**MURRAYA CHILD CARE CENTRE**

**SHOWCASING QUALITY EDUCATION AND CARE PRACTICES IN THE TERRITORY**

**CREATING QUALITY FLEXIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

**Consider the questions following the video to inform critical reflection on practices at your services.**

Tara McLennan My name is Tara McLennan, I am the Centre Coordinator of Murraya Children’s Centre.

Sarah Lloyd And my name is Sarah Lloyd, I’m the Manager of Murraya Children’s Centre. So our philosophy here at Murraya is around play based learning, but incorporated into that play based learning is the environment and so that’s not only a love of the environment sustainability but it’s also care and the thought and the processes that go in to setting up out environment. So we think a lot about learning and what children are going learn and then think about the spaces and where that learning is going to occur. We’re looking for creativity, imagination, we’re looking for numeracy and literacy through play.

Tara McLennan We do have an indoor / outdoor, so our verandah doors are open.

Sarah Lloyd So we have spaces within the indoors but we also have equally spaces within the outdoors, so, they’re like outdoor rooms I guess would be the way of describing them. So all educators would contribute to that from the educational program and then that space will be created to facilitate that learning.

We tend to try and source our equipment locally, but we tend to stay away from commercial education suppliers,

When we think about equipment, we’re thinking about how can it be used in multiple ways, over multiple experiences. In the design of the spaces one of the things that we consider is adult interactions as well as children’s interactions, obviously children are at the centre of everything that we do but in order to facilitate that, that involves also catering for the adults.

Tara McLennan And I think by also doing that were also creating spaces for families to be able to sit and interact with their children.

Sarah Lloyd One of the easiest ways we say to explain to people is if you would not do it in your own lounge room well we wouldn’t do it here.

Tara McLennan So we provide care for children from birth to five, uumm, so we have four different rooms, so we have our infants, our toddlers, our kinder and our preschool.

So part of our pedagogy and our curriculum is that we do critically reflect on you know our practice and our thinking and our beliefs behind what it is that we are doing here at Murraya.

We attended the Early Childhood Australia National Conference and that got us thinking about technology in the early years and what that might look like for children between the ages of two and three and half.

Sarah Lloyd There’s lot of information for preschool, there is actually very limited information on what that looks like for two to three year olds and how they would engage with technology. Is it ok for an iPad to be a play object that children do have autonomy over and that they can go and pick up an iPad, or is that something that could, should only be used as a tool with educators? It’s actually a simple question with a very big answer and we are still working our way through that.

Tara McLennan We don’t have a, would you say, a stop and start routine everything is progressive, you know they have access to cold running water, cups, they have access to the fridge to get their water bottles, our routine such as meal times, it’s all progressive, there’s that flow that children can sit and have morning tea or if those other children are still interacting or you know engrossed in an experience, they can wait a little bit longer to finish that before they then go up and have morning tea or lunch or afternoon tea.

Sarah Lloyd One of the things with Murraya is that it evolved over time so when we opened in 2008 we really considered how we were going to provide quality education for children but also create a positive working space for educators as well.

Part of our philosophy is around seeing children’s being competent and capable, you know within level of age appropriate boundaries, because if you give children that responsibility and you view them as being capable there is a follow through of how they behave and how they interact with our environment.

Tara McLennan So we have two resident cats, also we have chickens as well as ducks, rabbits, fish and children have access to all of our animals and take part in their care practices as well and looking after our animals.

Sarah Lloyd And I don’t know if you have noticed but we do have a lot of plants and you know objects that could potentially be damaged, but because we have high expectations that we care for it and we respect the environment the children do too.

There was a number of practices that we would consider when we’re arranging our environment in regards to it being hot or if it’s during the buildup and its definitely getting hotter, that would be things in the hottest part of the day, we may stay under the verandah, you have the option to go out off the verandah, but we might consider that we might need to rearrange our spaces on our verandahs to accommodate a greater number of children, we may engage in water play,

One thing that we don’t do is go inside.

We try and accommodate the weather in different ways than going inside.

We do have a child initiated educational programs that within the bounds of that is intentional teaching, so I think it’s the balancing act, I wouldn’t like to say this child, everything is child initiated I also wouldn’t say that everything is educator initiated, it’s a partnership between the two where everyone is learning together.

**Questions:**

**What did you notice about the atmosphere of the service?**

**What role to the educators play?**

**How does the choice of materials and the design of the environment contribute to children’s learning?**

**How do educators reflect on their practices to contribute to ongoing improvement?**

**What ideas could you explore in your service setting?**