

QA1 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY

SCOPE

This policy and its associated documents provide a framework to guide all actions for the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, all team members, children, parents, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and any visitors to the Service.

Failure to adhere to this policy, or any of its associated documents, may result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including termination of employment for personnel, refusal of service for clients, and / or the dissolving of contractual agreements with suppliers and individuals outside of our Service.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear expectations about each child's learning program, and the related educator practice that supports the implementation of these programs.

This policy discusses:

- Play based learning approaches within a Montessori Philosophy
- Written educational programs and individual child documentation, and
- Educator curriculum decision making and pedagogical practices.

This policy relates to the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice.

POLICY STATEMENT

PROGRAM

We value the Montessori Philosophy and Pedagogy within play-based curriculum where children's strengths, interests and culture form the basis of the program to ensure education is individualised and inclusive. The Montessori Philosophy and play based learning provides children with opportunities for active exploration that is process oriented and self-motivating, leading to intellectual and cognitive benefits.

A child-centred program promotes children's decision making and influence in their educational environment, enhancing their agency. Our educators actively seek the views, opinions and perspectives of children and make these evident through programmed educational experiences.

Our programs reflect a deep connection with children's identity and unique community, including opportunities to develop an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. This involves a commitment to regular communication and engagement with families that moves beyond involvement to a strong partnership with home learning environments and local communities.

Each child who attends our service has in place a written educational program available to families. This program is based on contemporary understandings of child development, teaching, learning and education and care. It shows children's educational goals, the learning opportunities that are provided by our educators to achieve these, and the related educator practices to support learning.

Our programs demonstrate confident and informed educator curriculum decision making, for both individual and whole groups of children, to maximise learning and development outcomes. Educators share their pedagogical approach in ways that are understandable to families and other professionals and are able to explain how their pedagogical approach relates to contemporary practice and early childhood theory.

PRACTICE

Our educators' practice decisions and actions are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful, demonstrating a commitment to high quality practice at all times. Educator practice is intentionally flexible to suit each child's learning style to maximise participation in the learning program. This promotes children's agency and choice in the learning environment.

Educator decisions and actions are reflective of the setting's unique geographical and cultural community. Our service has a commitment to cultural competence where educators value the benefits of cultural diversity, and where everyday practices reflect an ability to understand and honour difference.

Current research informs educator curriculum decisions and teaching strategies. A culture of professional learning and commitment to critical reflection drives continuous improvement, ensuring educator practice remains contemporary.

The service philosophy and vision is evident through educator ethical decision making and actions, and through valuing equity in their relationships with children and families.

ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Our programs follow a cycle of planning, where educators document children's learning and development, engage in assessment and analysis to inform this learning, then use this information to plan for and maximise further educational goals. Each cycle of planning informs the next, resulting in increasingly complex learning and development outcomes for children.

Educators demonstrate the ability to draw on early childhood theory and practice approaches to inform their planning to suit the children and their unique learning setting. As a result, educator

planning demonstrates interconnectedness of curriculum areas, and is responsive to children's holistic educational requirements including cognitive, physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Intentional and planned teaching is applied to educator practice, learning experiences, and the environment. This ensures the educational program caters to the unique group of children, is flexible, challenging, and safe. Planned learning spaces invite the development of relationships, exploration, and connection with natural materials.

Educators regularly utilise assessment strategies to monitor children's learning and development progression. This enables educators to plan for continuity of learning as children transition between educational environments within the service, or on to the school environment. Engaging in assessment enables educators to demonstrate that learning is occurring as a result of their curriculum decision making and planning, thus increasing educator accountability.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Agency – being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world (DEEWR, 2009).

Curriculum - all interactions, experiences, activities routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development (DEEWR, 2009).

Intentional teaching - involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always' been done that way.

Learning framework - a guide which provides general goals or outcomes for children's learning and how they might be attained. It also provides a scaffold to assist early childhood settings to develop their own, more detailed curriculum (DEEWR, 2009).

Learning Outcome - a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families (DEEWR, 2009).

Pedagogy – all the actions and processes that educators use to translate philosophy and curriculum approaches into practice (Arthur et al, 2015).

Program – the documentation showing children's educational goals, the learning opportunities that are provided by our educators to achieve these, and the related educator practices to support learning.

LINKS TO STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

This policy relates to the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice.

Standard/ Elements	Concept	Descriptor
QA1		Educational program and practice
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Responsive teaching and scaffolding Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
1.3	Assessment and planning	Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
1.3.1	Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation,

		analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
1.3.2	Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children’s learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
1.3.3	Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

This policy relates to the following law and national regulations:

Standard/ Elements	Concept	Related law and national regulations
QA1		Educational program and practice
1.1	Program	<p>The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.</p> <p>Section 51(1)(b) Conditions on service approval (educational and developmental needs of children)</p> <p>Section 168 Offence relating to required programs</p> <p>Regulation 73 Educational program</p> <p>Section 168 Offence relating to required programs</p>
1.2	Practice	<p>Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.</p> <p>Section 51(1)(b) Conditions on service approval (educational and developmental needs of children)</p> <p>Section 168 Offence relating to required programs</p> <p>Regulation 155 Interactions with children</p> <p>Regulation 156 Relationships in groups</p>

1.3	Assessment and planning	Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
		<p>Regulation 74 Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program</p> <p>Regulation 75 Information about the educational program to be kept available</p> <p>Regulation 76 Information about educational program to be given to parents</p> <p><i>Jurisdiction-specific provisions</i></p> <p>NSW – Regulation 274A Programs for children over preschool age</p> <p>NT – Regulation 289A Programs for children over preschool age Qld – Regulation 298A Programs for children over preschool age</p>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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DOCUMENT CONTROL:

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
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