

Best Practice – Quality Area 1

Please Note: Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. is referred to as BPA in this document.

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure that the educational program (curriculum) and practice at services managed by BPA are:

- 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

BPA 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 (BPA), 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 services managed by BPA.

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.

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The National Regulations requires 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

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*). Critical reflection occurs when we analyse and challenge the validity of our presuppositions and assess the appropriateness of our knowledge, understanding and beliefs given our present contexts (Mezirow, 1990)

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) – Refer to Attachments 1, 2 & 3.

Curriculum Guidelines: A document developed by BPA to guide and support educators to provide genuine, authentic, purposeful experiences in line with the *Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (VEYLDF)*

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

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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.

Educational Rationale: A document which states the learning intentions of proposed experiences to be included as part of the curriculum, in line with the BPA Curriculum Guidelines

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 – Resources for Professionals:*
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldf.aspx>
- *Marrung – Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026*
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/marrung.aspx>

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*

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PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider (BPA) 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*)
- designating a suitably qualified and experienced Educational Leader to direct the development and implementation of educational programs at a service (Regulation 118)
- ensuring the Educational Leader Consent form is included with the relevant staff record at the service (Regulation 148)
- ensuring that a 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 are documented against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74(1)(a)(ii))
- ensuring documentation of assessments includes reflection on the period of time the child is being educated and cared for 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 a 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)
- provide guidance in developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Educational Leader, Nominated Supervisor, educators, children and families.

The Educational Leader and/or Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge 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*)
- 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)
- ensuring that a service's philosophy guides educational program and practice

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- ensuring documentation of assessments includes reflection on the period of time the child is being educated and cared for at the service, and how documented information will be used by educators at the service (Regulation 74(2)(a)(i)&(ii))
- 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 documentation is written in plain language and is easy to understand by both educators and parents/guardians (Regulation 74(2)(b))
- displaying a copy of the educational program at a 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. Educators may need to complete an Educational Rationale as part of developing the curriculum to highlight intentions for learning – refer to *Attachment 3*
- ensuring regular communication is established between a service and parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development.

Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that a service's philosophy guides educational program and practice
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, children and families.
- 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
- ensuring documentation is written in plain language and is easy to understand by both educators and parents/guardians (Regulation 74(2)(b))
- 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

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

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- 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: Curriculum Policy – Guidelines – Creative Arts
- Attachment 2: Celebrations & Special Events Policy Guidelines
- Attachment 3: Educational Rationale

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider, Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. on 24 September 2019.

REVIEW DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2022

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ATTACHMENT 1
Curriculum Policy Guidelines