# Educational Program and Practice Policy

“The educational program and practice is stimulating, engaging and enhances children’s learning and development.” (NQS, 2009).

# Objectives of the Policy

This policy will provide guidance for the Approved Provider, educators, coordinators and the Educational Leader of ……………………………………………………............................... (service’s name) in relation to Quality Area 1 Educational program and practice. The policy will be underpinned by:

* The service’s philosophy
* The Education and Care Services National Law
* The Education and Care Services National Regulations
* The National Quality Standard
* Relevant policies of the service

# Responsibilities of the Approved Provider

The Approved Provider will:

* Ensure, for each child pre-school age and under, assessment of the child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program are documented.
* Ensure there is assessment of each child’s progress against the Learning Outcomes of the EYLF.
* Consider how the documentation will be used by the educators and how the information is prepared and shared with families.
* Ensure, for each child over pre-school age, that there are evaluations of the child’s wellbeing, development and learning.
* Ensure information about the contents and operation of the educational program for the service is displayed at the FDC service and a copy of the educational program is available at each FDC residence.
* Ensure information about the content and operation of the educational program and their child’s participation in the program is provided to the child’s family.
* Ensure that the documents for each child attending the service are kept, as required under Regulation 74.
* Ensure that an Educational Leader is appointed for the FDC service.
* Ensure that the Educational Leader is supported in their role, - has opportunities for professional critical reflection, professional development, professional networking and ongoing learning to assist in their position.
* Ensure that each coordinator is assisted in their role as a support person for the FDC educators.
* Ensure that educators are supported to develop and deliver quality educational programs and practices.
* Take immediate action where educators, coordinators or the Educational Leader are not willing or unable, to fulfil their responsibilities as set out in this policy.

# Responsibilities of Family Day Care Educators

Family Day Care educators will:

* Refer to the approved learning framework, the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF will inform the development of the educator’s program therefore enhancing the child’s play, learning and development.
* Embed the Learning Outcomes in their program understanding that all of the things that take place in a child’s day in Family Day Care can contribute to their learning and developmental outcomes:
* Learning Outcome 1 - Children have a strong sense of identity
* Learning Outcome 2 - Children are connected with and contribute to their world
* Learning Outcome 3 - Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
* Learning Outcome 4 - Children are involved and confident learners
* Learning Outcome 5 - Children are effective communicators
* Regularly observe the children in their care, documenting each child’s current knowledge, ideas, abilities, learning, play preferences and interests.
* Provide environments which assist each child to take part in play and learning, while supporting them to ‘belong’. Factors which will be considered as environmental are indoor spaces, outdoor spaces, excursions and the educator’s interactions in any of these areas.
* Document the program, capturing each child’s progress in respect to play, learning and development. The documentation will be shared with families in a manner in which they can engage with the information.
* Support each child to participate in the program, taking into consideration their age, developmental stage, disposition for learning, abilities and culture.
* Support each child to influence the program through the choices and decisions they make.
* Be actively involved in all aspects of the program.
* Undertake an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
* Recognise intentional teaching opportunities, both planned and spontaneous.
* Take part in professional development to continue on a path of life-long ongoing personal and professional learning.
* Undertake critical reflection on a regular basis. The educator’s reflection should be documented in a way that can influence quality improvement in future educational program and practices. Reflection could include the following areas:
* Each Learning Outcome
* Children’s learning
* Children’s environments
* Children’s routines
* Children’s developmental areas
* Children’s play and leisure
* Children’s transitions
* Interactions with children and families
* Methods of documentation
* Observations
* Resources and equipment
* The educator’s philosophy or the service philosophy

# Responsibilities of the Educational Leader

The Educational Leader will:

* Be an individual appointed to lead the development and implementation of the educational program, based on the EYLF, in the Family Day Care service. This person must be suitably qualified and experienced to carry out this role.
* Support the continuous quality improvement process of the service in relation to Quality Area 1.
* Have an understanding of pedagogy and curriculum in the context of Early Childhood Education and Care.
* Lead and take part in reflective practice discussions which are about the practices and implementation of the learning framework.
* Mentor educators and coordinators to ensure quality practices.
* Assist FDC educators with the best methods of documenting and assessing children’s play, learning and development.
* Discuss the ways in which children’s routines and transitions can be effective learning experiences for children.
* Observe the educator’s and children’s interactions, providing feedback on quality and intentional teaching.
* Provide information to families about the ways in which FDC educators may offer an educational program.
* Network with other Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) professionals, allied health professionals and support services and agencies.
* Consider ways in which the service can make effective connections to the local community.
* Consider the continuity of learning for children in the service who attend different ECEC programs, share FDC educators and are transitioning to school.
* Consider the benefits, disadvantages and ethics of implementing electronic programs into the service.
* Support the ongoing learning of educators and coordinators by identifying professional development opportunities, sourcing professional readings and encouraging professional conversations around quality programs and practices.

# Responsibilities of Family Day Care Coordinators

Coordinators will:

* Support the Educational Leader in their role.
* Support FDC educators to develop and deliver quality educational programs.
* Provide supportive feedback to educators when observing their practices in FDC environments on a regular basis.
* Enter into professional discussions following reflection on practices and programs.
* Advocate for the rights of children and families to engage with only quality educational programs and practices in all FDC environments.
* Undertake professional development, build professional networks and carry out research relating to current trends for educational programs and practices.

# Key definitions

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| Assessment | Defined as the process of gathering ongoing and comprehensive information about aspects of a child’s knowledge, development, skills, abilities, learning dispositions and behaviour for the purpose of making educational program and practice decisions. |
| Critical reflection | Defined as educators thinking about what they do in order to reconsider their actions and refine their program and practices in accordance with these thoughts. Educators undertake a cycle of ongoing learning – a process of quality improvement. |
| Curriculum | Defined as ‘all interactions, experiences, activities routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development’ (The Early Years Learning Framework, 2009).  |
| Intentional teaching | Defined as ‘educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions’ (The Early Years Learning Framework, 2009). Intentional teachers are all educators who support children to learn through planned and spontaneous play. |
| Pedagogy  | Defined as ‘early childhood educator’s practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching and learning’ (The Early Years Learning Framework, 2009). |

# Resources

* Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (2014). *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2014.*
* Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (2011). *National Quality Standards.*
* Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (2014). *Guide to the National Quality Framework.*
* Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (2014). *Guide to the National Quality Standard.*
* Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.(2009) *Belonging, Being and becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework.*
* Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments. (2010). *My Time, Our Place: The Framework for School Age Care.*

# Version control (Example)

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| Version | Action | Date |
| Policy \*\*\*. V1 | Endorsed  | \*\*/\*\*/\*\*\*\* |
| Policy \*\*\*. V1.1 | Review (minor or major changes) | \*\*/\*\*/\*\*\* |
| Policy \*\*\*. V2 | Review due | \*\*/\*\*/\*\*\*\* |