

Yarram Early Learning

Curriculum Development Policy

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

The aim of Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice of the National Quality Standard is to ensure that the educational program and practice is stimulating and engaging and enhances children's learning, knowledge, skills and holistic development that enables life long learning.

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines to ensure that the educational program (curriculum) and practice at Yarram Early Learning is:

- based on an approved learning framework (EYLF, MTOP, VEYLDF)
- centred on child's learning, development, wellbeing and safety
- designed to take into account the diversity of each child context and differences.
- based on the developmental needs, strengths, ideas and experiences and cultural background of each child
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POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Yarram Early Learning is committed to:

- Providing an educational program that is based on reflective practice, critical analysis, planning and the cycle of learning with the development and designing of experiences.
- Supporting each child to achieve learning outcomes consistent with the *National Early Years Learning Framework version 2* and/or the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to Sources)
- Embedding our First Nations Peoples Cultural Heritage and knowledge into the daily educational teaching practices with the context of the community of Yarram & District and global contemporary society.
- Embracing the Reggio Emilia Approach into educational teaching practices and a cultural context of the community of Yarram Early Learning Centre and global contemporary society
- 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 practices
- Involving families in the development and review of educational program and practice.

- Embedding the ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) into our daily rituals curriculum development.
- Embracing a program of Nature Learning with in the daily experiences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Yarram Early Learning.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Yarram Early Learning delivers a curriculum that is underpinned by the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law) that is based on an approved learning framework. In Victoria, approved learning frameworks for the early childhood sector are the *Early Years Learning Framework Version 2 2023* (EYLF) (*Belonging, Being & Becoming*) (refer to Sources) and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF) (refer to Sources). These documents contain practices and principles that encourage reflection and provide staff with a thorough understanding of the pedagogy of early childhood curriculum in a contemporary context.

The aim of the EYLF and the VEYLDF is to provide a guide for the Educators in their work with young children. The aim is for all Young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens (*Belonging, Being and Becoming, 2009*).

Both frameworks are divided into five outcomes for learning:

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of Identity

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Outcome 5: Children are effective Communicators.

Under National Regulations, Yarram Early Learning has an educational leader to lead the development and implementation of the curriculum at Yarram Early Learning (Regulation 118). The educational leader has advanced qualifications and experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*, enabling them to guide other staff 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*).

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY (ACECQA)

ACECQA guides the implementation of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care nationally and ensures consistency in delivery. The *National Quality Standard (NQS)* is a key aspect of the *National Quality Framework (NQF)* sets a national benchmark for early childhood education. The National Quality Standard is linked to national learning frameworks that recognise children learn from birth. It outlines practices that support and promote children's learning. The NQS consists of seven quality areas, each containing standards and elements, that children's education and care services are assessed and rated against. Quality Area

1 - Educational Program and Practice focuses on “enhancing children’s learning and development through the:

- Pedagogical practices of all educators and Centre Leadership
- Development of programs that promote children’s learning across five learning outcomes” (*guide to the national quality standard, p20 – refer to sources*).

Yarram Early Learning Educators employ the EYLF and the VEYLDF to guide the development of the teaching and the learning programs. Program planning integrates the five Learning Outcomes Principles and Practices of both Frameworks that are designed to respond to the complex and integrated learning of young children with ‘Play based underpinning the learning process. Children work collaboratively to gather and investigate information on chosen big ideas with the emphasis placed on real life issues or problems that are worthy of investigation. Children are involved in design, problem solving, decision-making and wide ranging investigative activities along with action based learning within the Centre and wider community.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

With a world population of 7 billion people and limited natural resources, we, as individuals and societies need to learn to live together sustainably. We need to take action responsibly based on the understanding that what we do today can have implications on the lives of people and the planet in future. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future.

UNESCO aims to improve access to quality education on sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts, to transform society by reorienting education and help people develop knowledge, skills, values and behaviours needed for sustainable development. It is about including sustainable development issues, such as climate change and biodiversity into teaching and learning. Individuals are encouraged to be responsible actors who resolve challenges, respect cultural diversity and contribute to creating a more sustainable world.

THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH

The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education views young children as individuals who are curious about their world and have the powerful potential to learn from all that surrounds them. Educational, psychological, and sociological influences are important factors to consider in understanding children and working to stimulate learning in appropriate ways. Reggio teachers employ strategies such as exposing children to a wide variety of educational opportunities that encourage self-expression, communication, logical thinking, and problem-solving.

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/reggio-emilia-approach/>

Nature Kinder

At Yarram Early Learning, we believe childhood is precious and that being outside in nature plays an important part of this time. Contact with nature and the outdoors can at times, be limited for some children. Research suggests that children need to spend more time outside, in nature.

Yarram Early Learning (YEL) this needs to include all ages groups and, the Tiddalek (Kindergarten) room use our ‘Nature Program’ to support young children through play, to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It encourages children to take risks, self-assess their risks, ensuring that the children start to consider the impact

of their actions on themselves and on others. In doing this, the children learn to take on challenges and accept responsibility.

Children learn from nature. Our Nature Program provides children with the time and the ideal environment for them to learn, with uninterrupted nature play in different areas of Yarram and District, where they are able to use what nature has provided as materials for learning. The Nature Program is a special part of a child's total Kindergarten experience.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe:

1. In recognising and acknowledging the Gunai Kurnai people, the Brataaualung people, who are the local traditional owners of this land, we are committed to providing learning experiences that reflect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.'
2. Non Indigenous cultures are promoted in the same way. Everyone is encouraged to be proud of who they are and to share and celebrate their cultures and family values. This may need rewording some how.
3. Children are powerful and curious learners. We foster this by providing an inquiry rich play based environment. Together we will nurture and respect all children, building on their unique strengths and abilities and valuing each family's diversity. This fosters children's motivation to learn and reinforces their sense of themselves as competent learners
4. If we provide an environment that allows children to feel safe and secure this will encourage them to take risks in their learning and help them develop resilience for life's challenges
5. In developing a strong sense of community by establishing links and accessing support services within our local area. We seek to strengthen partnerships and build relationships by actively participating in local events.
6. Children make sense of their world through play based experiences that are meaningful to them. By involving them in the decisions we make, by listening, acknowledging and valuing who they are right now, it allows us to scaffold and build on their learning
7. The relationships which children make with other children and with adults are of vital importance to their development. As educators we will provide opportunities for children to interact and communicate in a supportive manner that allows them to develop and build on their emerging social skills.

8. That our service is a valuable community resource and as such we are committed to ensuring each child in Yarram and the surrounding district is offered a kindergarten placement in the year before school. We are also committed to providing a service that is high quality, accessible, flexible and responsive to community needs. Feedback and involvement are actively encouraged.

9. That it is the parent's role as the child's first and most influential educator and encourage their involvement in our centre and their input into the development of our programs and philosophy. Children thrive when we work together to build a trusting partnership.

10. In supporting our educators to value their own learning and improve their practices and education through sound orientation practises, encouraging critical reflection, and providing training and mentoring.

11. The National Quality Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework are embedded within our program. Our teaching is intentional. We focus on the process, we give children the freedom to explore, investigate, experience, interact and discover. To learn about new things, people, cultures, sustainability, the environment, and technology

Yarram Early Learning embraces best practice. Educators continuously engage in ongoing professional learning and critical reflection to ensure their practices reflect current theories and pedagogy. Therefore, on an annual basis ELC staff and parents are given the opportunity to review the philosophy statement and changes made if deemed appropriate.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Learning takes place in environments that are designed to stimulate sensory exploration and thinking and problem solving. Staff devote time to the design and presentation of aesthetically pleasing and intellectually challenging environments that link both the indoor and outdoor spaces and curriculum content. Special objects, collections and materials form a basis to enhance environmental sensibilities of each child and excite and inspire children's imaginative explorations. Emphasis on the environment detailing a streamlined approach where the children have an understanding of what is expected with the learning and the use of the materials. Materials are the text of the early childhood environment, spaces are uncluttered and respect for the materials as part of the childhood worlds is shown.

Yarram Early Learning is committed to inclusive practice that acknowledges the diversity of cultural needs. Parents are requested to register with teaching staff each year their interest in any particular celebratory/special events they would like included in the program. Parents are also encouraged to share their cultural heritage and family stories in the kindergarten.

The Centre is open for 48 weeks each year. Of these weeks, a long day kindergarten program will operate for 42 weeks in conjunction with standard Victorian school term dates and a Holiday Program operates for the remaining weeks.

SOURCES AND RELEVANT POLICIES

Sources:

- ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>
- Education for Sustainable Development: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/200910deecdannualreport.pdf>
- EYLF – Belonging, being and becoming: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veylframework.pdf>
- Reggio Emilia Approach: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/reggio-emilia-approach/>

Relevant Policies:

- *Sustainability Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity 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:
 - Ensuring that the educational program is:
 - s based on an approved learning framework(refer to *Definitions*);
 - is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework;
 - is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child;
 - is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child (National Law: Section 168)
 -
- 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 and Responsible Persons and Room Leaders are 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 or digital copy on Xplor, 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.

Educators and other staff 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 via xplor observations and face-to-face conversations.
- Developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, children and families.
- Each afternoon/evening, providing the parents with a "daily parent communication" that offers information of the daily activities that occurred in the room.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Communicating regularly with the service in relation to their child's learning and development and communicating via xplor home with educators when necessary
- Logging in to the xplor home app to view their child/ren's observations and health records.
- Providing input to the development of the educational program in collaboration with the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators and children.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Yarram Early Learning Incorporated in April 2023

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment one: How we support positive behaviours

REVIEW DATE April 2025

ATTACHMENT ONE

How We Support Positive Behaviour

Our aims:

- To establish respectful, responsive and nurturing relationships between each child and each educator; meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
- To assist each child to form effective relationships with other children and to support them to regulate their own behaviour.

We understand that it is common for there to be occasional behavioural problems in toddler age groups, as children are just learning how to interact with other adults and children. They mostly believe they are the centre of their world (egocentric) so this makes it difficult for them sometimes to be in a group setting. They are just beginning to understand cause and effect, so they don't always realise that another child's distress is caused by their actions. They have strong emotions that they have not yet learned to control.

To build a strong relationship with each child we:

- Find out as much as we can about your child's interests, daily routine and any other information that you are willing to share with us that would help us to support your child
- plan activities that focus on their planned goals so that we are supporting their learning, development and wellbeing
- Show interest in what they are showing us/telling us/asking us
- Extend conversations about their interests as much as possible
- Use every possible moment of the day, including mealtimes, toileting and rest time to spend one-to-one time with them
- Comfort them if they are distressed and respond to their needs as quickly as possible.

Children benefit when there are effective partnerships between educators and families so we thought it might be helpful for us to share the strategies that we use when dealing with some of the challenging behaviours that we see. We would also be very interested in hearing suggestions that you find work well for you at home.

We plan to minimise behavioural problems by:

- Being proactive rather than reactive; we think about what might happen and how we should handle situations, rather than just reacting to the situation at the time
- Providing sensory experiences every day such as sand, water and painting; these experiences assist children to feel calm as well as providing opportunities for communication between children and educators
- Providing lots of choice about playing inside or outside
- Providing a larger outdoor play space

- Making sure that we are alert to the signs when children are showing us that they are starting to feel over tired, excited or frustrated
- Providing a calm space where children can just 'be' and hide away; e.g. In a large cardboard box, tepee or a 'tent' made from sheets/blankets.)

The positive guidance strategies we use include:

- Having clear guidelines so that the children know what is expected; these are designed to keep all children safe
- Reminding the children regularly in a firm but friendly way if they do something that is not in line with the expectations
- Ignoring some behaviour (especially attention-seeking behaviour) but immediately stepping in if someone is being hurt
- Consistently choosing to focus on positive reinforcement if we have ignored some attention-seeking behaviour; we try to 'catch them being good' and comment on what we see, e.g. "thank you for coming to sit down for lunch."
- Using encouragement rather than praise; we avoid using random comments such as "good job" "good boy" or "good girl" and instead comment on what the child has done, e.g. "i can see you've been trying very hard to put that together. You've used lots of yellow blocks, haven't you?"
- Using positive language; we avoid using "don't", "stop" and "no" except to keep another child safe in a potentially dangerous situation. If we say, "don't run inside" or "don't hit", it is just emphasising what they are doing. We emphasise what we want to happen by saying, "remember to walk inside" and "be gentle".)
- Using distraction and redirection as much as possible; it is amazing how easy it is to distract a child by drawing their attention to another part of the room or another activity. We also redirect a child outside or to a different part of the room to remove them from the situation that is causing stress or distress to themselves or others.
- Having an attitude of why not, instead of 'no you can't'; this recognises that children want to make decisions, have choices and be independent and when they are stopped, they are likely to have meltdowns.
- Acknowledging that there are some things children have to do whether they want to or not (usually to keep everyone safe and healthy) but using humour as much as possible to defuse the situation; e.g. Offering a choice such as 'would you like to come and wash your hands now or in a couple of minutes?'
- Working as a team to step in and assist another educator if a child is having a meltdown; sometimes children need to 'save face' so are more likely to calmly cooperate with a different educator by going with them to a quiet space

If a child is hurt by another child, we:

- Provide immediate attention and comfort to any child who has been hurt before guiding the behaviour of the child who has caused the hurt
- Redirect the child to come with us and sit with them to provide some one-to-one quiet time to assist them to calm down at a sensory experience, or provide access to a weighted lizard or their own comfort item; this is not a punishment and recognises that the child is struggling to know how to communicate their feelings in an acceptable way
- Wait until the child is calm before using teaching strategies to help them to understand what has happened and that they need to be gentle with everyone.
- Use phrases such as 'we wouldn't let anyone hurt you and we can't let you hurt anyone else'.
- Help the child understand cause and effect; "look at how unhappy x is, you hurt her when you pushed her over. Please be gentle."
- Encourage the child to help comfort the other child; "look at the marks your teeth have made on x's arm. It is not okay to bite. Let's get a cold washer to stop it hurting."
- Closely observe the child and record notes to identify the time of day, where the incident happened and who else was involved; this helps us to see possible triggers for events and to be proactive to avoid further incidents.