that are evident through our local reputation and how the family community engages with each other and our team
- A highly qualified and diverse team of educators who are supported to continuously develop their skills through professional learning opportunities and who are seen as valuable and valued team members
- A curriculum that is built on the child's voice and led by their interests, with educators as collaborators and co-contributors and that has relationships at its core
- A highly skilled and passionate leadership team, who are supported by a committee of management made up of family volunteers that centre children's rights and needs in every decision made in relation to the service
- Additional educators have been employed across the centre to provide identified supports to families, children and the wider staff team

Our Educational Program

QAI

- Our curriculum is centred around developing relationships with children that fosters an environment of agency and trust, from which the educators build on the learning opportunities
- Ongoing Reconciliation and Indigenous themes are promoted throughout the service and the programs
- Transitions and routines are embedded as respectful 'rituals' and 'rhythms' as part of our trust of the child
- Educational resources are sourced to ensure children are seen as the protagonist of their own stories and the communities diversity is reflected
- Extra-Curricular Programs are offered to support every child's right to grow up healthy, play and have fun! (Convention of the Rights of the Child, 2012)
- The Educational Leader role is fully non-contact in order to provide mentoring, support and program development alongside educators to promote deep critical reflection around practices, interactions and the way in which we shape learning for children.
- The program is centered around creating a safe space for families and children to form relationships and develop their skills alongside one another and the community, in order to create foundations of success for families that may otherwise disengage.





QA2

Children's Health and Safety

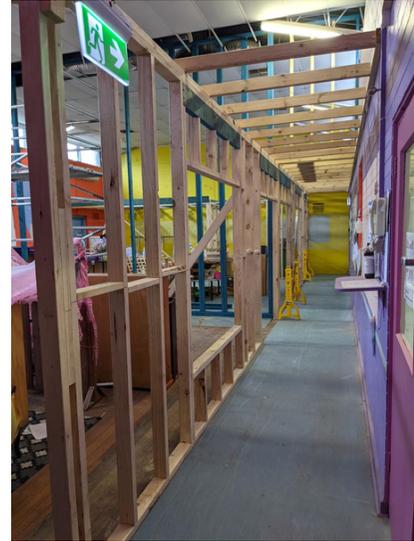
- A strong and responsive relationship with our local MCHN and Cohealth allow us to support children and families with varied levels of extra medical, health or social supports through referral and engagement with external services and local networks.
- Our weekly sports program was implemented in response to AEDC data and evidence collected by the team in relation to the barriers our community has accessing physical education.
- Our Kitchen menu is seasonally developed alongside children and families by the chef and our management team and reflects a variety of recipes from our diverse community.
- Vegetable gardens are seasonally planted and harvested by children, families and educators and incorporated in regular cooking experiences.
- Self-feeding is encouraged from birth but also culturally respected and understood.
- Children are encouraged to take risks and develop their confidence in their body safety through trial and error without adult intervention.
- Inclusive spaces for nervous system regulation, rest and solitude are set up with care in different environments.
- Additional needs are catered for with a budget for safety, sensory and adaptive resources to support a range of requirements and enable educators to access assistance before additional payments are granted to the service.
- Our Educators use their strong connections with the community and families to support children's safety and advocate for them to access supports with a strong focus on child protection.

The Environment as our Third Teacher

QA3

- A community approach to the recent renovations included planning with children, community and a working group made up of families at the centre who had clear shared goals for accessibility, safety and access to the outdoor spaces.
- Our Indoor/Outdoor program allows children to engage with the natural environment without restrictions and supports children to explore and connect with nature.
- Opportunities for children to engage in risky-play experiences are incorporated within our environment and curriculum, supporting children to learn their own capabilities and celebrate their achievements.
- A generous budget for resources and improvements supports the educators and children to extend their own learning wherever possible.
- The centre re-purposes and upcycles materials to promote sustainability and longer lives of resources wherever possible.
- An ongoing partnerships with the local 'Woodies' wood-working community group within Moonee Valley who custom create and donate resources and furniture
- Creation of spaces aim to provide a warm, bright, inviting and 'un-business like' atmosphere to ensure families and children feel welcomed and supported within
- Resources are inclusive and reflective of our community

BEFORE



AFTER





QA4 Our team

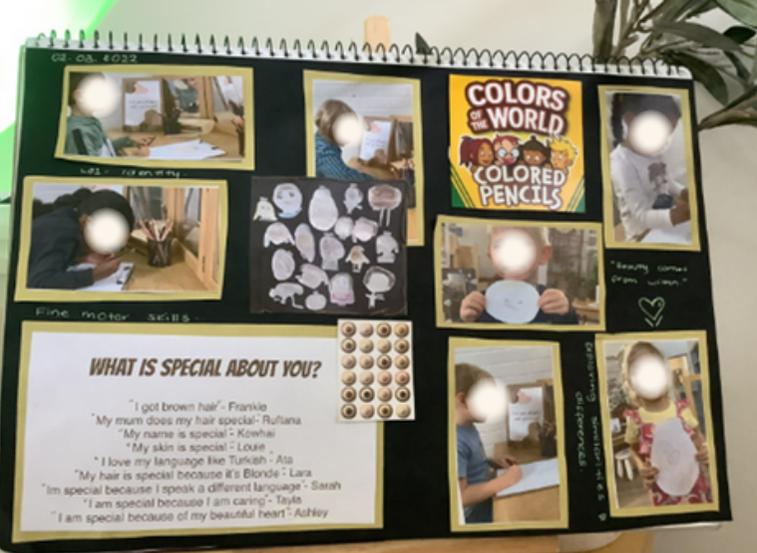
- The service ensures a higher educator to child ratio in all spaces to embed high quality support for the educators and children.
- Weekly Leadership huddles allow our leadership team to set achievable goals, support one another, share their knowledge and most importantly celebrate individual achievements.
- Our team are strongly connected and have a deep respect for each other both inside and outside of work, providing supports, openly sharing feedback and celebrating important milestones regularly.
- Team-building opportunities are ongoing through both social and professional events .
- Our highly knowledgeable and diverse team regularly shares wisdom around their culture, pedagogy and advocacy for children's rights.
- Our leadership team meets regularly to reflect and think critically about practice and programming.
- Each room is allocated a full day of planning each week in order to adequately provide high quality results and support families and children with any additional requirements .
- Wellbeing initiatives have a generous budget and are supported by the committee of management to ensure the educational team are celebrated throughout the year.
- Educators are valued for their individual perspectives, knowledge and experiences and are celebrated for their diversity, with several employees who are part of the Ascot Vale Estate community
- Our team are adequately reimbursed for their time, knowledge, upskilling, expenses and uniform in addition to their above award wages that are advocated for by our Committee of management in recognition of their skills and dedication.

Connections with our children

QA5 *"I love to look at my photos" Caleb*

- Children's unique and individual needs are effectively supported through strong relationships with local agencies
- Inclusive, culturally aware and equitable relationships with all children are embedded across the service and highly promoted within our Philosophy
- Children across the service have ownership over their own learning and are supported to develop room and centre displays that reflect on current and previous experiences with their educators and stretch their learning through reciprocal relationships and shared learning opportunities.
- Conflict resolution involves deep discussions, where children are confident in their abilities to autonomously create fair and equitable solutions
- The Committee of Management ensures that all decisions are child-centered and that procedures and policies enhance the engagement and access of all children.
- The child's voice is heard throughout the centre and opportunities are available for all children to provide feedback, engage in reviews of procedures and policies and be part of significant decisions around the service.
- Children show confidence as teachers within their classrooms, being offered regular opportunities to take on a range of leadership roles and advocate for their own learning on a daily basis.

"I like going on excursions because we see new things" - Yeabsera



"My daughter has been there for 18 months and absolutely loves it. The staff are so nice and down to earth. it has a fantastic outdoor area, newly renovated rooms and they do a lot of culturally inclusive activities."

- Parent

We have enjoyed dealing with Wingate as the staff are so friendly and helpful. The educators we've met are really lovely - down to earth, respectful, flexible and relaxed.

-Parent



Community and Family Connections

QA6

- Families are involved in all aspects of the Centre, from fundraising and working bees, supporting other families during times of crisis, making business and environmental decisions and voting for or electing to run for the Committee of Management
- Strong, embedded community relationships with the local men's shed, Co-Health, Advanced MCHN, local businesses, charities and other support organisations
- Families lead initiatives, such as fundraising BBQs, clothing drives, resource donations and planting projects
- Children lead community engagement through our open excursion policy, which encourages spontaneous outings within the local neighbourhood.
- Our centre director has been actively involved within the local housing estate and the 'Ascot Vale Estate's shared vision' redevelopment project since 2018, advocating for the community and families living within the estate and highlighting the voices and need for better supports
- All employees are passionate about uplifting voices and creating a welcoming and supportive introduction to the service that focuses on connection and respect.
- Management respect the diverse communities needs by using a variety of communication devices including simplified English, pictograms, translators and support workers to reduce access barriers not only to the Centre, but in order to support their access to other networks.

"Wingate Ave has been a wonderful support for the children within the Ascot Vale Estate. The ongoing relationship that has been built has allowed vulnerable children priority of access to the high quality education and care that Wingate provide." - Leonie, MCHN



From the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange Training on Image of The Child

Governance and Leadership

- The Centre Philosophy outlines the vision and values of the Centre and is reflective of the relationships, curriculum and community at Wingate Avenue.
- A regular review process allows all stakeholders to contribute to service policies, procedures and relevant documentation or service happenings.
- Annual performance reviews are undertaken with a full Centre approach, where goals are set with each employee's relevant mentor to promote leadership from all levels.
- Our Committee of Management brings a diverse skill set that provides wider support for our team to gain insight and build on strengths in varying areas. Examples include; leading outreach to vulnerable communities during COVID-19, HR and management, mediation, legal representation and consultation.
- Our COM are involved in exit interviews, which allow transparency across the centre and evaluate areas of focus.
- A clear strategic plan, developed in consultation between the COM and Centre Director supports the ongoing operation and focuses on internal upgrades and ongoing professional development of all employees.
- The self-assessment document draws information from a range of avenues such as family feedback, surveys, community goals and current happenings to develop clear and achievable focus areas for the year.
- Our Educational Leader comes to the Centre with over 12 years of experience and is supported to foster high-quality curriculum and practices through a full-time non-contact role, which allows for mentoring and critical reflection to be embedded practices within the team.

Our 2022 focus areas

This year, Wingate Avenue Children's Co-Operative will be focusing on 3 priority areas which will be deeply investigated and reflected upon in collaboration with the children, families, educators, committee of management and our community.

These priority areas have been developed based on our Family survey, feedback from children, ongoing self assessments and our vision to provide continuous improvement and the most appropriate education and care that reflects our communities needs and values.

You will find these priority areas available beside our Quality Improvement Plan in easy to access folders within the reception area.

We encourage all families, children, educators and members to add to these throughout the year.

Quality Area 1 – 1.3.3 Information for families

Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

Objective:

To increase families' understanding of and interaction with the curriculum, as well as reducing barriers to engagement for families, with a focus on our CALD community's needs

Identified Improvement:

Curriculum planning and documentation styles that have been taught to educators as 'high-quality' are often overwhelming and othering to families from complex social backgrounds and who are not confident with English, especially when written. We are reviewing and altering our program so that it can be easily understood and engaged with by all families while still ensuring that the content is of high quality.

Priority:

High

Steps:

- 1) Gain feedback from family community around their current understanding and ease of engagement in the program, with a focus on our CALD families.
- 2) Use information gathered to create strategies with the team to include and educate the family community about the curriculum.
- 3) Action the approved changes alongside the educator team.
- 4) Gather family feedback and assess any changes to the level of interactions from families.

Success Measures:

- families are confident in their understanding of the learning that their child engages in at the service
- educators have documented more engagement with the program and learning from families

Envisioned Outcome:

For all families to have equitable access to knowledge and inclusion in the curriculum and reduce the amount of disengagement due to lack of understanding or confidence.

Who Will be Involved and How:

All staff, leadership team, families and children

Timeline:

July - Dec 2022

Quality Area 3 – 3.2.3 Environmentally responsible

The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Objective:

To incorporate a stronger focus centre wide on engaging children in discussions and actions of sustainability

Identified Improvement:

The centre offers a range of sustainable practices, but often fails to identify the reasons **why** we do this, especially in regard of the long term impact these changes have and the benefits behind these practices for children to engage with and show true understanding.

Priority:

Medium

Steps:

- 1) Incorporate regular conversations that identify the steps we are currently taking and the impacts they have for children to understand the "why" behind these actions.
- 2) Reflect the current practices and vision of the Moonee Valley Councils sustainability initiatives and how we can engage with these.
- 3) Align practices with our RAP, acknowledging the Wurrundjeri people and the connection to land.
- 4) Use research topics and group projects to identify areas of need and further investigate our roles.

Success Measures:

- Children and educators show a deep understanding of the reasons behind the practices across the centre
- The centre aligns with current Community wide projects and strategic planning and

Envisioned Outcome:

For children to develop a deeper understanding in their role and advocacy for change through sustainable practices that identify the impact of human activity.

Who Will be Involved and How:

Children, educators, management and wider community.

Timeline:

Ongoing

Quality Area 7 – 7.2.3 Induction of new employees

Objective:

To ensure all newly hired employees are given a strong, positive induction into the team, with a focus on their understanding of the vision, policies, procedures and expectations so that they are supported to succeed within their role.

Identified Improvement:

The current induction process relies on a buddy system that doesn't provide dedicated time with the educational leader and director that could incorporate a deeper understanding of the curriculum, philosophy and community values within the centre.

Priority:

Medium - High

Steps:

- 1) Update the current induction process to incorporate time with E.L and Director that is clearly allocated in the first two days.
- 2) Incorporate an 'introduction' to families for all new employees that outlines their experience, alignment with philosophy and their personal teaching pedagogy and reflect how this is shared with families and their engagement.
- 3) Gather feedback from families, children and the new employees after their first month to identify areas that need more focus or review.
- 4) Reflect against current industry standards and support agencies such as ELAA and Employsure.

Success Measures:

- All educators have a deep understanding of the centres procedures, policies and philosophy and are able to implement these within their day to day practices.
- Employees feel supported within the team to seek support, ask questions and engage in ongoing mentoring.

Envisioned Outcome:

All employees joining our team show confidence in their roles and responsibilities and have a deep understanding of the centre policies and how to embed our overall vision.

Who Will be Involved and How:

Alison, Belle, Families, children and the wider team.

Timeline:

May to September