

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 1

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure that the educational program (curriculum) and practice at Alfred Nuttall Memorial Kindergarten is:

- based on an approved learning framework
- underpinned by critical reflection and careful planning
- stimulating, engaging and enhances children's learning and development.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Alfred Nuttall Memorial Kindergarten is committed to:

- providing an educational program that is based on reflective practice, critical analysis and planning
- supporting each child to achieve learning outcomes consistent with the national *Early Years Learning Framework* and/or the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*)
- providing an educational program where children can learn through play and are supported to make decisions, problem-solve and build relationships with others
- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices
- involving families in the development and review of educational program and practice.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Alfred Nuttall Memorial Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law) requires services to deliver an educational program (curriculum) that is based on an approved learning framework. In Victoria, approved learning frameworks for the early childhood sector are the *Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being & Becoming)* (refer to *Sources*) and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*). These documents are underpinned by practices and principles that encourage reflection and provide educators with a thorough understanding of the pedagogy of early childhood curriculum in a contemporary context.

Part 4.1 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (National Regulations) outlines the operational requirements for educational program and practice within services, including the requirements for documentation of assessments in relation to the educational program. There is no prescribed method in the National Law or National Regulations for documenting assessment of children's learning. Each service must determine a method that suits their individual circumstances. To meet the documentation requirements of the National Regulations, the assessment must include an analysis of children's learning. Collecting this information enables educators to plan effectively for each child's learning and development. It can also be used by educators to stimulate reflection on their own values, beliefs and teaching practices, and to communicate about children's learning with children and their families.

The National Regulations require the appointment of an Educational Leader to lead the development and implementation of the educational program (or curriculum) at the service (Regulation 118). This person will have suitable qualifications and experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the *Early Years Learning Framework* and/or the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*, enabling them to guide other educators in planning and reflection, and to mentor colleagues in implementation practices (*Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations*, p85 – refer to *Sources*).

The *National Quality Standard* is linked to the approved learning frameworks. Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice focuses on “enhancing children’s learning and development through the:

- pedagogical practices of educators and co-ordinators
- development of programs that promote children’s learning across five learning outcomes” (*Guide to the National Quality Standard*, p20 – refer to *Sources*).

The educational program must also be underpinned by the service’s philosophy.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Sections 168, 301(3)(d), 323
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 73–76, 118, 148
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice
 - Standard 1.1: An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development
 - Standard 1.2: Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Approved learning framework: A document that outlines practices that educators and co-ordinators must use to support and promote children’s learning. The *Early Years Learning Framework* (*Belonging, Being & Becoming*) and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* are approved learning frameworks for use in Victoria (refer to *Sources*).

Critical reflection: Reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice (*Early Years Learning Framework*, p45 – refer to *Sources*).

Curriculum: All interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development (*Early Years Learning Framework*, p45 – refer to *Sources*; adapted from Te Whariki).

Each child: A phrase used in the *National Quality Standard* when an individualised approach is warranted and educators are required to modify their response to meet the needs of an individual child. An example is ‘each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture and interests provide the foundation for the program’.

Educational Leader: The Approved Provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, co-ordinator or other individual to lead the development and implementation of educational programs at the service (Regulation 118). This person must have a thorough understanding of the *Early Years Learning Framework* (or other approved learning framework), be able to guide other educators in their planning and reflection, and mentor colleagues in the implementation of their practice.

Learning: A natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth, as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development.

Learning framework: Refer to **approved learning framework** above.

Learning outcome: A skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families.

Learning relationships: Relationships that further children's learning and development. Both adult and child have intent to learn from one another.

Play-based learning: A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social world as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:*
<http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
- *Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:*
<http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, ACECQA:* www.acecqa.gov.au
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA:* www.acecqa.gov.au
- *National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program:*
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Resources for Professionals:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/profresources.htm

Service policies

- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*
- *Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy*
- *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Water Safety Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that the educational program is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 168)
- ensuring the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child are accommodated in the educational program (Section 168) (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)

- ensuring the educational program contributes to each child:
 - developing a strong sense of identity
 - being connected with, and contributing to, his or her world
 - having a strong sense of wellbeing
 - being a confident and involved learner
 - being an effective communicator (Regulation 73)
- designating a suitably qualified and experienced Educational Leader to direct the development and implementation of educational programs at the service (Regulation 118)
- ensuring the staff record includes the name of the Educational Leader at the service (Regulation 148)
- ensuring that the service's philosophy guides educational program and practice
- ensuring that assessments of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program are documented (Regulation 74(1)(a)(i))
- ensuring that assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program are documented (Regulation 74(1)(a)(ii))
- ensuring documentation of assessments includes reflection on the period of time the child is at the service, and how documented information will be used by educators at the service (Regulation 74(2)(a)(i)&(ii))
- ensuring documentation is written in plain language and is easy to understand by both educators and parents/guardians (Regulation 74(2)(b))
- ensuring a copy of the educational program is displayed at the service and accessible to parents/guardians (Regulation 75)
- ensuring that parents/guardians are provided with information about the content and implementation of the educational program, their child's participation in the program and documentation relating to assessments or evaluations of their child (Regulation 76)
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, children and families.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring that the educational program is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 168)
- ensuring the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child are accommodated in the educational program (Section 168) (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- displaying a copy of the educational program at the service in a location accessible to parents/guardians
- ensuring that each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation
- ensuring that there is a record of learning and development for each child, and that it is updated and maintained on an ongoing basis
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, educators, children and families
- ensuring regular communication is established between the service and parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development.

Persons in day-to-day Charge and other educators are responsible for:

- delivering an educational program that is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*)

- considering the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child in the educational program (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- assessing and documenting each child's needs, interests, experiences, participation and progress in relation to the educational program in a way that is easy to understand for parents/guardians
- making information available to parents/guardians about their child's participation in the educational program
- communicating regularly with parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, children and families.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- communicating regularly with the service in relation to their child's learning and development
- providing input to the development of the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and children.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Procedures and Considerations Specific to Alfred Nuttall Memorial Kindergarten

Attachment One

Procedures and Considerations Specific to Alfred Nuttall Kindergarten

Educators at ANMK provide a quality programme which enhances children's learning and development in the five outcome areas. In conjunction with the Kindergarten's philosophy statement, the Early Years Learning Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework provide the foundation for the development of the curriculum. A programme based on sound principles and practices, knowledge of each individual child and a cycle of assessment, planning and implementation will enhance children's learning and development.

Curriculum Development

Educators have sound knowledge of the five outcome areas:

- (a) the child will have a strong sense of identity;
- (b) the child will be connected with and contribute to his or her world;
- (c) the child will have a strong sense of wellbeing;
- (d) the child will be a confident and involved learner;
- (e) the child will be an effective communicator.

Intentional plans, interactions, documentation and reflections progress development towards the outcome areas. All documentation reflects learning and development in the five outcome areas, for example, observation sheets, summaries for families, transition to school statements, learning records and group programme books.

Educators plan a programme based on children's strengths, needs and current knowledge and abilities. A play based programme which incorporates children's interests is the foundation for experiences which will enhance learning. Children's current strengths, needs, knowledge and abilities are assessed and then plans made to scaffold learning. Knowing children's strengths, capabilities, culture and interests optimizes children's engagement in experiences and hence their learning. The children's programme is play based and open ended which allows for both intentional teaching and the flexibility to be able to respond to children's initiations, ideas, culture and interests.

Intentional teaching plans form the basis for the programme and guide educators as they purposefully scaffold children's learning and development. Intentional teaching plans indicate programmes for focus areas, learning experiences, strategies and group experiences which are based on previous assessments and evaluations. Within the scope of the intentional plan there is acknowledgement and inclusion of spontaneous teaching moments, for example, if a child initiates an interest or inquiry area. These spontaneous moments then inform future intentional plans.

Children are capable and active learners who guide their own learning and contribute to the learning of others. At ANMK we offer children opportunities to make choices and to take responsibility for leading their own learning. Educators respect and value with each child's unique qualities and acknowledge children as capable and active learners. This enables children to take control of and meaningfully explore learning opportunities.

Educators plan for and establish learning experiences which offer open ended and flexible play spaces. In this way, children can explore and participate in experiences according to their capabilities, skills and interests. Experiences offered provide a balance between familiar experiences offering opportunities for success and also experiences which offer further challenge and appropriate risks. Some experiences are offered consistently over extended periods of time and may be added to, changed or extended depending on interest and skills development while other experiences may be changed on a more frequent basis. There are many opportunities for children to repeat experiences enabling the consolidation of skills, reinforcement of current or new leanings and to ultimately experience success.

Assessment and Planning

To ensure children's learning and development in the five outcome areas, assessments are made to determine children's current skills, capabilities, strengths and interests. These then form the basis for future planning for both groups and individuals. Evaluations and reflections then assess the ways in

which plans have promoted children's continued learning in the five outcome areas. This is an ongoing cyclic process.

Educators have a commitment to developing relationships and observing, listening and talking with children in order to gain understanding and knowledge of each child's thoughts, skills, knowledge and interests. As well as through observation, information is gathered through enrolment forms, informal and formal discussions with parents, "All About Me" sheets, "Comfort Needs Survey", art and language samples and photographs. Information collected should include details regarding the child's family, cultural background and community. Opportunities are provided for educators to access and share this information, for example through discussion, reading information sheets. Educators have a thorough knowledge of the learning outcomes to ensure that observations taken are meaningful and provide information about children's learning in these areas. Educators work together to ensure that all children have equality of attention and detail in the assessment and planning process.

Information about children's strengths, interests, relationships and learning is gathered on an ongoing basis and over a period of time through the strategies outlined above and in particularly through ongoing and meaningful interactions and conversations with children and families. The information gathered is then analysed and assessed in relation to the learning outcomes and plans are then made to scaffold and extend learning in relation to specific learning outcomes.

Records and documentation are designed to ensure that children's development in all learning areas is meaningfully and thoroughly recorded. The group programme book indicates an overall plan including intentional plans for experiences, special focus areas and group experiences. The programme book also includes curriculum links, children's responses to intentional plans, spontaneous learning experiences and reflections about these experiences. The group programme book is available in the locker entrance area to the lockers. Individual learning records are completed and are located in the children's files/portfolios. Children and families are able to access their portfolio books at anytime and are also encouraged to make contributions. During the year, children are able to take their portfolios home to share with their families. Educators are aware of privacy requirements and ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Communication with Families

The Kindergarten philosophy and learning frameworks emphasises the importance of working in partnership with families. As such, educators emphasise the importance of meaningful and ongoing communication with families about the learning and development of their child.

At the beginning of the year, families come to Kindergarten in small groups and educators have an opportunity to sit down individually with each parent to gather information about the child, clarify information contained in the enrolment form and answer any questions. Meetings with families are organised in term one (4yo), term two (3yo) and term three (4yo). Summaries of discussions with families at these meetings are copied and given to families. These meetings also provide an opportunity for educators to gather further information about children's learning and development in the home setting.

Educators use a range of strategies to communicate learning outcomes with families. At the initial parent information session and also via information packages given to families at the start of the year, families are given general information about the learning frame works, including the principles, practices and learning outcomes. Information about the group programme is communicated via the group programme book, the monthly programme report and newsletters. Information about individual children's progress in the learning outcome areas is given through informal discussion, organized meetings with parents and is available through learning records.

Informal discussions can occur at the start and end of sessions and for any further detailed conversation, families are requested to make a meeting time. Preparation times are advertised to families and parents are welcome to phone at anytime.

Transition statements are written for each child moving onto school. These statements outline children's learning and development in each of the outcome areas and must be given to families for approval before these are forwarded to primary school.

Routines and Transitions

The curriculum includes all interactions, environments, play experiences and routines and transitions. Educators ensure that these aspects are planned for and established to allow for children's optimum learning and development. Routines and transitions offer specific opportunities for children's development in the outcome areas.

A general routine underlines the session which gives the children a sense of consistency and security in being able to predict what is going to happen next. The routines are established early in the year through discussion, prompting, modelling and visual cues. Routines include the transitions from home to kindergarten and vice versa, snack times, transitions between environments and group experiences. Routines also include expectations such as assisting to pack away materials and equipment. Routines are initially generally maintained on a consistent basis to give children a sense of comfort and familiarity. Once children are confident within these, then there are increased opportunities for changes. Routines also need to be flexible to take into consideration group dynamics, weather, special activities, children's involvement and participation and children's contributions.

Routine aspects to transition times enable these to occur smoothly. Examples include greeting children/educators on arrival, unpacking bags/hanging up a towel, notifying about forth coming times to pack away, settling songs/music at the beginning of group times, gathering together as a group before going home. The kindergarten philosophy emphasises the importance of developing a sense of belonging to the group and so the children are encouraged to join group experiences for language/music times and also for mid-morning snack times. During longer sessions, an additional snack times enables children to flexibly choose when they are going to eat their snack.

Reflection

Reflective practice is embedded in the kindergarten's philosophy and learning frameworks and forms the basis for ongoing learning and development. Critical reflection and evaluation ensures that educators think deeply about philosophy, ethics, practice and teaching plans and how they impact on children's learning. Reflections and evaluations consider all aspects of the curriculum and may take an overall perspective or focus on specific learning areas. These considerations then inform future planning as programmes are extended or modified for both groups and individuals. Critical reflection is an ongoing process which enables thoughtful and continuous evaluation and consideration of the service's philosophy, curriculum as guided by the learning frameworks, code of conduct and management of the service.

Educators use a range of methods to evaluate and reflect on the children's programme. The group programme book uses texts and photographs to consistently show families how the intentionally planned programme is implemented, children's learning, links to the learning outcomes, how the programme is changed or modified and how spontaneous learning moments are incorporated in the programme. Monthly programme reports for the management committee and families informs about the recent and current planning foci and also indications for future planning.

Personal reflections by teachers are also recorded and these include evaluations of learning experiences, teaching strategies, curriculum design, spontaneous moments and the resulting learning and development of the children. In these reflections it is important to consider both the programme successes and also areas where changes can be made. Clearly shown is how these reflections actually guide the next step in the planning cycle.

Families are able to provide feedback about the programme through a range of means including informal discussions, through meetings with families, through management processes and through the kindergarten's annual survey. Feedback from families also offers opportunity for reflection about their children's development, working in partnership with families and the relevance of the programme to the community.

Educators make opportunities available to record children's feedback and contributions to the programme. This takes the form of noting children's conversations and comments, scribing children's thoughts about their work, taking photographs, recording group discussions and children's thinking about the programme.

Time and opportunity is available for educators to be able to think meaningfully about each session and to be able to record this for planning purposes. All educators must have the opportunity to be able to share reflections both verbally and in written format. This occurs on a daily basis after sessions and also during planning times. Staff meetings and professional development also offer opportunities for joint discussion, reflection and review.