



St Joseph's School
BOULDER
FAITH • KINDNESS • RESPECT

The Walker Learning Approach

at St. Joseph's Primary School

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Information guide



Dear Kindy and Pre-Primary parents,

We are thrilled to announce the implementation of Walker learning in Kindergarten and Pre-Primary at St. Joseph's School Boulder. Extensive research highlights the benefits of play-based learning and its positive impact on children's academic and developmental outcomes.

The Walker Learning Approach fosters problem-solving skills, deep thinking, and creative learning in children. It also promotes the growth of a robust vocabulary as students engage in discussions, ask questions, hypothesise, and negotiate their learning experiences. The opportunities presented during Investigations time equip students with essential skills that will benefit them in their future education and adult life.



The Walker Learning Approach

The Walker learning environment at St. Joseph's, Boulder is crafted to tap into children's curiosity, enhancing their knowledge and understanding of not just the curriculum, but much more. In our classrooms, learning emerges naturally from the various activities and experiences children participate in. They will acquire academic skills and concepts while also nurturing their social and emotional growth.

St. Joseph's Boulder is dedicated to achieving an ideal balance between play-based learning and explicit instruction. While meeting curriculum benchmarks is essential, it's important to understand that play-based learning at St. Joseph's is not merely free play; instead, it is thoughtfully designed to connect with curriculum learning objectives. Each day, teachers allocate a minimum of 40 minutes for play-based learning, during which multiple curriculum standards are addressed.



"Holistic education is about creating a balance between academic learning and the growth of the child as a whole person."

Ron Miller

Morning Session

Each day, we gather on the mat for our morning session or meeting. During this time, we take attendance, review the calendar, and outline the day's schedule. Teachers might also seize this opportunity to introduce a concept from one of the core learning areas. Following that, we discuss the curriculum learning intentions for the day. These intentions will guide our play-based learning activities, known as investigations, and inform our explicit teaching lessons later on.



21st-century learners need more than answers; they need the courage to ask the right questions.

Tuning In & Investigations

After we outline our learning intentions, we engage with our focus children and conclude our tuning-in session with a brief discussion about our daily tasks for the photographer and reporter roles.

Investigation time lasts a minimum of 40 minutes, serving as our play-based learning period. We have an array of play-based activities organised across ten distinct learning spaces. These learning spaces are crafted in accordance with children's brain development as well as the Kindergarten curriculum guidelines and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) mandated by the Australian Government.



1. Construction area
2. Reading corner
3. Tinkering area
4. Creative area
5. Dramatic play area
6. Mark-making area
7. Science and Nature area
8. Sensory area
9. Numeracy area
10. Outdoor area

"In play, a child always behaves beyond their average age, above their daily behaviour; in play it is as though they were a head taller than themselves."

Lev Vygotsky

Tuning In & Investigations



Each of the areas mentioned above has been meticulously crafted to encourage children to learn through various provocations placed throughout the classroom. These provocations are regularly updated to align with the children's current interests and learning needs, ensuring that the learning experience remains authentic and engaging. Children are dismissed from the mat with clear purpose and intention. Typically, the focus children, along with the reporter and photographer, will be the first to leave the mat.

Reflection & Reset

At the conclusion of the investigation period, students are invited back to the mat. The class comes together to reflect on the learning that has taken place. Children are encouraged to think critically, forge connections, enhance their strengths and skills, and clearly express their understanding. This reflection session will then be followed up by a reset of the areas.



Role of Teachers During Investigations

The Walker Learning Approach offers teachers a valuable chance to deeply understand each child's unique interests and developmental requirements. Educators will closely observe several factors:

- Which students collaborate with
- What activities they engage in
- Where they prefer to work
- How long they dedicate to these tasks

Teachers will leverage this gathered information to strategise future resources and learning opportunities tailored to meet the diverse needs of each student in the classroom.



Like young trees exposed to wind, children who are routinely exposed to small risks grow up to become adults who can handle much larger risks without panicking. - Jonathan Haidt

Focus Children

Our students enjoy being the focus child, as it makes them feel unique and contributes to fostering a sense of community within the classroom. Each child will have an opportunity to be the focus child, with one to two focus children selected daily. During their special time, the focus child typically sits at the front of the classroom alongside the teacher. Together, they engage in a conversation that centres around the focus child, emphasising their learning goals, interests, and personal experiences. This exchange of information not only makes each child feel valued but also aids the teacher in planning future assessments and lessons.

Reporter & Photographer

Similar to the focus children, students take turns in the roles of reporter and photographer. Each role comes with a personalised task to complete during investigation time. The reporter typically holds a clipboard and captures images using our class iPad. The tasks assigned to both the reporter and photographer are tailored to align with our learning objectives and cater to each student's unique strengths and needs. During reflection time, the reporter and photographer share their findings with the class, offering students a chance to further develop their public speaking skills.



In Kindergarten, these roles are introduced gradually throughout the year to prepare for Pre-Primary and beyond.

Statement of Intent (SOI)

A Statement of Intent serves as a planning document that details what teachers aim to cover over a three-week period. It is crafted in alignment with the curriculum and takes into account a teacher's understanding of students' developmental needs and interests. Each teacher will display their Statement of Intent on the classroom noticeboard outside their classroom. Additionally, it will be uploaded onto Seesaw for your convenience. Please take a moment to review the Statement of Intent to stay informed about what the students are learning and the associated learning goals.

Example of a Statement of Intent (SOI)

Source: Early Life Foundations

Statement of Intent		Year 2	Term 3 Weeks 5 & 6		
Developmental Domain Objectives	Learning Objectives	Students' Current Interests	Staff/School/Community Interests	Related Learning Experiences	Modifications Incidental / Scaffolding Assessment / Notes
Emotional (Identity) For the children to: Use the skill of self-control.	ENGLISH For the children to: Innovate on familiar texts by experimenting with character, setting or plot. Read and discuss different journey tale stories, identifying how they are similar or different. Understand that different types of texts have identifiable text structures and language features.	Lego Minecraft Painting Collage Reading Camping Insects Chemistry Art Cooking Robots Volcanoes Travelling Music Dressing up Spinners Tournaments Tomatoes Future Movies AI Construction Cars Detectives Sports - netball, soccer, basketball Dancing Robotics Motorbikes Animals Fishing Snakes Doctors Vets Bush Video Games	Core Values - Responsibility - Respect - Courage - Compassion - Honesty Monday - Friday Swimming lessons Tuesday Smoking Ceremony - George Wollery, School oval Thursday Music Incursion Saturday P & C Fair	Investigation Provocations Dramatic Play Veterinary surgery (soft toy animals, computer, phone, medical kit and supplies, posters), calculator, stopwatch, sign-in-no tolerance of bad behaviour, clock, calendar. Puppet Theatre Australian animal puppets Camping Tent , sleeping bags, campfire, clapping sticks, coolamon, bush tucker pictures, Aboriginal doll. Reading Selection of fiction and non-fiction texts - inc. Snail and the Whale, The Gruffalo, Mandurah maps, Downs syndrome doll. Construction Cubes, magnetix, wooden blocks, digital/mechanical scales, planning prompts, Lego, robot made from collage materials, MAB blocks. Sensory Light table - Coloured leaves, magnetic shapes, overhead projector, snow cube Bowl of water, plastic cloud, jug, containers Play dough - scented and coloured. Literacy Selection of writing tools and papers. Story idea cards, envelopes, magnetic letters, wooden letters, books, word cards, familiar narrative texts, various mind-map prompts. Mathematics number lines, bead string, cm squared paper, objects to count, wooden numbers, 100 squares, books, balance scales. Art/Drawing Paint, brushes, easel, variety of paper, vase of flowers, photos of diverse groups of people, families, Van Gogh's chair. Science/Nature Water conservation poster, levers, pulleys, wheels and axles, digital scales, reduce, reuse, recycle objects for sorting, language for questioning. Tinkering Tools, wooden planks, bolts, nuts, screws, nails, hammers, items for deconstruction, mind maps, picture of light bulb lit up, analogue scale, design brief. Collage Selection of craft materials collected natural seeds/nuts grouped.	Explicit Teaching Sessions Mathematics Measurement - Time clock, Mass - variety of objects to weigh. English Innovation, short burst descriptive writing - picture prompts Science Earth's resources - water - fire hydrant, puzzles HASS - Local area History of the Mandurah locality - maps Visual Art Colour, pattern Art examples - paper collage examples. Technology Chairs - pictures of different chairs

Assessment

Each day, as part of investigations, teachers observe the designated focus children, reporters, and photographers, jotting down their comments and/or photographs on an observation sheet. This information is essential for planning new provocations and resources to introduce into various learning environments, as well as for setting future learning goals for each child.

Example of a Weekly Observation Chart
Source: Early Life Foundations

Walker Learning
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LEARNING

Daily - Weekly Observations Record: Foundation-Year 2					Date:
CHILD	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Rosie	In home corner checking recipes and writing extra recipes			In the shop using the calculator to estimate cost of shopping	
Hussein		Working in vet as receptionist making appointments			In construction with Balunn making mini city
Mary		Building with blocks as architect			
Kathy					Reading books under tree about horses
Noah	Conducting an experiment in science-nature		In the vet clinic weighing the animals		
Abdul		In vet clinic writing a report on the animals			
Alan	Constructing a marble run with 4 bends and different angles			Designing a frequency table to monitor the number of successful marble runs	
George			With Kathy designing dog kennels		
Balunn			In construction with Hussein designing city		
Jesse				In sensory estimating volume of different flasks	

earlylife.com.au

Assessment Continued



Each student has a personal observation sheet that tracks their progress across the following developmental domains throughout the year:

- Social
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Language
- Physical

Individual Observation Planning Record (IOPR): Foundation – Year 2	
Childs Name:	Date of Birth:
DEVELOPMENT	
Emotional (Identity)	25/3 Julie is having trouble expressing her frustrations verbally with her peers 6/4 Julie is currently unsettled and easily upset. Her parent is away OS
Social (Community)	25/3 Julie is initiating contact and discussion with a range of peers 4/4 Julie tends to dominate the social interactions
Cognitive (Learning)	27/3 Julie often reflects lateral thinking and good problem solving
Language (Communication)	4/4 Julie uses appropriate grammar in tenses when describing events
Physical (Well being)	25/3 Julie's general upper body coordination seems appropriate, with good strength in arms in swinging (monkey bars)
Developmental Intentions	Focus for term 1 For Julie to extend her positive initiation with peers but to also learn how to express her feelings, frustrations with her peers.
KEY LEARNING AREAS	
Literacy Observation	25/3 Julie is recognising key words, key aspects of punctuation including full stops, question marks. 4/4 Julie enjoys reading and choosing her own books. She is beginning to use more expression in her words when reading.
Literacy Goal	For Julie to use expression in her words and continue to sound out when reading.
Numeracy Observation	25/3 Julie is demonstrating appropriate basic number skills and understandings. Seems to particularly enjoy numeracy classes.
Numeracy Goal	For Julie to be extended in her number understanding and commence more complex addition.
Science Observation	
Science Goal	
History Observation	
History Goal	

Observations and personalised learning objectives are recorded for both Literacy and Numeracy, along with any specific interests or topics that a student may express curiosity about.

Example of an Individual Observation Sheet (IOS). Source: Early Life Foundations

The Hundred Languages of Children



Source: My Teaching Cupboard



Notes



Notes

