

# Documenting the Educational Program

## National Law:

- 168 – Offence related to required programs
- 323 – Approved Learning Framework

## National Regulations:

- 73 – Educational Program.
- 74 – Documenting child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program.
- 75 – Information about the program to be kept available.
- 76 – Information about the program to be given to parents.

## National Quality Framework:

- 1.1 – Program
- 1.2 – Practice
- 1.3 – Assessment and planning
- 3.2 – Use
- 6.2.2 – Access and participation



## Policy Statement

The service aims to engage in systems of documentation with the following three underlying principles;

- **Meaningful** – Is the documentation meaningful to myself, my colleagues, the child and our parents within the service.
- **Efficiency** – Is there long term viability of the systems we choose. Can I keep upholding the quality of the documentation methods I have chosen for extended periods of time?
- **Timely** –the programming is relevant to the interests of children, with consideration given to how educators prepare the environment and continue being with children.

The service does not employ the use of apps or paid programming platforms that report daily to parents as these take educators away from being with children. At the core of our work we strive to be “ever present”.

## Goals / What we are going to do?

- Maintain a statement of service philosophy.
- Collect information on each child, analyse what that information tells you and document how you will further the child’s learning.

- Planning will consider children’s strengths, abilities and interests and consider how learning is extended.
- Educators will consider the environment as the third teacher and be thoughtful in how spaces are set up and maintained.
- Educators will use the process of critical reflection to evaluate their work with children the service and families.
- All educators are to contribute to the planning and the QIP – Quality Improvement Plan.

## Procedures / How this will be done?

The Education and Care Services National Regulations outline the following legislative requirements for documenting children’s learning within the setting:

- 1) The approved provider of the education and care service must ensure that, for the purposes of the educational program, the following are documented-
  - a) for a child preschool age or under—
    - i) Assessments of the child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program; and
    - ii) Assessments of the child’s progress against the outcomes of the educational program; and
  - b) For a child over preschool age, evaluations of the child’s wellbeing, development and learning.
- 2) In preparing the documentation, the approved provider must—
  - a) Consider—
    - i) The period of time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service; and

- ii) How the documentation will be used by the educators at the service; and
- b) prepare the documentation in a way that is readily understandable by the educators at the service and the parents of the child.

**Note.** A compliance direction may be issued for failure to comply with sub regulation (1).



### The National Curriculum – The Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children’s learning from birth to five years and through the transitions to school. The framework provides broad direction for educators in our setting to facilitate learning. It guides us on our curriculum decision making as well as how we plan implement and evaluate our settings. The three underpinning elements of the framework are Belonging, Being and Becoming.

Experiencing **BELONGING** is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children’s independence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

**BEING** recognises the significance of the here and now in children’s lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging in life’s joys and complexities and meeting challenges in everyday life.

Children’s identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. **BECOMING** reflects this process of rapid and significant change in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

### The Programming Cycle

#### Collect Information

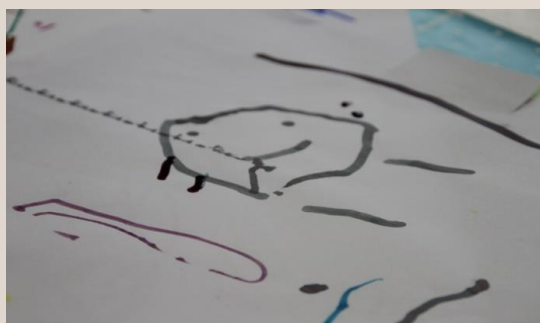
Record child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences, and participation in the educational program. (Reg. 74) (1.i) Document your environment - spaces, resources and materials children’s routines and family relationships and expectations. Gather this information with the following documentation types;

- Children Background Sheet
- Photographs (good quality)
- Samples of artwork / drawing / writing
- Family discussions
- Narratives- anecdotes/ jottings / running records / learning stories
- Checklists

#### PROGRAMMING EXAMPLE

Art Sample- cotton tip painting completed by Chloe in Feb 2020

As the children were painting Chloe said “This is my mum” and as fast as lightning Stella said “she has no arms”... I (Miss Julie) watched Chloe tilt her head as if considering Stella’s statement and then she added the arms. That afternoon Chloe’s mum said it was Chloe’s first representational painting



#### Interpret

Now we have collected data in several forms listed above it is time to make some professional judgements about that data. Ask yourself:

- What does it tell me about the child’s strengths?
- What does it tell me about their interests and needs?
- What play activities might build on their interest’s, strengths and abilities?
- What resources and materials will I require?

- How will children's culture be reflected?
- What communication methods could be used?
- How will I support play and learning?
- How will I listen to children's voices and opinions?

Chloe is now beginning to enter the preschematic stage of drawing where she begins to understand that the marks she leaves on the paper are representative of the world around her.

Chloe was also thoughtful of the information Stella provided and responded to the feedback.

## Plan

Use your professional knowledge and understanding to plan for new experiences / activities and routines.

- Use the Belonging Being and Becoming to make appropriate links to principle and learning outcomes
- Consult with children and families
- Plan for children to learn from each other
- Document appropriate intentional teaching strategies.
- Consider how will I make this planning visible to children and families?

Follow up experiences - Drawing implements in the drawing area with different papers, felt pens, lead pencils, biros, crayons, charcoal, fine brushes with watercolours- inside/outside.

How could I add Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of making Art?

Explore professional artists that perhaps hang in Art Galleries.

Add a colour wheel and look for opportunities to talk about colour mixing "What happens when..."

Outcome 5.3 – using creative art to express ideas and make meaning

Outcome 4.4 – using feedback from themselves and others to revise and build on an idea.

Foundations for Success – Investigating Environments

## Evaluate

How did your plan go? Did the activities and experiences offer children's further learning opportunities that you can implement?

How did your teaching strategies go? How were your interactions with children could this be extended or improved?

25/02/2020 Chloe chose this week the watercolours at the easel and the chalk on the small easels outside. Again, her work was circular with limbs that she labels "mum" "dad" or "baby Michael"

## Critical Reflection

The children have shown great interest in the water paints and chalk drawing on the outdoor concrete. And as I reflected, I considered how I include Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander perspectives about Art and paper markings and paint colour. I currently sit on Gubbi Gubbi land from the Yugambeh people. I spoke to a colleague and mentor Claire who sent me a link to the Indigenous Cultural Awareness Foundation Course –keen to finish.

After doing some reading and thinking I will:

- Invite parent to a parent evening.
- Send Ben the Bear home and get families to share a little of them and their home space.



- Find a dreamtime story to read.
- What other resources can I find to provoke conversations around culture in relation to Art.
- Ask Katie (Aboriginal educator) if her Grandma could come in to help me.
- Look on the Council website for community events.
- Make time to visit the Yugambeh Museum

**OVERALL** – planning and evaluating should be kept in one place either folder / computer file on the NASS / or filing cabinet. It should depict a meaningful

collaboration of documents that display a deep understanding of the child.

### Programming quantities

It is often asked “how many documents are required in a child’s folio” and this is difficult to quantify. But in the interests of trying to reduce the anxiety for educators let us outline some considerations:

- How many children are currently enrolled in your group? Of course, the bigger the number of children the more complex it becomes and having streamlined systems is the key.
- How many days a week does each child attend? Again, five day a week children have a greater opportunity for developing relationships with educators and peers compared with children who attend one day a week.

But at the very least your programming folder or files *should* contain:

- Your personal philosophy / service philosophy at the front of you folder or on the wall in your room.
- A roll – to show children’s days.
- Child Background Information Form– collected on enrolment.
- [Developmental Milestones](#) copied from the ACECQA website appropriate for the age group.

Children who attend 1 (one) day a week – a min of two documents for the month.

Children who attend 2-3 (two-three) days a week – a min of three documents per month.

Children who attend 4-5 (four-five) days a week – a min of four documents per month.

So now what if the child is absent – just write “child away”

The key to this is to keep documents brief and to the point. *Mean what you say and say what you mean.*

### Principles from The Early Years Framework

1. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
2. Partnerships
3. High Expectations and Equity
4. Respect for Diversity
5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice

When reviewing children’s learning educators value the “journey” of the learning just as importantly as the outcomes.

### Learning through Play

The first thing to understand is “What is Play?” Play needs to be child directed, as soon as we direct it too much it is no longer play for children (Einarsdottir,

2005; Wing, 1995) Play **doesn’t have functional end goals** for the player (Burghardt, 2011; Garvey, 1990). Play is initiated **only** for the enjoyment of the process (called ‘intrinsic motivation’).

Being **enjoyable** sustains children’s motivation to learn (Garvey, 1990), particularly when children are in control of how it happens. Don’t you learn more when you’re enjoying and directing your learning?

One often-forgotten characteristic of play is that it only occurs **when basic needs have been met**, and there is no insecurity or stress. It is paramount, therefore, that children feel relaxed, protected and free from external pressures like worried educators or parents.



### Risky Play

A natural part of children's physical play involves engaging in play that is challenging, a bit scary and somewhat risky. Children actively seek this thrilling kind of play, and nearly all children love the quivering feeling of butterflies in their belly when they encounter something they do not know if they can manage or what the consequences of their actions will be. In other words, children seek challenging and risky forms of play even though, and often because, it is closely connected with the feeling of fear and thrill, and the possibility of being harmed (Adams, 2001; Aldis, 1975; Smith, 1998; Stephenson, 2003).

For the service finding the balance between allowing children to explore and take risks in their play while also avoiding serious injuries is not an easy exercise. The increasing focus on children's safety on one hand is important, but on the other hand it must not lead to children being restricted from the opportunity for challenge and excitement. Educators at the service will allow children to experience some risk, on an

individual level and within a relatively safe environment. In children's risky play, one must always consider the risks against the developmental benefits this play has, although it sometimes could result in some minor injuries. (Ball, 2002)

### Intentional Teaching

Intentional teaching involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and action. They include:

- ✓ Demonstrating – wearing your hat.
- ✓ Role modelling – how to use the sticky tape dispenser/ writing.
- ✓ Instructing – “Please wash your hands for lunch” this is different to a request which asks “Would you like to wash your hands for lunch?” When you request the child has a right to say “No thank-you” So make sure you give clear instructions when the child doesn't have a choice. Remember: sometimes a child can't make a choice about everything.
- ✓ Explaining – “I put it there to help us with....”
- ✓ Scaffolding – breaking tasks into smaller pieces.
- ✓ Affirming – a wink or thumbs up.
- ✓ Questioning – “How would you do that...”
- ✓ Challenging – “Do you think that might work..”
- ✓ Encouraging – “I like the way you....”
- ✓ Collaborating – “Ben knows a lot about motorbikes could we ask him to help...”
- ✓ Negotiating – “you have a problem ....what can we do?”
- ✓ Researching – “I am not sure but we could find out by....”
- ✓ Revising and revisiting
- ✓ Backward or Forward Chaining – this is where the last part of the skill is taught first for e.g. Putting socks on – adult puts on over the toes heel and the child completes pulling it up – Praise. Each time the child completes a little bit more until they can are independent.

### Educational Leader

The National Quality Framework states that Educational Leadership is “complex multi-faceted and diverse”

Belonging Being Becoming (p.13) sights “A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when Early Childhood educators and those with whom they work are ALL involved in an ongoing cycle of review through which current practices are examined, outcomes reviewed and new ideas generated.

The Educational Leaders Role is also one of Advocacy. To challenge our practices and commenting on social policy and strategic directions that affect the early learning sector and government decision making.

### Links to Theory

“Different theories about early childhood inform approaches to children's learning and development. Early childhood educators draw upon a range of perspectives in their work ...” (EYLF p.11)

Nolan and Raban (2015) writes “A theory is a group of ideas that explain a certain topic within the domain of children's learning and development. Typically, a theory is developed through the use of thoughtful and rational forms of abstract and generalised thinking. In addition, a theory is often based on general principles that are independent of what is being explained. So, someone who considers given facts and comes up with a possible explanation for those facts is called a theorist. Some say that theorists come up with abstract ideas and beliefs and then spend their lives trying to prove them, because ideas can always be disputed until proven absolutely. What theories provide are ‘ways of knowing’ that influence thinking and impact on practice in particular ways.”



The Early Years Learning Framework categorises theory into five main ways

#### Theory 1- Development

**Who** – Piaget Steiner Montessori and Gardner

**How that affects how you work:** We respond to and plan activities in relation to children's developmental stages

#### Theory 2- Socio-culture

**Who** – Vygotsky Bruner Bronfenbrenner Malaguzzi Rogoff

**How that affects how you work:** Educators and more knowledgeable others scaffold and transform learning in response to children's prior understandings.

#### Theory 3- Socio-behaviourist

**Who** – Pavlov Skinner Bandura

**How that affects how you work:** Educator directed activities coupled with rewards and reinforcements.

#### Theory 4- Critical

**Who** – Habermas Freire

**How that affects how you work:** We challenge assumption about curriculum and query taken for granted.

**Theory 5-** Post-structuralist

**Who** – Foucault Bourdieu

**How that affects how you work:** We explore many different ways of exploiting power relationships embedded in our practice that may privilege certain children over others.

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

In relation to children, I will:

“Create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children’s agency and enhance their learning”

“Provide meaningful curriculum to enrich children’s learning, balancing child and educator initiated experiences”

“Understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children’s learning, development and wellbeing”

“Ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future”

“Respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment”

“Safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when shared on digital platforms”

In relation to families, I will:

“Listen to learn with families and engage in shared decision making, planning and assessment practices in relation to children’s learning, development and well being”

“Respect families right to privacy and maintain confidentiality”

In relation to the profession, I will:

“Base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whole I work”

“Engage in critical reflection, ongoing professional learning and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession”

“Advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care”

In relation to community and society, I will:

“Learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children’s learning, development and wellbeing”

“Collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families”

“Advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families”

**National Quality Framework** – Educational program and practice

1.1. The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.

1.2. Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.

1.3. Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.

**National Quality Framework** – Physical environment

3.2. The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

**National Quality Framework** – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

6.2.2. Effective partnerships support children’s access, inclusion and participation in the program.

**Culturally Diverse Practices**

There are several keys resources that are invaluable when we start to think of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders ways into our program our environments and our hearts. They include;

[Foundations for success](#) – Guideline for extending and enriching learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Kindergarten year. (not just for the kindergarten children) and;

[8ways of Aboriginal learning – Aboriginal Pedagogy](#)

8ways is something that grew out of a particular ethic, a way of working that goes beyond cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and even cultural responsiveness.

It is all about relational responsiveness, a protocol of attending to relational obligations to those working in, relating and responding holistically to people, land, culture, language, spirit and the relationships between these with integrity and

intellectual rigour. 8ways is a point of entry into this way of knowing. It is a way to develop relationally responsive practice in the way you work with your Aboriginal community.

### **8ways**

Story Sharing: Approaching learning through narrative.

Learning Maps: Explicitly mapping/visualising processes.

Non-verbal: Applying intra-personal and kinaesthetic skills to thinking and learning.

Symbols and Images: Using images and metaphors to understand concepts and content.

Land Links: Place-based learning, linking content to local land and place.

Non-linear: Producing innovations and understanding by thinking laterally or combining systems.

Deconstruct/Reconstruct: Modelling and scaffolding, working from wholes to parts (watch then do).

Community Links: Centring local viewpoints, applying learning for community benefit.

### **How we learn – Culture way**

- 1.** We connect through the stories we share.
- 2.** We picture our pathways of knowledge.
- 3.** We see, think, act, make and share without words.
- 4.** We keep and share knowledge with art and objects.
- 5.** We work with lessons from land and nature.
- 6.** We put different ideas together and create new knowledge.
- 7.** We work from wholes to parts, watching and then doing.
- 8.** We bring new knowledge home to help our mob.

‘Early learning programs that do not reflect the culture and knowledge of the Indigenous community are not seen as culturally safe and tend not to be used by families in that community’ (Harrison, Goldfeld, Metcalfe & Moore, 2012).

### **Reflective questions about this policy.**

Are the current systems for documenting children’s learning timely and sustainable?

What are our current strengths?

What are our focus areas?

How do we all collectively gather to discuss our documentation and understanding?

### **When answering the reflective questions did you have areas identified for improvement:**

If change is required:

- Discuss any proposed changes to documenting children’s learning

To implement the changes effectively:

- Trial the changes
- Seek feedback and consult.

Review of change is an important step:

- Evaluate whether the changes have improved practice and document.

Document in your Quality Improvement Plan.....

### **Roles and Responsibilities for documenting the program**

#### **Approved Provider, Area Manager and Director**

- Ensure that Educators programming and planning is being reviewed by the Educational Leader / Responsible person in charge of the day to day operations or Area Manager’s on an annual basis.
- Work with the service Educational Leader to explore the Early Years Learning Framework.
- Conduct audits of programming and planning.
- Ensure that educators are provided with the resources required to complete their documentation.

#### **Person in day to day charge**

- Ensure that programming and planning is being gathered in a variety of ways.
- Ensure that programs include planned experiences to support children individual goals.
- Ensure that educators implement and contribute to the Documentation policy and reviews.
- Ensure allocation of resources to complete documentation and planned experiences.

