

Educational Program Policy

Research accentuates that quality programs significantly influences children’s growth and development. We have the opportunity to construct a supportive learning environment and program, with inspirations from the children and families. This contribution can encourage the children to feel a sense of control over their actions, interactions, to explore, be curious and test out their understanding of themselves others and the world around them.

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
1.1.1	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.2	Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.
1.1.4	The documentation about each child’s program and progress is available to families.
1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
1.1.6	Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
1.2.1	Each child’s learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
1.2.2	Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning.
1.2.3	Critical reflection on children’s learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
73	Educational programs
74	Information about the educational program to be kept available
75	Information about educational program to be given to parents
76	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program

Early Years Learning Framework

Learning Outcome 1-5
All Learning Outcomes under the Early Years Learning Framework will be addressed through our Policy and practices.

PURPOSE

To enhance children’s learning and development through the pedagogical practices of educators and families in a positive learning environment which is promoted across the five learning outcomes from Early Years Learning Framework. Educators will gather and interpret information about children to inform the preparation of the environment and implement experiences that are engaging and meaningful.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, and management of the service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Guide to the National Quality Standard states that, 'Planning involves observing, gathering and interpreting information about children to inform the preparation of environments and experiences that engage them and are meaningful for them. It also involves reflecting on and documenting children's experiences and learning' (p. 22).

Under the National Law and National Regulations, approved services are required to base their educational program on an approved learning framework. The program should focus on addressing the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, while taking into account the individual differences of each child.

There are two nationally approved learning frameworks in New South Wales which outline practices that support and promote children's learning:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia ('Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)')
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia ('Framework for School Age Care').
- Victoria: the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Our service is committed to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

Early Years Learning Framework

- Each child's learning will be based on their interests and strengths and guided by educators.
- Educators must work in collaboration with families to provide relevant learning experiences for each child, based on their interests and family experiences.
- Every child will be equally valued. Their achievements & learning will be celebrated.
- Educators will observe and record the strengths and learning of each child.
- Educators will work closely with children and families to produce ideas for the curriculum.
- Learning Outcomes will be linked to the curriculum during and after each child's learning has occurred.
- The curriculum will be constructed on the children's interests, educators extending children's interests, spontaneous experiences and family contribution.
- Where appropriate, the service will liaise with external agencies and support persons to best educate and care for children with additional needs.
- Where appropriate, the curriculum (play and learning experiences) will build and develop each child's Learning Stories, Portfolio and Observations of each child's strengths and development.
- The curriculum will be evaluated and reflected upon continuously by educators

Management/ A Nominated Supervisor/ Certified Supervisor will:

- Ensure that a suitable program based on an approved learning framework is delivered to all children
- Ensure all Educators work as a team in preparing and/or implementing the curriculum which collaborates with the services philosophy
- Ensure modifications are made in the environment for children with special needs. Management will make appropriate, professional referrals where necessary with family permission
- Ensure a conscious balance between indoor and outdoor experiences is planned for with large blocks of unstructured time for child initiated play
- Communicate with families on a regular basis
- Ensure each child is acknowledged for their uniqueness in a positive way
- Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate

- Be consistently aware of and responsive to children who may require additional support, assistance or attention, noticing and listening carefully to children's concerns and discussing diverse perspectives on issues of inclusion and exclusion and fair and unfair behaviour.

Educators will:

- Implement an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning which will underpin the educational program and involves educators in critically thinking about what is obtainable and why.
- Document children's experiences and their responses to the environment making children's learning visible to children, educators and families and promotes shared learning and collaboration.
- Provide experiences that include both structured and unstructured learning times catering for children's individual needs, interests and are age appropriate.
- Ensure materials and equipment reflect the cultural diversity that exists in our society
- Respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning
- Provide experiences that actively promote and initiate the investigation of ideas, complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesising
- Gather information from families upon enrolment regarding the child's needs, interest and family backgrounds. This information is treated as confidential and allows Educators to provide experiences that interest and extend children's current development. We feel that it is important to develop a partnership between parents and Educators to ensure that consistency between home and the Service occurs and that the best possible care is provided
- Explore ideas and theories using imagination, creativity and play, during large blocks of uninterrupted time.
- Use the learning outcomes to guide their planning for children's learning.
- Intentionally scaffold children's understanding and learning
- Make use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' to extend children's learning
- Respond to children's displays of learning dispositions by commenting on them and providing encouragement and additional ideas
- Further extend critical thinking skills through provocations
- Plan realistic curriculum goals for children based on observation and assessment of individual needs and interests.

The program will provide a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials that are selected to achieve the following goals:

- Foster positive self-concept
- Develop social skills
- Encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment
- Encourage language development
- Enhance physical development and skills
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety and nutritional practices
- Encourage creative expression
- Respect cultural diversity of staff and children
- Respect gender diversity

Source

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015, ECA Code of Ethics.
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2013). Guide to the National Quality Standard.
- Frith, John Dr & Kambouris, Nita & O’Grady, Onagh & University of New South Wales. School of Public Health and Community Medicine (2003). Health & safety in children's centres : model policies & practices (2nd ed). School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales on behalf of the Australian Early Childhood Association (NSW Branch), and the NSW Children's Services Health and Safety Committee, [Sydney]
- Tansey, Sonja. (2005, September 2005). Supervision in Children's Services. Putting Children First, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Issue 15, p. 8-11.
- Programming with the Early Years Learning Framework (2014)
- Program and Planning in Early Childhood Settings 5th Edition (2012)

Review

Policy Review Date
February 2018

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Programming Procedure

The program will be guided by observations on children that have been reflected on and then followed up as per the planning cycle outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework

- Qualified Room Leaders for each room are to receive at least two hours of non-contact time per week to plan their program and complete observations
- Educators from each group work together to produce an interest based, child serviced program. This program will be evaluated and extended upon daily, then critically reflected upon weekly.
- Educators work together to record their observations on Childcarers each week, in conjunction with the Room Leader.
- Through interacting with children during unstructured learning times Educators are able to discover the child's interests and extend upon these in a relaxed, spontaneous atmosphere. Educators will interact with children in a way that encourages and challenges them to extend their thinking and interests
- Educators will respect the child's rights to choose not to participate at times and provide them with another activity or experience
- The rooms are set up with designated areas, which remain the same for consistency, only changing to support children's interests or safety. An evaluation will be completed should the learning environment change.
- The children are provided with a range of choice of activities and are responsible for packing away these activities when they are finished with a particular project. We wish to instill in children a sense of care and respect for their equipment and environment.
- Educators will conduct smooth un-regimented transitions between activities. Transitions are to be integrated into the program as learning opportunities
- The environment and program will encourage children's choice in a selection of experiences
- Routine tasks will be incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children learning self-help and social skills
- Appropriate staff/child ratios, according to the licensing regulations will be maintained at the Service at all times
- Portfolios / Digital files will be given to families at the end of the year to review and discuss.
- Digital files will provide an accurate record of each child's learning and development as well as special moments captured during their time spent at the Service. Digital communication with families is carried out at least weekly.
- Transitions from one room to another within the Service will be done in consultation with the family of the child, the current Room Leader and the new Room Leader and other Educators. While the transition will be more than likely initiated because of age, a child will not be forced to progress or held back in a particular room because of their age. Developmental maturity including emotional maturity will be a contributing factor if agreed by all parties.