

## 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.
- 170 – Policies and procedures are to be followed
- 171 – Policies and procedures are to be kept available

### National Quality Framework:

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

### Definitions

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA-	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	<a href="http://acecqa.gov.au">acecqa.gov.au</a>
Curriculum	In the early childhood setting, the curriculum refers to 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development'. [adapted from Te Whariki].	
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 that 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 in developing their own, more detailed curriculum.	
Critical reflection	Reflective practices that focus on the implication of equity and social justice.	
Play-based learning	A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.	
Pedagogy	Early childhood Educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning.	



### Links to other Policies and Manuals

- Child Safe Environments
- Determining a Responsible Person
- Governance and Leadership
- Interactions with Children
- Records and Record Keeping
- Child Protection and Safety
- Diversity and Equity
- Commitment Statement to Children and Young People
- Company Profile
- Parent Handbook
- Programming Manual

### Induction and ongoing training

Educators with the service will be trained on this policy during;

- Orientation and Induction procedures, thus allowing Educators to ask questions and discuss.
- Educators will be trained in programming and planning procedures.
- Training will occur in various formats, including face-to-face training, discussions at staff meetings, video demonstrations, vignettes, guest speakers, and open-ended policy questionnaires.
- Inductions and training records will be completed and kept in each team member's file.

Educators will be provided with ongoing support as required, based on the extent to which they have demonstrated competence in carrying out their responsibilities to policy and procedures.

### 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**—Are the systems we choose viable long-term? Can I maintain the documentation methods I have chosen for extended periods?
- **Timely**—the programming is relevant to children's interests and development, considering 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.
- Educators will use the Belonging Being and Becoming -Early Years Learning Framework V2.0

2022 and its Principles and Practices to plan and develop the children's curriculum.

- Educators working with school-age children will use My Time, Our Place -Framework for School-Age Children in Australia V2.0 2022.
- Educators will take a holistic approach, paying equal attention to children's physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual well-being and cognitive aspects of learning.
- Educators will consider the environment as the third teacher and consider how spaces are set up and maintained.
- Educators will use the Evaluation and Critical Reflection process to evaluate their work with children in the service and their families.
- All Educators are to contribute to the planning and the QIP – Quality Improvement Plan.
- Educators will program and plan for the child's entire enrolment period.

### 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 well-being, development, and learning.
- 2) In preparing the documentation, the approved provider must—
  - a) Consider—
    - i) The length 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).

It is expected that Lead Educators produce high-quality programs that are documented and evaluated. If an Educator is not able to produce such programming, a performance plan will be formulated.

### 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 in our curriculum decision-making and 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. Many different events and circumstances shape them. **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.

### 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. Therefore, it is paramount that children feel relaxed, protected, and free from external pressures like worried Educators or parents.

### Play-based learning and Intentionality

Belonging, Being and Becoming V2.0 expands on concepts of play-based learning with intentionality and give the following examples:

- Plan and create environments, both indoors and outdoors, that promote and support different types of play for children's active engagement, agency, problem-solving, curiosity, creativity, and exploration.
- Take different roles in children's play or make purposeful decisions about when to observe and when to join and guide the play.

- Extend children's learning using intentional teaching strategies such as asking questions, explaining, modelling, speculating, inquiring, and demonstrating to increase children's knowledge, skills, and enjoyment of thinking and learning.
- Sustain, extend, challenge and deepen children's ideas and skills through shared thinking and scaffolding learning.
- Use a range of strategies to plan, document and assess children's learning in play-based experiences.
- plan and implement worthwhile play-based learning experiences using children's interests, curiosities and funds of knowledge.
- Assist children in recognising unfair play and offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair, and inclusive learning community.
- Act as resourceful and respectful co-learners and collaborators with children
- Support children's progress in play-based learning through the thoughtful extension of children's knowledge, skills and concept development.
- Notice and work sensitively with very young children's intentions in exploring, practising and experimenting through play.
- Acknowledge children's enjoyment and sense of fun and playfulness in learning, particularly when engaged in group play.
- Provide a balance between child-led and adult-initiated and guided play.
- Plan opportunities for intentional knowledge building, as well as recognising and utilising opportunities for spontaneous teaching and learning.
- Use routines, rituals and transitions to foster learning, development and wellbeing.
- Participate in children's play experiences, such as taking a role in pretend play, to understand and build on children's ideas to support and foster learning.
- Facilitate the integration of popular culture, media and digital technologies which add to children's multimodal play.

### 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 bellies 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)

### 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 - *Belonging Being Becoming* p.13)

Nolan and Raban (2015) write, "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 **National Quality Framework (NQF)** in Australia draws on several early childhood theories and research-based approaches. While the framework is not directly attributed to individual theorists, its principles and practices reflect the influence of foundational theorists and contemporary research in early childhood education. Here are the key theorists whose ideas align with the NQF:

#### Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934)

- **Key Ideas:** Sociocultural theory, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and the importance of social interaction in learning.
- **Relevance to the NQF:** Vygotsky's emphasis on collaboration, relationships, and scaffolding aligns with the NQF's focus on partnerships, respectful interactions, and intentional teaching.

#### Jean Piaget (1896–1980)

- **Key Ideas:** Cognitive development stages and the importance of play-based learning for children's intellectual growth.
- **Relevance to the NQF:** The emphasis on developmental appropriateness and play-based learning in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) reflects Piaget's work.

#### Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005)

- **Key Ideas:** Ecological Systems Theory, highlighting the interconnectedness of a child's environment (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem).
- **Relevance to the NQF:** The framework's recognition of community, family partnerships, and broader societal influences reflects Bronfenbrenner's theory.

#### John Bowlby (1907–1990) and Mary Ainsworth (1913–1999)

- **Key Ideas:** Attachment theory and the significance of secure, trusting relationships in early development.
- **Relevance to the NQF:** The emphasis on relationships and secure environments in the NQF draws on attachment theory to ensure children feel safe and supported.

#### Howard Gardner (b. 1943)

- **Key Ideas:** Theory of Multiple Intelligences, recognising that children learn and express knowledge differently.
- **Relevance to the NQF:** The framework encourages Educators to support individual learning styles and strengths, aligning with Gardner's theory.

#### Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994)

- **Key Ideas:** Founder of the Reggio Emilia approach, emphasising child-led learning, collaboration, and the role of the environment as the "third teacher."
- **Relevance to the NQF:** The NQF promotes inquiry-based, child-centred approaches that reflect the principles of Reggio Emilia.

#### Maria Montessori (1870–1952)

- **Key Ideas:** Emphasis on independence, hands-on learning, and respect for a child's natural development.
- **Relevance to the NQF:** The NQF values child agency and independence, aligning with Montessori's philosophy.

#### Albert Bandura (b. 1925)

- **Key Ideas:** Social Learning Theory, which highlights learning through observation, imitation, and modelling.
- **Relevance to the NQF:** The importance of positive role modelling in interactions and relationships is consistent with Bandura's work.

The NQF is a synthesis of these theoretical foundations, emphasizing quality environments, relationships, and intentional teaching to support children's holistic development and well-being.



### 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 well-being."

"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 wellbeing."

"Respect family's right to privacy and maintain confidentiality."

In relation to the profession, I will:

"I base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence, and my understanding of the children and families with whom 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 well-being".

"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 key 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.

How do my planned experiences align with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) outcomes and reflect the diverse needs, interests, and strengths of each child?

Am I incorporating the voices of children, families, and the community into my programming to create meaningful and inclusive learning experiences?

How do I ensure my planning is flexible and responsive to children’s spontaneous interests and emerging needs during the day?

What strategies am I using to evaluate the effectiveness of my program, and how do I incorporate feedback from observations, families, and children into ongoing planning?

How do I balance intentional teaching with child-led, play-based learning opportunities in my programming?

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

If change is required:

- Discuss any proposed changes to the documentation policy.
- Have any incidents led to obvious changes to be implemented?
- Discuss with Educators and families about changes that may strengthen this policy.

To implement the changes effectively:

- Trial the changes
- Seek feedback and consult.
- Document your thoughts on your Critical Reflection Tracker or in your room diary, and let your manager know at your next Educator meeting. Alternatively, write them down and pass them on to your Educational Leader or director.

A review of change is an important step:

- Evaluate and document in your QIP.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

##### Approved Provider, Area Managers, Director and Nominated Supervisor

- Ensure that the obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met.
- Develop a communication plan in consultation with families to ensure that programming for their children is accessible, meaningful, and useful.
- Collaborate with Educators to display the educational program in a way that is accessible, understandable, and meaningful to families so they can see what is planned for their child.
- Ensure that the Educational Leader is reviewing Educators' programming and planning.
- Work with the service Educational Leader to explore the Early Years Learning Framework.
- Conduct audits of programming and planning.
- Ensure that Educators have the resources required to complete their documentation.
- Ensure that programs include planned experiences to support children and individual goals.
- Ensure that Educators implement and contribute to the Documentation policy and reviews.

##### Educators

- Educators will use the Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 2022 and its Principles and Practices to plan and develop the children's curriculum.
- Educators will ensure they are using their allocated programming time and program well.
- Educators will not use their programming computer for personal use.
- Ensure that ALL Educators are involved in the planning and evaluation.



- Ensure that Educators partake in the review of this Documentation Policy.
- Educators will ensure they complete their Google Doc questionnaires about programming and planning.
- Educators will verbally inform families of their child's participation and progress whenever possible and share documentation about children's learning and development in understandable ways.

#### **Families**

- Parents are welcome to have conversations at the beginning and end of each day. Regular conversations to discuss a child's progress are important ways of developing partnerships and having families involved in their child's care at our service.

#### **Sources and Further Readings**

Belonging, Being, Becoming: *The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia 2009*

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Pound, L. (2011). *How children Learn*. NSW Essential Resources Publishers.

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Sandeter, E. (2014) *Children's risky play in early childhood education and care*.

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#### **Policy Update**

This policy will be updated in December 2027 or if a policy review has been conducted and significant changes have been made. It will be reprinted and distributed to Educators and families.