

Principles

The philosophy of DanceKids aligns very closely with the Principles outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework. The following section will use examples to outline how we address these Principles.

Secure, Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships

We currently have six talented instructors, who all have years of experience working with children in different contexts. DanceKids instructors must have a sound background in dance or related fields and an ability to interact with young children in a positive, professional and caring manner.

Our Programs encourage respect between the children participating, emphasising concern for each other's welfare and the value of listening to the opinions of others. The joy of learning from each other is evident as they build on each other's knowledge when working together as a team.

Partnerships

Understanding the importance of the relationships between children and their teachers, DanceKids Instructors work with teachers to provide the best possible experience to the children taking part in our Programs. At the end of each session we offer suggestions of ways to continue exploring the concepts we have covered.

High Expectations and Equity

The foundation of the DanceKids Program is Kinaesthetic Learning. Of the three learning styles – Auditory, Visual and Kinaesthetic, the latter is without a doubt the most difficult to present in the classroom. A packed curriculum leaves limited time for students to engage in this kind of learning.

Identifying this gap, DanceKids aims to fill it and by doing so help children reap the many and varied rewards that come from Kinaesthetic Learning.

Perhaps the most important result of expanding the curriculum to cover all three learning styles is that it ensures all children are catered to. Many children find learning kinesthetically an exciting and engaging experience when taught in concert with Auditory and Visual styles. By providing a means to teach in this style DanceKids strives to provide children with an equitable learning experience.

In the words of Professor Ken Robinson:

“If we are to prepare successfully for the twenty-first century we will have to do more than just improve literacy and numeracy skills. We need a broad, flexible and motivating education that recognises the different talents of all children and delivers excellence for everyone.”

We encourage the participants in our programs to challenge themselves and the ideas that they take for granted. It is our goal to emphasise learning through creative problem solving, where being right is not about having the correct answer, but instead about having a different answer.

With years of experience interacting with children under our belt, DanceKids Programs are able to provide different learning styles, which are accessible to everyone.

Respect for Diversity

DanceKids provides a multilayered approach when presenting the concept of diversity. Our Themed Programs such as Around the World present a number of contrasting cultures; for example, Japan, India, Romania and Mexico, explaining the cultural context for their way of life. We also bring the concept of diversity into the classroom, encouraging children from different backgrounds to discuss their experiences living in different places.

Our other more environmentally focussed Themes present diversity in the context of the natural world. We explain that the way human society operates is just one of many such systems that exist on earth. For instance, our Honey Bees Theme outlines the unique life cycle and roles of Honey Bees within a bee hive.

Ongoing Learning and Reflective Practise

Founded in 2004, DanceKids has a long history of working with young children. We pride ourselves on a constantly evolving approach, which allows us to engage in reflective practise. Utilising the feedback we receive from the centres we operate in, parents and of course the children we interact with, we constantly review and optimise our programs. This culture of professional enquiry ensures that our programs are of the highest quality and that children who engage with them have an equitable and enjoyable learning experience.

Practise

The process of educating children is of course built around practise. DanceKids' experienced Instructors take their responsibilities very seriously and will typically engage children using the following techniques:

- Adopting holistic approaches.
- Being responsive to children.
- Planning and implementing learning through play.
- Intentional teaching.
- Creating physical and social learning.
- Environments that have a positive impact on children's learning.
- Valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families.

DanceKids' Instructors comes from a multicultural background, hailing from countries like Singapore, Japan and England and of course Australia. What they all have in common is their passion for working with children. This can be felt in every level of DanceKids and ensures that we are always sympathetic and responsive to the needs of the children in our Programs. While we are there to facilitate a learning experience, we also recognise as Educators, it is our job to work with teachers to provide a safe and positive experience for every child.

Our Themed Programs have been designed to present a structured and creative combination of intentional learning and learning through play. This duality ensures that the children in our programs receive the valuable experience of self-discovery within a structured environment. Using a holistic approach, our programs nurture the bodies and minds of children, helping them to understand their body's needs with warm ups and warm downs as well as increasing their self-esteem through physical activity.

Our Themed Programs promote understanding and respect for the natural environment and promote the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. For example in

the Rainforest Theme, we examine the different layers of the tree line, look at how different organisms have adapted their systems of seed dispersal, and present the concept of interdependence. This concept is important not only to the rainforest ecosystem but also to our global ecosystem. We also look at the endangered cassowaries and discuss the importance of conserving our rainforests.

Learning Outcomes

Outcome 1: Children Have A Strong Sense Of Identity

Children feel safe secure and supported.

In our Programs, children are introduced to dance in a safe and confidence building environment. DanceKids Instructors work with the children, responding to them and being sensitive to their needs.

Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

Children in our Programs are introduced to a new style of learning, which challenges them and helps them to make new discoveries.

For Example: When roleplaying the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly.

Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.

Children are supported as they experience the growth of their self-identity when learning through play.

Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

We encourage the children in our Programs to express themselves and to engage in respectful discussion. They are guided through cooperative and collaborative behaviour.

Outcome 2: Children Are Connected With And Contribute To Their World

Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.

Children in our programs are given the opportunity to represent their ideas by engaging in discussion, using dance and physical movements.

They share their unique cultural insight with other children and educators.

For Example: In the Around the World Program, children learn about the foods, dances, music and clothes of peoples all around the globe.

Children respond to diversity with respect.

In our Programs, children are presented with new perspectives on life, with emphasis being placed on other cultures and types of life forms.

Children become aware of fairness.

Children in our Programs learn from each other's perspectives in a respectful manner. They appreciate the achievements of others and themselves.

Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

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Outcome 3: Children Have A Strong Sense Of Wellbeing

Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

Using a holistic approach, our programs nurture the bodies and minds of children, helping them to understand their body's needs with warm ups and warm downs as well as increasing their self-esteem through physical activity.

Outcome 4: Children Are Confident And Involved Learners

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.

In our programs, children are given the confidence to persist with creative challenges when first attempts are not successful.

For Example: Instructors display delight, encouragement and enthusiasm for children's attempts when they make progress with a play based activity that challenges their physical ability.

Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.

Children in our Programs are given the tools to express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views physically and with speech.

For Example: They are led through physical re-enactments of many environments' life cycles, which inspires the children to share their thoughts on the subject.

Outcome 5: Children Are Effective Communicators

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

The core of a DanceKids Program is play based learning. Using speech and role-play children are given many opportunities to experiment and learning through play. Examples of this can be found in all of our Themes, for instance in our Honey Bees Theme, children will learn about the dances of bees and are introduced to the concept of communication through movement.

Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.

Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.

By looking at illustrations of the patterns created in the Honey Bees communication dances and translating this into actions, children are able to make meaning of this behaviour.