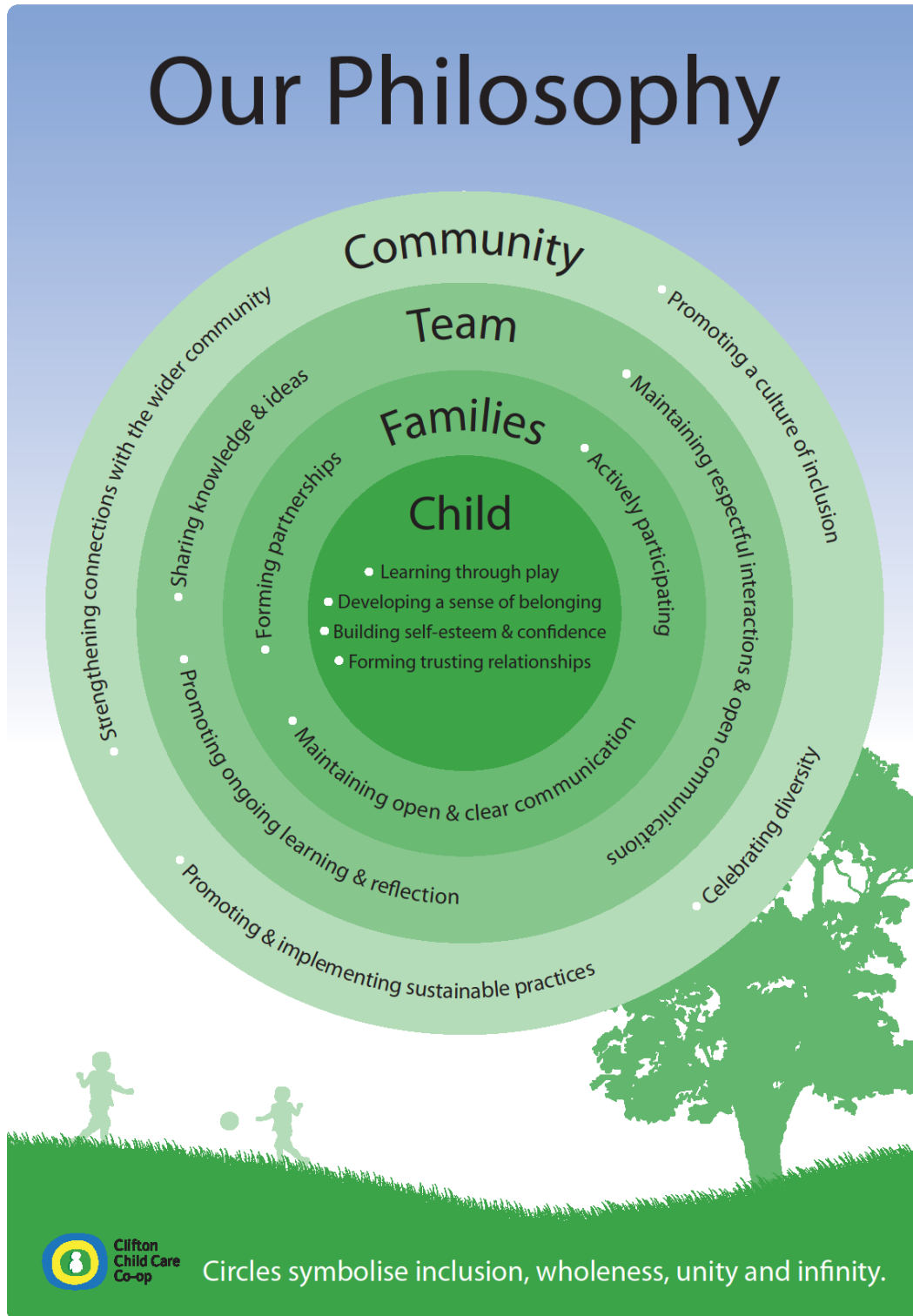


4 Introducing Clifton Child Care Co-op

4.1 Philosophy



We believe children learn about the world, each other and themselves through play, and through meaningful relationships formed in an environment of trust and enjoyment. Play helps children to develop the language, physical and social skills they need in life, including respect for people and the environment.

We place immense value on imaginative play and in the satisfaction that comes with even the smallest accomplishment. Children are encouraged to explore their environment freely, to imagine, communicate and create. We use natural materials in play to help stimulate the children's creativity and develop respect for their diverse environment.

Our staff respect children's unique differences and through observing the children's development each child's individual needs are met. Our co-operative partnership between families and staff – involving communication and consultation - helps us understand and plan an appropriate programme. We are always endeavouring to improve and meet the changing requirements of children and families.

Clifton Child Care Co-op celebrates diversity and embraces our place as part of a wider community. The involvement of parents in the life of the centre helps foster that community spirit.

We provide a nurturing, stimulating and safe setting in which children, staff and parents feel welcome and at home.

Children are amazing and we are privileged to play a part in their childhoods.

4.2 About Clifton Child Care Co-operative

What does it mean to belong to a Co-operative?

All families attending Clifton Child Care are members of our not for profit Co-operative. This means that parents participate in managing the Co-op, both in the structured sense of the Committee of Management and by their involvement in decision making and activities. Belonging to a Co-operative gives parents the opportunity to contribute their ideas and understand how the Centre is run.

The Co-op's background

In 1972, the Federal Government introduced the Children's Services Program under the Child Care Act to provide quality Child Care through a program based on self-help and community control. In 1974, the Fitzroy Council received grants for community-based, parent-run Child Care co-operatives. Accordingly, the Fitzroy Council purchased the property at 121 Rushall Crescent with Federal Government money and the Co-op began providing Child Care in 1977. In 2003 the City of Yarra approved funding to provide major renovations to the Centre, to update the facilities. The renovations were completed in November 2004, and the Centre now has wonderful, purpose built facilities and landscaping..

The Yarra City Council holds the title to the house and land and is responsible for major maintenance of the property. Daily running costs are covered almost entirely from fees, with some small grants. Fundraising is undertaken for special projects.

The Co-op is registered under the Children's Services Regulations 2009

The Co-op is deliberately small, set in an ordinary house that has been renovated to meet the needs of children. As a result, the Co-op is able to provide a warm, homely atmosphere that is greatly appreciated by both children and parents. Because of its small size, families can get to know each other over time and staff can get to know parents as well as children.

The National Quality Framework and Clifton Child Care Co-operative

In December 2009, all Australian governments, through the Council of Australian Governments, agreed to a partnership to establish a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (National Quality Framework).

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in education and care services through a national quality assessment and rating process, with

streamlined regulatory arrangements and a new national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments—the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)—to oversee the new system which replaces state and territory licensing and quality assurance processes.'(ACECQA web site)

In line with the new Framework, Clifton Child Care Co-operative Committee of Management, educators and staff, along with families have developed out policies and information booklets to ensure we meet the criteria for being 'excellent' in Child Care.

Our information contained within this document brings our facility into line with the National Quality Standards and shows the goals we have set for all within the Clifton Child Care Co-operative.

Area 1 – Educational programs and practice

Our Goal

- We aim to achieve the best education and learning outcomes for the children attending our Centre.
- Our approach is current and consistent across all areas
- To place immense value on imaginative play for our children and share the satisfaction that comes with even the smallest accomplishment.
- To encourage children to explore their environment freely, to imagine, communicate and create.

Area 2 – Children’s health and safety

Our Goal

- That the Clifton Child Care Co-operative is a place where children are respected, healthy, safe and connected.
- To provide a nurturing, stimulating and safe setting in which children, staff and parents feel welcome and at home.

Area 3 – Physical environment

Our Goal

- That children and families benefit from a high quality physical infrastructure.
- That sustainability is a key feature.
- That our children and families are engaged in the planning and delivery of programs.
- To have children enjoy a creative environment.
- To use natural materials in play to help stimulate the children’s creativity and develop respect for their diverse environment

Area 4 – Staffing arrangements

Our Goal

- That educator roles are filled on a permanent basis by appropriately qualified staff.
- To have staff turnover managed effectively.
- That there is a strong and supportive culture (multicultural too) in the centre.

Area 5 – Relationships with children

Our Goal

- To achieve our vision of ‘respected, healthy, safe and connected children’.
- That we believe children learn about the world, each other and themselves through play, and through meaningful relationships formed in an environment of trust and enjoyment
- Through play we help children to develop the language, physical and social skills they need in life, including respect for people and the environment.
- To enjoy the privilege we have to play a part in their childhood.
- To respect our children’s unique differences and through observing their development we ensure each child’s individual needs are met.

Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Our Goal

- To always endeavour to improve and to meet the changing requirements of our children and their families.
- To have a co-operative partnership between families and staff – involving communication and consultation as this will help us understand and plan an appropriate programme.
- To have positive, active relationships with agencies, neighbours, our Council and the wider community.
- To celebrate diversity and embrace our place as part of a wider community. The involvement of parents in the life of the centre helps foster that community spirit.

Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management

Our Goal

- We want to be recognised for excellence in the implementation of the National Quality Framework.
- To run our Centre in an efficient and effective way and be supported by an active, involved Committee of Management

Management

Committee of Management

A Committee of Management (COM) manages the Co-op in accordance with the Standard Rules (Constitution). The COM is made up of volunteer parents with children at the Co-op and is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Co-op's operations. Duties include budget planning, staff appointments, movement of finances, liaison with government bodies, fundraising, developing policies, and maintaining a close involvement with staff and the day to day running of the Co-op. As a Co-op member, are expected to be willing to serve on the COM and are strongly encouraged to consider serving as a Committee member or sub-committee member.

For more information, please speak with the Co-ordinator or the Chairperson.

The Co-op is managed by a Committee of Management in accordance with the Standard Rules (Constitution). It is the responsibility of the Committee of Management to oversee all aspects of the Co-op's operation.

Duties include planning the budget, appointment of staff, movement of finances, liaison with government bodies, fundraising, developing policies, and maintaining a close involvement with staff and the day to day running of the Co-op.

1. The Committee of Management will endeavour to represent the general parent body at all times to the best of their ability.
2. The names and phone numbers of the Committee of Management will be advised annually to members.
3. The Committee of Management will maintain appropriate communication with parents, through regular newsletters, notices, parent meetings, social events, and being available to parents.
4. The Committee of Management will maintain appropriate communication with staff, through the Co-ordinator and Parent/Staff Liaison Person, attending staff meetings as required, staff appraisal, social and fundraising events, and being available.
5. The Committee of Management will maintain appropriate communication with relevant government bodies, being aware of and responding to child care issues as they may arise.
6. The Committee of Management in conjunction with the Co-ordinator will review existing policy and procedure annually to ensure they reflect expectations of current members and staff, and to develop any new policies or procedures required.
7. The Committee of Management will discuss budget criteria for the following year, to provide guidelines for the Treasurer to prepare a draft budget. This will be put on the agenda as a fixed item.

Election of Committee

The Committee of Management consists of seven directors who are elected from the Co-op members. All Co-op members are eligible to become directors and are encouraged to consider serving as a Committee member or Sub-committee member.

1. Committee membership is for a two-year term.
2. Half the positions will come up for election each year (to facilitate continuity on the Committee).
3. Nominations are sought from the parent body for Committee and sub committees.
4. Elections will be held at the AGM.
5. If the number of nominations does not exceed the vacancies, those nominees will be declared elected.

Committee Portfolios

Each member of the Committee will have a certain area of responsibility.

1. The Committee must elect a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.
2. Other portfolios currently include Parent/Staff Liaison, Gardening and Maintenance, Fundraising, Communication and Promotion, Major Projects and Quality Accreditation.
3. Duties of each portfolio are stated in role descriptions (Refer Committee of Management – Position Descriptions p. 204).