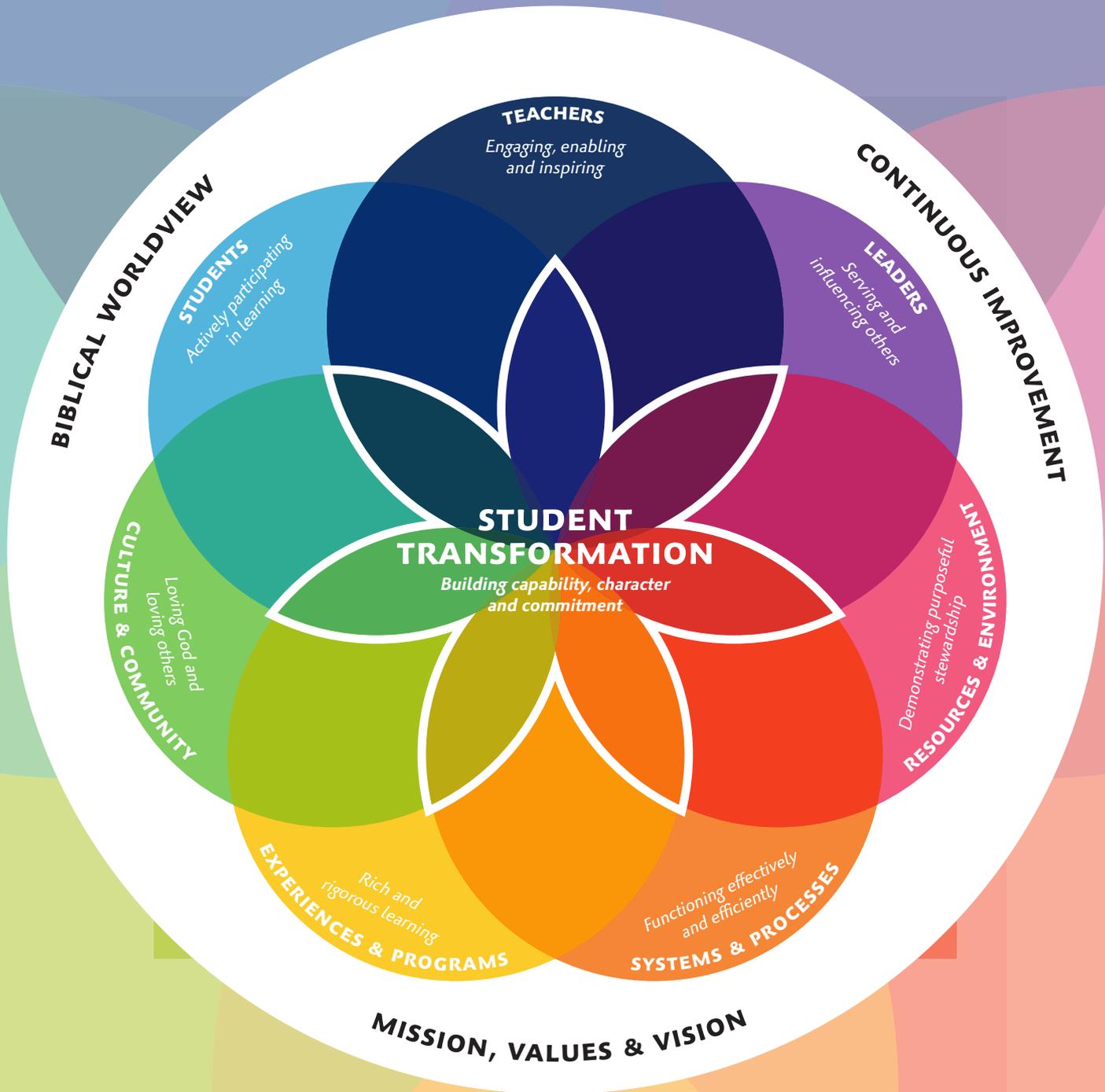




Chairo Kinder

PAKENHAM CAMPUS

Learning Framework



OUR MISSION

To provide excellence in Christ-centred education, in partnership with families, within a caring Christian community.

OUR VISION

To see Christ's redemptive impact in the world through the capability, character and commitment of our students.

OUR VALUES

Christ like character: *We are being transformed daily through God's word and Spirit, as both individuals and as a community.*

Biblical foundation: *We maintain an uncompromising biblical foundation in all that we think, do and say.*

Partnership: *We partner with parents as they seek to fulfil their God-given responsibility for the nurture and education of their children.*

Relationship: *We grow relationships that express the love and role of Christ.*

Achievement: *We provide an educational environment in which students and staff members are nurtured toward reaching their potential through and for Christ.*

Uniqueness: *We celebrate and respond to the uniqueness of each individual as an image-bearer of God.*

Stewardship: *We steward wisely all that God has given us for the cause of Christian education.*

Chairo's mission, values and vision reflect our desire to work in partnership with families. We seek to provide an education that allows each child to reach their full God-given potential. This is achieved while providing parents and guardians with an environment in which they can maintain and exercise scriptural authority and responsibility for their children.

PURPOSE OF THE KINDERGARTEN YEARS

Our motto of 'learning that lasts a lifetime' is the platform for learning throughout Chairo, and our kindergartens are an essential part of that. Laying a foundation for learning is certainly the basis of all that we do at Chairo Kinder.

It is our aim is to provide an environment in which the children are able to safely and freely experience the world around them through exploration, inquiry and discovery within a Christ-centred framework. As you will observe over time, our faith and beliefs heavily underpin all areas of our program.

Each precious child is a gift from God and has been created by Him as a unique and special person. All aspects of a child's development are nurtured, including the intellectual, emotional, physical, social and spiritual dimensions.

Early childhood is the beginning of a child's formal education. It is often the first opportunity for children to spend time away from their parents/guardians, and is therefore, an important part of their preparation for school. The years between 0 and 8 are critically important ones where a great deal of learning, understanding of the world, language, independence and attitudes develop.

We aim to help each individual child develop their full potential in three main areas. The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of Belonging, Being and Becoming.

Belonging is knowing where and with whom you belong. It is integral to human existence. In fact, God places each child within a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. A child's sense of belonging grows within these relationships and at Chairo Kinder we value and believe in developing a strong partnership with families in order to support each child's sense of belonging and connectedness.

Being is about living here and now. Childhood is the beginning phase of life and we want each child to flourish as individuals who bear the image of God. At Chairo, we allow children time to discover and engage with God's creation while learning about the complexities and joys of relationships, and while meeting the challenges of everyday life.

Becoming reflects the rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as children learn and grow. At Chairo, we seek to lay a biblical foundation and Christian worldview to help transform each child in their knowledge and understanding of what it means to live in God's world, under God's rule and in relationship with Him.

OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACH

We implement an integrated teaching and learning approach to enable each child to reach their full potential. Our programs allow for times of guided play and learning, adult-led learning and child-directed play and learning. Our curriculum is characterised by collaborative, effective and reflective practice.

Children learn best when their social and emotional wellbeing needs are being met. Therefore, we acknowledge and recognise that each child will learn at different rates, in different ways and at different times, and as such our early learning programs reflect the varied learning styles of individual children.

Young children learn best through activities that are relevant to their lives and varied enough to be challenging and engaging. Children learn as they interact, play, investigate, discover, create and wonder. The ideas that they bring to us are highly valued and our program aims to build on that prior knowledge. Being able to have lots of indoor/outdoor play, and being read to and have time to talk at home, helps children's learning and provides stimulus for the kindergarten program.

This type of program is called Play-Based Learning. It is fun, relevant and satisfying for the children because it is tailored to their own level of development. We support children's efforts to construct meaning from the world around them by drawing on their interests and prior knowledge, providing inspiration through new experiences with time and opportunity for reflection and consolidation. The environment is the third teacher and therefore an important part of the learning experience. It provides rich and stimulating experiences that cater for the individual, and for both small and whole groups.

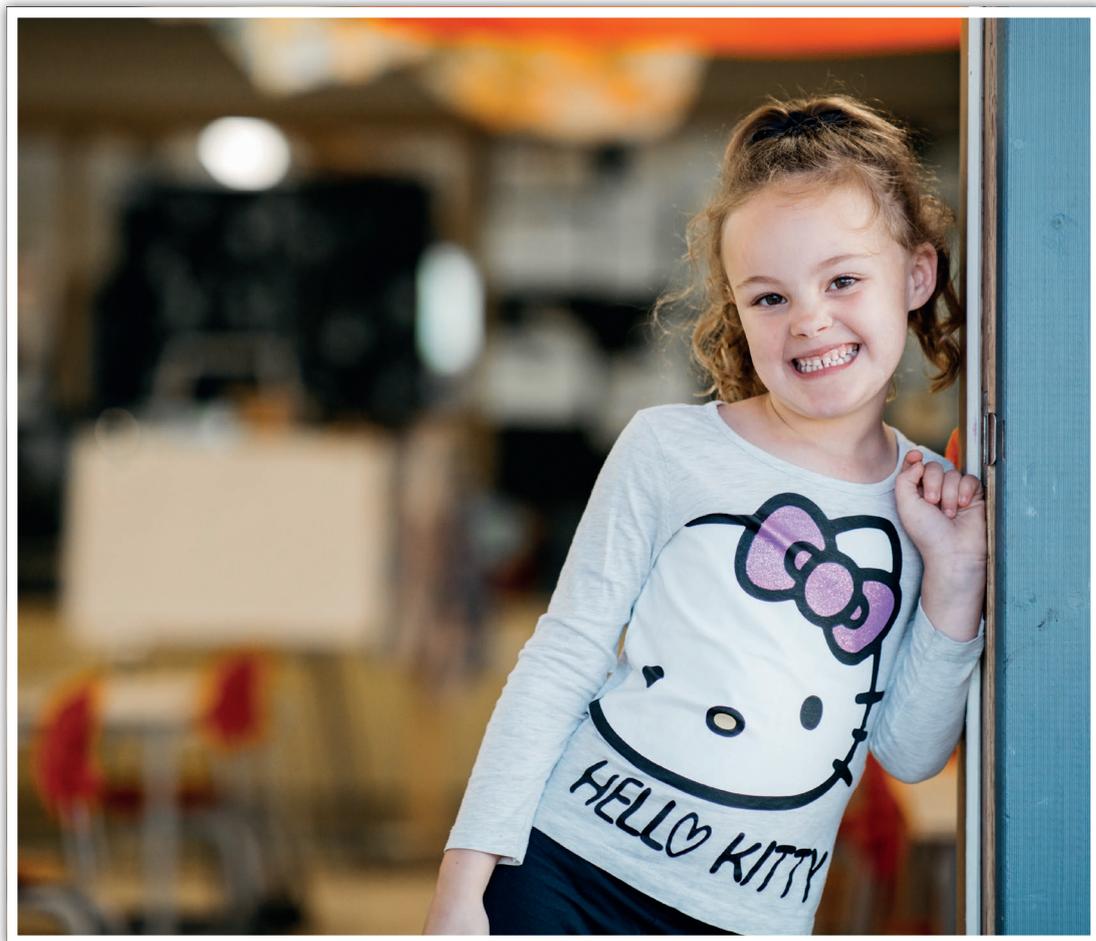
Threaded through our interactions with the children's play, our educators intentionally present a biblical foundation and Christian worldview. The Gospel story of creation, fall, redemption and restoration is central to all that we teach. Through Bible stories, songs, prayer and conversations we teach the children how to respond to each other in love and acts of kindness, and ultimately towards God in love and faith.

OUR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Chairo Kinder uses an emergent approach to inform the program. An emergent curriculum is responsive to the interests and needs of the children. Our program is carefully and thoroughly planned by our educators, and at the same time is flexible to allow for spontaneous learning.

Our program is informed by the CEN (Christian Education National) curriculum development resource called *Transformation by Design* (TbD), and by the five outcomes of the VEYLDF (Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework): Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning and Communication.

Within the daily routine, the children are able to make individual choices about their play, and they are encouraged and supported in this decision-making process. Social interactions are a key to the learning of children. They provide rich experiences of oral language, visual communication, listening skills, role play, problem-solving, discovery and creativity.



EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

While curriculum is important within early childhood education at Chairo, it is not the key focus in our Kindergartens—the children are. A meaningful, integrated, emerging curriculum linking to the Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being, and Becoming) is the most beneficial to children's learning across all developmental domains. Play is the main focus, as children journey through life to explore the beauty of God's love and their uniqueness as created beings made in His image.

The programs offered are carefully and thoughtfully planned to properly cover all five learning outcomes stated. These are: Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning and Communication. Within these learning outcomes, the eight practice principles of the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework are embraced. These have been identified to support and sustain practice to enhance children's development towards achieving the learning outcomes, including:

- family-centred practice;
- partnerships with professionals;
- high expectations for every child;
- equity and diversity;
- respectful relationships and responsive engagement;
- integrated and intentional teaching and learning approaches;
- assessment for learning and development; and
- reflective practice.

IDENTITY

Our priority is to ensure that each child's experience is intentional, contextual and responsive. Contextual experiences are mindful of a child's age, stage, giftings, interests, abilities and needs within their kindergarten community.

We believe that building a strong sense of identity in children can be accomplished through an understanding of:

- who God is as the Creator of mankind and the natural world (Genesis 1:26-27);
- who they are as created beings made in the image of their Maker, therefore being unique and valued; and
- their responsibilities towards others: care, empathy and respect.

COMMUNITY

Our priority is to grow a Jesus-centred culture through communication, training and accountability.

We believe that because children are part of humanity, they are equal before God, born into families by God's design (Genesis 2:24–25), and belonging to community groups at large. Children are capable and competent, and they are able to contribute to the community by becoming the people and fulfilling the purposes that God has designed. Ways in which children contribute to the community within our Kindergartens are demonstrated when they:

- take on tasks in groups (initiating and following direction);
- volunteer to ask and answer questions (contributing to learning);
- share and take turns; and
- show concern and care for others.

WELLBEING

Our priority is to provide opportunities for wellbeing through relationship, responsibility, challenge, achievement and character development.

We believe that although all people are born into a fallen world and are therefore sinful (Romans 3:23), children are capable of growing and can be nurtured in a healthy way. This is achieved through the development of strong relationships with the Kindergarten educators; the greater school community; parents and extended family; and the community at large, as well as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Early social and emotional development helps to lay the foundations for future mental health and wellbeing, and for physical health and learning. Physically, this includes the development of fine and gross motor skills and coordination. Emotionally and psychologically, this includes the development of resilience and healthy self-concept, and spiritually this includes growing in their understanding that this is God's world and that they have purpose and value within God's plan.

LEARNING

Our priority is to equip each child to apply themselves responsibly and capably in order to achieve in a range of endeavours. Learning is to be holistic, instructing the mind, shaping the heart and equipping the hand.

For children, learning is a process of discovery – about God, the world and who they are – through the *guided unfolding* of teachers and parents. Children are active learners who learn best when encouraged to be involved, given choices, and presented with a variety of opportunities. Children’s natural curiosity and creativity are fostered by encouraging them to use their five senses to explore the world around them, to inquire, plan, collaborate, grapple with, and solve problems.

COMMUNICATION

Through the development of relationships that are built on the basis of a relationship with God and collaborating with parents, being positive, encouraging, inclusive and purposeful, children will be able to express themselves verbally and in other ways through a variety of experiences such as visual arts, performing arts and literacy.

These learning outcomes are met through play. Educators observe and interact with the children to enhance and develop their individual abilities and capacity to learn. Literacy and numeracy, science and arts are included in the internal and external environments of the Kindergarten programs. Contributions from the greater community, with visits from the fire brigade, police and ambulance services, are also extremely valued.

WHEN SHOULD I SEND MY CHILD TO KINDERGARTEN?

Research shows that engaging children in high-quality learning experiences benefits all children and their families and can improve a child’s learning and development outcomes, emotional wellbeing, longer-term educational and social outcomes, and life experience. It is vital that children receive these benefits when they are emotionally and socially ready for the experience.

The state government provides funding to subsidise fifteen hours of kindergarten for each child in the year before school. A second year of kindergarten is available for children who meet the eligibility criteria and are deemed to have a developmental delay in at least two areas. It is important to note that the majority of children are only eligible for *one year* of funded kindergarten. Children who withdraw from a funded program once they commence are not eligible for a second year anywhere in Victoria.

Children are eligible to attend kindergarten if they are turning four before the end of April in any given year. Some parents choose to wait an extra year, especially if their child is born between

January and April. The conversations about when a child is ready for kindergarten, and when a child is ready for school, need to take place before the child begins their funded kindergarten year. This decision is critical and has long-reaching implications.

Maternal and Child Health Services staff and kindergarten staff provide valuable information to parents about when to begin the more formal educational journey. As each child is only eligible for one year of funded kindergarten, it is important to determine when they would benefit most from starting school and then enrol to attend kindergarten the year before that. Some families may choose to enrol in pre-kinder the year prior to their funded kindergarten program.

It is important that families take the time to make an informed decision now. Please take the opportunity to visit kindergarten open days to discuss this with qualified teachers or early childhood educators. Alternatively, you could talk to your pre-kinder teacher, long day care provider or local maternal and child health nurse.

WHAT YEAR IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Think carefully about when your child is likely to start school, and therefore when is the best time for the child to have a kindergarten experience. (DEECD, 2011)

Earliest Eligible Year

Date of Birth	Unfunded 3YO Kinder	Funded 4YO Kinder	School
1/5/2014 – 30/4/2015	2018	2019	2020
1/5/2015 – 30/4/2016	2019	2020	2021
1/5/2016 – 30/4/2017	2020	2021	2022
1/5/2017 – 30/4/2018	2021	2022	2023
1/5/2018 – 30/4/2019	2022	2023	2024

Children are required to start school by the time they turn six. However, if your child was born between the start of January and the end of April, you may choose to defer sending him or her. For example, if your child turns four on 1 April, you may choose to have them attend the following year.

Children are funded by the state government for *one year* of kindergarten in the year before they commence school, and those who withdraw from a state funded four-year-old

kindergarten program *once commenced* are not funded for a second year anywhere in Victoria. Parents therefore need to plan ahead and work back from the year of school commencement. Note: a second year of funding can still be applied for if a child has significant developmental delays in two or more areas.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

There are many factors to consider when thinking about sending your child to kindergarten, including emotional maturity and social confidence. Questions to ask yourself include:

- Can my child separate easily from me?
- Can my child be understood by other people?
- Can my child express his or her needs clearly?
- Does my child have the stamina to attend and enjoy a full kindergarten session?

Please speak to a maternal child health nurse, kindergarten teacher or pre-school field officer if you are unsure of your child's readiness. Children who turn four between January and April in the year they attend kindergarten can often struggle and will be with mainly older children.

Children are not able to withdraw and recommence in a state-funded place once they start their kindergarten year. If they have two or more significant developmental delays they may be eligible for a second year of funding. However, funding will not be available if a child is 'not ready' for kindergarten. Parents are advised to determine when they want their child to attend school and work back from there with regards to kindergarten attendance.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services offer supplementary assistance to kindergartens to support the inclusion of a child with special needs in the kindergarten program. Applications are made by the kindergarten teacher in consultation with parents, early childhood intervention agencies, and pre-school field officers. Applications are made in the year prior to the child starting kindergarten and strict criteria exist for an application to be made. Please speak to the pre-school field officer on 5624 2540 for further information regarding funding availability for children with special needs.



Chairo Christian School

www.chairo.vic.edu.au

