

Yarram Early Learning Employee Assistance Program Policy

Quality Area 4

PURPOSE

This policy acknowledges that circumstances beyond people's control can impact on their behaviour and performance at work.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following service policies:

- *Code of Conduct Policy*

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

- Yarram Early Learning is committed to providing staff with support through an external third party to address any issues impacting on work performance.
- Creating a welcoming environment where staff feel supported and their physical and emotional wellbeing is valued
- Continuously working towards protecting and promoting the health, safety and welfare of all staff members

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Responsible Person,, Nominated Supervisor, Educators, other staff, students on placement and volunteers at Yarram Early Learning.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Yarram Early Learning Centre has an 'Employee Assistance Program' (EAP) which is an initiative to provide staff with confidential counselling and support for work and personal issues. Yarram Early Learning Centre understands that if staff members are positive about their jobs and lives, then their work performance and overall wellbeing will be better.

An agreement is currently in place with Converge International to externally provide the EAP. Converge is a counselling service that provides independent, confidential counselling to staff as required. EAP Counsellors talk with employees and help them find ways to solve their problem/s or at least gain a greater understanding of their situations so they can better manage the issues concerning them.

EAP Counselling is a process which involves a staff member speaking with a Counsellor either face to face or over the telephone. Staff who decide to use their EAP Counselling services are required to book their initial appointment over the telephone. Converge provides a free call 1800 337 068 number that does not appear on phone bills. The only information staff will be asked over the telephone is

their name, the name of their employer and possibly a contact telephone number for reaching them. Converge counselling sessions can take place at the EAP provider's, at the worksite or over the phone. Yarram Early Learning Centre will be invoiced for the session. At no time is a staff member's name released to their employer. Please feel free to contact Converge International on 1800 337 068 should you require any counselling, advice or assistance.

Staff can use the EAP for a wide range of work related or family and personal issues and up to 3 counselling sessions will be paid for by Yarram Early Learning Centre. Additional sessions paid for by Yarram Early Learning Centre may be negotiated on a case by case basis.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
 - Standard 4.1: Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management
 - Standard 7.1: Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community
- Work Health & Safety Act 2011

DEFINITIONS

Educator: An individual who provides education and care for children as part of an education and care service.

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.

Responsible Person: The Approved Provider (if that person is an individual, and in any other case the person with management or control of the service operated by the Approved Provider) or a Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person has been placed in day-to-day charge of the service in accordance with the National Regulations.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA):
www.acecqa.gov.au

- National Early Years Learning Framework:
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/veyldframework.pdf>
- Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/Pages/default.aspx>
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic)

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Having an agreement in place with a third party to provide an Employee Assistance Program available to staff.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the available program and nominated supervisors and educational leader are promoting the program.

The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader are responsible for:

- Promoting the EAP program to staff, volunteers and students on placement.
- Review the use and cost of the EAP program on an annual basis.
- Accessing the EAP as needed.

Responsible Person are responsible for:

- Promoting the EAP program to staff, volunteers and students on placement.
- Accessing the EAP as needed.

Educators, volunteers, students and other staff are responsible for:

- Promoting a supportive and encouraging environment for the use of the EAP.
- Accessing the EAP as needed.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will receive the annual review of the EAP from the Nominated Supervisor and consider any recommendations.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by Yarram Early Learning Incorporated in June 2020.

REVIEWED BY MANAGEMENT - June 2023

TO BE REVIEWED - 2024