

Educational program and practice

Introduction

The requirements for an Education and Care service in the area of 'Curriculum' are embedded in the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the Learning Frameworks and in professional requirements from local Teacher Registration Boards.

Core references are given in each policy and the main reference list is at the back of the Manual, however the reader should consider the references that apply for their local situation.

The national Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics is an important part of this work.

Critical areas of concern

Before reading this section of policies, it is valuable to consider the following from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3 in particular:

Article 3/1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.¹

These policies are a requirement of all staff in the service without exception. What are the critical areas of concern for these policies?

- Is either the Early Years Learning Framework or My Time Our Place used to guide the development of the program?
- Have you developed a program that contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes as outlined in the learning framework?
- How is the program delivered? Is it in accordance with the learning framework?
- Are parents aware of how the program is developed and delivered?
- Can we see patterns of children's participation?

Implementation

The service philosophy guides the development and implementation of all its policies and the curriculum is no exception.

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf> retrieved 18 January 2016

Knowledge development

Staff in this service are required to have or be working toward the relevant qualification and then continue their ongoing learning.

In this area, it includes:

- Orientation
- Professional learning through staff meetings
- Ongoing reading, discussion and self-reflection
- External professional development as decided with the Director
- Professional development as decided by the service as being essential for all staff in the area:
 - ✓ Learning Frameworks
 - ✓ Curriculum development
 - ✓ Analysis of learning
 - ✓ Working with parents
 - ✓ Professional development required by professional body such as teacher registration.

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Policy: Parents as first Educators

Related policies

Philosophy
Enrolment
Curriculum
Inclusion
Recruitment
Orientation
Professional development
Performance development

Procedures related to this policy

Enrolment
Curriculum
Inclusion
Recruitment
Orientation
Professional development
Performance development

Centre forms related to this policy

Enrolment
Curriculum records

Related Centre publications

Curriculum
Parent handbook
Staff Handbook

Related education

Parent orientation session
Curriculum session
Child protection

Review schedule

2 years or at need

Legal and professional requirements:

Education and Care Services
National Law: Section 3 Objectives,
168

Education and Care Services
National Regulations: 73-76 and 173

National Quality Standards:
Quality Area 1, 5.2.1 and 6.2.1

Policy statement

Our Service Philosophy is underpinned by our respect for parents and the belief that parents are the child's first educator.

Our Service follows practices that support the development of sound partnerships with parents.

We recruit, guide and support our staff to ensure that our teams have the skills and knowledge to create a setting where parents feel that their role is valued, that they can communicate freely with staff and that any information given will be treated with respect.

Our Service supports parents by creating conversations about their child, working closely with parents in the development of their child's curriculum, and by providing information, guidance and support.

Rationale

The practices of Educators and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning. The Learning Frameworks tells us that partnerships between Educators and families matter because:

- when Educators respect their family, it strengthens a child's identity and sense of belonging and enhances their learning
- knowing a child well also includes knowing the family and the cultural and community contexts of their lives
- families bring insights that offer a richer picture about their child.

Definition: What do we mean by 'Parent'?

We understand that there are many different family structures and so we define **parent** as the person who, in relation to a child, has responsibility for the long term care, welfare and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child.

Procedure: Parents as first Educators

Parent role

Parents are asked to provide information that they feel will assist their child's Educators to build a relationship with their child and to understand their child's needs. Parents are asked to provide current enrolment, medical and related information on the forms provided as this is a condition of enrolment at the Service.

For all other information, parents are welcome to provide the information in a format that best suits their needs and allows for effective communication with their child's Educator.

Educator responsibilities

Educators will ensure that they work towards developing partnerships with parents, beginning from first contact through to enrolment, orientation and settling in, through to transitioning on to a new learning setting or school.

Educators will make themselves available to discuss the child's interests, needs and issues at a mutually convenient time, and will:

- support families to be able to share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs
- tailor each child's settling-in to meet the needs of individual children and families
- identify each child's individual education and care requirements based on discussion and observation
- work with families on the development of plans for their child
- record the plans appropriately and make these available to parents at any time
- support parents who wish to make their own entries in the plans
- store the plans as per the service policy
- gather information from families to support continuity of care between home and the Service.

Parents will be:

- warmly welcomed each time they arrive
- invited to provide information about the child relevant for the day
- provided with clear and meaningful 'end of day' verbal handover
- regularly invited to sit and review their child's portfolio
- invited to parents groups, meetings and service activities
- provided with a regular written assessment of their child's progress toward meeting the planned outcomes
- invited to view their child's plans.

Issue resolution

Should any issue or concern be identified, Educators and parents will discuss their concerns. Should this not provide a resolution, or not be possible, then either can discuss the issue with the Director.

Policy: Curriculum

Related policies

Philosophy

Enrolment

Recruitment

Orientation

[Child Australia statement on Pedagogy](#)

Child protection

Procedures related to this policy

Enrolment

Curriculum

Recruitment

Orientation

Child protection

Centre forms related to this policy

Enrolment

Curriculum records

Related Centre publications

Our Service's Curriculum Guide

Parent handbook

Staff Handbook

Related education

Parent orientation session

Curriculum session

Review schedule

2 years or at need

Legal and professional requirements:

Education and Care Services
National Law, including: Section 3
Objectives

Education and Care Services
National Regulations, including: 73-
76, 157, 172, and 173,175

National Quality Standards:
Including: Quality Areas 1, 4, 5 and 6

The Frameworks: Early Years and
School Age Care

Policy statement

Our curriculum is play based and acknowledges that play is a purposeful activity. In a rich environment which respects children's learning, play is a powerful arena for developing relationships, learning new skills, making sense of the world and also for fun and relaxation.

The Service will recruit, guide and support staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to create the necessary environment where the children can thrive and learn.

Educators use the Learning Frameworks as we work with the children and their parents to decide on:

- content for our curriculum
- the environment and resources
- particular programs and which strategies to use
- the methods for assessing progress.

The Service will act to support parents by providing information and guidance on the curriculum and ensuring that their input is respectfully included.

We will ensure that the children's progress within the curriculum is documented and used for further planning and that when the time comes, meaningful summaries of progress are made available for the parent and for the child's transition to school.

Rationale

The practices of Educators and the inclusive relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning.

Definition: What is a 'curriculum' and a 'program'?

We define 'curriculum' as everything we do for the child in the Service that contributes to their learning.

This broad definition is defined further through the Early Years Learning Frameworks and the Framework for School Age Care (The Learning Frameworks) which we use and support. Our Service defines a 'program' as an individual or group plan within the curriculum.

Procedure: Curriculum

Parent's role

Parents and family members will be provided with a way (that suits them) to have input into their child's curriculum and planning. Parents and families are asked to talk to us about what their goals are for their children and provide information on their child's development and any information from any specialists or health practitioners their child may be seeing which may have a bearing on their child's program. Parents are asked to support their children to give input into their own program. Parents are asked to provide feedback on any aspect of the curriculum in the service.

Educator responsibilities

Educators use the agreed curriculum method across the service. This provides parents and children with continuity as they move from room to room. The curriculum at this service is facilitated through our agreed understandings of the principles and practices described in the Learning Frameworks. To support this understanding, all Educators will participate in ongoing professional learning.

The curriculum is developed through the agreed components - observation, discussion, analysis, planning, implementation and reflection.

Educators work with families and the children to organise and support experiences that enable children to learn in ways that are meaningful to themselves. The curriculum will be embedded in the context of the children's interests, children's development and learning, the child's environment and community.

Educators will work collaboratively with the Educational Leader.

Service responsibilities

The Service will consistently resource Educators with adequate time for planning including time to discuss and develop programs, consider appropriate resourcing, reflect on progress and practices and to evaluate outcomes. The Service will provide staff with ongoing professional development for programming.

Professional practice note

The Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School Age Care state that the curriculum encompasses all the interactions, experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occurs in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development.

Resources we use for planning the curriculum are:

- Guide to the National Quality Standard - ACECQA
- Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School Age Care - ACECQA
- Programming and planning in early childhood settings 6th Edition - Arthur L et al 2015
- Forms, templates, boards and children's journals
- Families as First Teachers resources <http://www.education.nt.gov.au/parents-community/early-childhood-Services/families-as-first-teachers-program/faft-program-video-clips>

Procedure: Curriculum – Routines through the day

Parent's role

Parents will provide information to assist Educators to provide appropriate attention to the individual needs of their child, for example the child's routine at home, the timing of medication, food or rest.

Educator responsibilities

The routine elements of the day are the focus of planning and purpose in the same way that programmed activities are.

Educators will continually review the day to assess whether there will be enough time for children to accomplish a satisfying outcome to the experience or activities underway, mindful that play and experiences may span several sessions or days.

The room day will be arranged to provide flexibility in rest, as well as group and individual activities within a secure time framework.

These encounters and experiences will be opportunities to experience, discuss, think and extend the children's learning.

Service responsibilities

The needs of individual children will be catered for by ensuring that routines are flexible.

The Service will ensure parents are aware of the routines embedded within their child's day and will adequately resource the flexible environment at the Service.

Professional practice note

Rigid fixed timetables are not appropriate for environments that cater for the needs of children, however, flexible routines provide the predictability and security that is necessary for children. Routine activities can offer powerful learning opportunities, (EYLF Page 12)(FSAC Page 11).

Resources we use for planning the routines are:

- Information from individual children and their families
- Guide to the National Quality Standard – ACECQA
- Knowledge of children's development
- Outcomes from discussions with a child's previous Educators
- Outcomes from discussions with Director and Food Coordinator



Procedure: Forms – Routines

Make electronic notes or place a printed copy of your service templates here.

Procedure: Curriculum–The child's environment

Parent's role

Parents are asked to contribute information on the type of environment they want for their child and where possible, support the staff through sharing ideas and cultural information.

Educator responsibilities

The setup of the environment will be planned as a group, with clear agreed purpose on each of the elements and areas. Educators are responsible for arranging an inviting environment to encourage children's interest and exploration and experimentation.

Each element of the environment will be reviewed for its effectiveness in agreed timeframes or as needed. The environment will be reviewed to ensure that it is inclusive of all children and does not exclude children.

Educators will incorporate ways of considering parent perspectives on the environment into their work and consider their perspectives on risk, and learning through play.

(See also the 'Natural Environment' policy in QA 3)

Service responsibilities

The Service will establish an inviting indoor and outdoor environment. We will select and use resources that reflect the diversity of the local community and promote use and access according to the children's needs and interests.

The Service recognises that resources that are broken, in poor repair or unsafe pose a risk to children and add nothing to a child's interest or engagement in learning, rest or fun. The Service will provide maintenance program which seeks to ensure a safe environment.

Professional practice note

The Early Years Learning Framework tells us that: materials enhance learning when they reflect what is natural and familiar and also introduce novelty to provoke interest and more complex and increasingly abstract thinking. For example, digital technologies can enable children to access global connections and resources, and encourage new ways of thinking. Environments and resources can also highlight our responsibilities for a sustainable future and promote children's understanding about their responsibility to care for the environment. They can foster hope, wonder and knowledge about the natural world, (EYLF Page 16).

Resources we use for managing the environment are:

- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- Guide to the National Law and Regulations (chapters on the environment)
- Environment plans
- Service policy on 'Risk'.

Procedure: Curriculum-Incursions and excursions

PLANNING

Parent's role

If participating in an excursion, parents are asked to prepare with staff to ensure that everyone concerned knows the requirements for the excursion and understands their individual and team role.

Service responsibilities

Educators must involve parents and children in the planning for the incursion or excursion. The planning must indicate a clear purpose, involve the children in planning stages and discussions and take into account individual children's contexts, interests, development, cultural needs.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Parent's role

Parents will provide information to assist Educators to plan the event and to provide appropriate attention to the individual needs of their child, for example skills, phobias and supervision needs.

Service responsibilities

The excursion or incursion cannot be undertaken without a risk assessment being carried out by one of the staff attending the excursion using the agreed risk assessment template and signed off by the Nominated Supervisor.

All involved staff must be aware of the risk assessment, have an understanding of the key risk factors and be fully aware of risk mitigation steps as well as any emergency strategies.

For incursions, the risk assessment will be as per the service template, but must include consideration of the purpose, what the parties will be doing and saying with the children, what they will be bringing, health and safety considerations and any additional incursion supervision needs.

For excursions, a staff member will have considered the transport stages in detail and visited the proposed venue, assessed its risk factors and planned for any risk mitigation according to the risk assessment form.

INCURSIONS

Parent's role

Parents are asked to read the excursion details and ask any questions they may have before giving permission to attend. Parents must give permission in writing.

Parents who are involved in the incursion are asked to make themselves aware of the requirements of the service in relation to the incursion and to adhere to those requirements throughout the session. This includes, but is not limited to, never being alone with any child other than their own child.

Service responsibilities

For incursions planning must include consideration of the purpose, what the parties will be doing and saying to the children, what they will be bringing and extra incursion supervision needs.

Provide a brief outline of the conduct of the excursion/incursion to staff and additional helpers (parents or volunteers) about the purpose, potential supervision issues, timing etc.

EXCURSIONS

Parent's role

Parents must give permission in writing. Parents who are involved in an excursion must participate in the service *orientation to assisting with excursions* and be made aware of the service requirements. Indications that the parent is not willing to comply with requirements must result in their non-participation.

Service responsibilities

For excursions planning must include consideration of transport stages in detail and a recent visit to the proposed venue, assessed its risk factors and planned for any risk mitigation according to the risk assessment form.

Provide a brief outline of the conduct of the excursion/incursion to staff and additional helpers (parents or volunteers) about the purpose, potential supervision issues, timing etc.

ROUTINE OUTINGS

Routine or regular outings are those which take place on the campus where the service is located or within the local neighbourhood and means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program; and where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are **the same on each outing**. In this case an initial risk assessment is done and unless the circumstances change, this carries through the year.

Professional practice note

Incursions and excursions represent opportunities and risks for staff, children and parents. Sound practice requires that all staff are aware of the requirements for each. It is therefore considered sound practice to orient new and volunteer staff to the required procedures and safety processes. Further, it is recommended that staff undertake a repeat orientation to excursion and incursion procedures annually.

Resources we use for planning the excursions and incursions are:

- Service based checklists and permission forms***
- Risk assessment forms***
- Information on individual children and their families
- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- Current program and curriculum plans – purpose and expected outcomes
- Outcomes from review of previous excursions or incursions



Procedure: Forms - Incursions and excursions

Make electronic notes or place a printed copy of your service templates here.

References:

Guide to the National Quality Standard (ACECQA) <http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/NQF03-Guide-to-NQS-130902.pdf>

Guide to the National Law and National Regulations (ACECQA)
http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/2014/NQF02%20Guide%20to%20ECS%20Law%20and%20Regs_web.pdf

Guidelines for documenting children's learning Information Sheet (ACECQA)
<http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/Information%20sheets/Information%20sheet%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20documenting%20children's%20learning.pdf>

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework (ACECQA)
<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/ResourceCategory.aspx?pid=412&gcpid=2> (Useful Word Version and PDF)

My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care (ACECQA)
<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/ResourceCategory.aspx?pid=412&gcpid=2> (Useful Word Version and PDF)

In our reading, we used and recommend the resources in the Early Childhood Resource Hub (Australian and state governments) <http://www.ecrh.edu.au/#/>

Child Australia
<http://www.childdaustralia.org.au>

Disclaimer

This resource is based on the most current information available in April 2016.

In developing this resource, we have referred to legislation and regulations, sought advice from professional organisations and reviewed contemporary research. This document should be used as a guide to compliment and develop service's existing practices. Services should always check the currency of information at the time of use and consider the information in this resource in the context of their particular service.