

STATEMENT OF CHILDCARE PHILOSOPHY

Rachel Schulte

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.” - Fred Rogers

Play is one of the most important things in child development. It's through exploring and playing that children learn about the world around them; how to interact with it and what things mean. An active and engaged mind is one that is working! It's the foundation of all education that follows as they grow, and helps not only in learning important basics (such as colors, shapes, numbers and letters), but in fostering creativity and building empathy.

I believe two types of play are vital:

Independent play- When the child or children play without adult interference. The children are always monitored for safety and care, but are allowed to explore and interact with toys or other children independently. On their own, they get to use and exercise their imagination. They learn how to simply occupy their own minds and to navigate through moments of boredom. With other children, they begin to learn how to handle social interactions. It is also the perfect chance to listen and watch for disagreements or other speed bumps, turning them into in-the-moment teaching opportunities, which are incredibly beneficial.

Interactive play- When the adult participates in interactive play with the child. This is crucial for many reasons. It gives the adult the chance to connect and build their relationship with the child, and presents countless opportunities to help the child learn about and navigate through new territory and developmental steps. It provides the child with someone to interact with, respond to and mimic. Of course, it also shows them that you are interested in and there for them; that you know how to have fun and enjoy being with them!

As someone who has extensive experience in the performing arts, I will always be an energetic and engaged participant with my students. I love being silly and bringing things like music and dance to everyday tasks, and of course, incorporating them into play.

“The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.” - Denis Waitley

Just as important as encouraging play and freedom is setting clear rules and boundaries for children as they grow. Structure is crucial to their safety and development. Helping with daily

tasks and self-care as they get older provides them with a strong sense of responsibility and independence. The balance between structure and freedom is important to accomplish; ensuring there is a set of boundaries within which the child should be free to explore and create on their own.

I believe in engaging children in things like tidying up; even when they are very small, singing a song or turning it into a game can instill it as a positive habit and help establish a routine! Every time we play, we clean up. Before we eat, we wash our hands. Before bed, we brush our teeth, and so on.

As someone who has managed both classrooms and a theatre company, I am experienced in keeping things organized, on task and running smoothly; even in the most chaotic of environments!

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.” - Margaret Mead

Above all, whether I am teaching them in a classroom or caring for them at home, the heart of my approach to working with children is in treating them as an individual. That means being adaptable; what works for one child might not work for another. We all learn and respond to things differently, so it is important to be willing to adjust your approach. Whether it's in terms of consequences and rewards, talking the child through difficult moments or helping them celebrate the good ones, I pay close attention to what is most beneficial given the individual child and situation.

Loving a child for who they are and treating them with compassion is not only the absolute best thing you can do for their confidence and self-esteem, but it also teaches them to give that same care and respect to others. If they learn to appreciate their own individuality, they will likewise learn to appreciate it in those around them.

The best way to teach is by example, and I am dedicated to bringing such respect and compassion into the lives of any child I work with or care for; to be someone they can both rely on and look up to. It brings me great joy to have a positive impact on children, and that joy is what I promise to bring in abundance to any position I am hired to.