

3 year old playgroup/kinder program

School in northern suburbs with a kindergarten on site

High population of migrant and refugee families

Have been running 3 and 4 year old program for many years

In Victoria govt subsidises 4 year old kinder only,

3 year old costs families \$250 per term, very expensive for families who are dependant on Centrelink payments.

Over the years our numbers started to drop because of this fee. It was not feasible to run a quality program with such low numbers. As Sonja mentioned yesterday, we too are passionate about giving children every possible chance to succeed in life.

At the end of 2016 we decided we needed to do something that would give children the opportunity to be part of a structured program that would prepare them for 4 year old

We all know there is substantial evidence to support the importance of these programs and the impact they have on a child's brain development especially up until the age of 3.

So my Principal, kindergarten teacher and hub workers can together to find an alternative.

We designed a program that would incorporate a playgroup in a kindergarten environment. The program would be facilitated by our kindergarten teacher, supported by our hub worker and parents would be actively engaged in the program.

Aim of program.

Improve children's oral language and literacy skills

Support their development

Give them a pre kinder experience which would improve their overall school achievements and

Support parents to help them support their children through their school life.

The more experiences and opportunities children provided for children to connect, interact and learn is their pathway to a thriving future.

At the end of 2016 we selected a cohort of children whose families would commit to the program who would be attending our 4 yr old kinder and prep year in 2019. This would enable us to track these children and compare their performance with children who had not attended a structured 3 yr old program. Secondly we needed some data to see how these children were performing at the time so they were tested in the early part of the year with a Brigance test. We determined where the gaps were and put our program together based on these gaps. Testing will be conducted again at the end of the year to enable us to measure their progress.

We designed our program based on the abecedarian approach which comprises of 4 key elements

Learning games

Conversational reading

Language priority

Enriched care giving.

Weekly activities are programmed to improve and extend children's oral language, literacy and numeracy skills such as

Asking open ended questions

Allowing for imaginative play

Introducing new words and concepts

Building on fine motor skills

Role play

Storytelling

Science experiments

Incorporating maths into activities

Different play areas are set up to give children real life experiences such as a Restaurant, farms and a classroom. Hopefully the video works and you can see some of these areas of play.

Parents get to observe these settings and the language used by the educators and use this as an opportunity to play and read at home too. Parents are very well supported throughout Tis program as we have very resourceful and experienced staff who are bilingual, resources are given to take home and books are borrowed through our library.

Today we have brought along some samples and also some books for you to look at that our school and kinder have produced during a healthy eating and healthy lifestyle program that we did last year.

We have specialists visiting such as play therapists, speech therapists and maternal health nurses.

There is so much more to be said about this program but time does not permit. I hope we have the opportunity to share the outcomes of this very valuable program in the near future.

Thank you for listening.