


NQS-QA1 Educational Program and Practice Policy	
Policy Number:	12.30
Policy Category:	Childcare Centre
Authorised by:	Res-2026-05-132
Date approved:	21 May 2026
Review Date:	21 May 2028



**Longreach
Regional Council**

SCOPE

This policy, and its related procedures and tools, apply to the Approved Provider, Nominated supervisor, all team members, children, parents, students, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and any visitors to our service.

If this policy, or its related procedures/tools. are not followed or implemented, it may result in disciplinary action being taken, which could include the termination of employment for staff, refusal of service for clients, and / or the ending of contractual agreements with suppliers and individuals outside of our service.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear expectations about each child's learning program, and the related educator practice that supports the implementation of these programs.

This policy discusses:

- Play based learning approaches,
- Written educational programs and individual child documentation, and
- Educator curriculum decision making and pedagogical practices.

This policy relates to the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice.

POLICY STATEMENT

PROGRAM

- The Early Years Learning Framework, My Time Our Place Framework and the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline form the foundation of our program.
- We value and implement a play-based curriculum where children's strengths, interests and culture inform and shape the program.
- Play based learning provides children with the opportunity to be actively involved in their own learning.
- We also value, and wherever possible, capitalise on children's spontaneous play, following their lead and exploring and learning with them.
- We pride ourselves on delivering a child-centred program where we support children to make decisions that influence and affect their experiences.
- We use a range of different approaches to find out and use the views and opinions of our children in relation to the learning experiences and environments we offer.

- We document where children’s input influences decisions and provide feedback in child-friendly formats (for example, “you said / we did”).
- We strive to implement a program that offers children a deep connection with their identity, heritage, culture and community.
- We include opportunities in the program for our children to develop an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Alongside this, we strive to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our centre programs, practices, and environments.
- We regularly communicate and engage with our children’s families with the goal of establishing strong partnerships that benefit each child’s growth, development and wellbeing.
- We seek out the ideas, feedback and contributions of our families through different methods, whether through digital or written documentation, including OWNA, and 1-1 conversations.
- In early childhood education, it is vital to be planned and purposeful, and we develop a written educational program for each of our children based on their needs, developmental stage, abilities, interests, personality, and preferences. This is available to families, and we seek and encourage their feedback on the plan.
- Each child’s plan details set goals, and the learning opportunities that are provided by our educators to achieve these.
- The learning program and experiences we offer, and implement are aimed at maximising learning and development outcomes for each child.
- We strive to share the “why of what they do “with families and other professionals, using evidence-based theory and/or practices to highlight our professionalism and capabilities.

PRACTICE

Our educators’ practice decisions and actions are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful, demonstrating a commitment to high quality practice at all times. Educator practice is intentionally flexible to suit each child’s learning style to maximise participation in the learning program. This promotes children’s agency and choice in the learning environment.

Educator decisions and actions are reflective of the setting’s unique geographical and cultural community. Our service has a commitment to cultural competence where educators value the benefits of cultural diversity, and where everyday practices reflect an ability to understand and honour differences.

Current research informs educator curriculum decisions and teaching strategies. A culture of professional learning and commitment to critical reflection drives continuous improvement, ensuring educator practice remains contemporary.

The service philosophy and vision is evident through the programs being offered to children, educator ethical decision making and actions, and through the educators valuing equity in their relationships with children and families.

We enhance responsive teaching and scaffolding of children's skills, and interests through our relationships and interactions with each child, family, and the community we are

established within. Understanding how each child is an active citizen within their communities demonstrates their capabilities and strengths. We use our observations and knowledge of each child to build upon this through open-ended questioning, invitations to learn within the environment, and intentionality throughout our interactions with children and team members.

ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Our programs follow a cycle of planning, where educators document children's learning and development, engage in assessment and analysis to inform this learning, then use this information to plan for and maximise further educational goals. Each cycle of planning informs the next, resulting in increasingly complex learning and development outcomes for children.

Educators demonstrate the ability to draw on early childhood theory and practice approaches to inform their planning to suit the children and their unique learning setting. As a result, educator planning demonstrates interconnectedness of curriculum areas and is responsive to children's holistic educational requirements including cognitive, physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Intentional and planned teaching is applied to educator practice, learning experiences, and the environment. This ensures the educational program caters to the unique group of children, is flexible, challenging, and safe. Planned learning spaces invite the development of relationships, exploration, and connection with natural materials.

Educators regularly utilise assessment strategies to monitor children's learning and development progression. This enables educators to plan for continuity of learning as children transition between educational environments within the service, or on to the school environment. Engaging in assessment enables educators to demonstrate that learning is occurring as a result of their curriculum decision making and planning, thus increasing educator accountability.

Families are regularly informed of the program and their child's progress through verbal conversations, OWNA communications and observations, Summative Assessments, and end of year transition statements. The program is readily available for families to access and feedback is always welcomed. We strive to ensure all communication to our families utilises a strengths-based perspective, and highlights any concerns through a respectful lens.

RELATED POLICY DOCUMENTS

- QA 1 Critical reflection procedure
- QA 5 Relationships with children Policy
- QA 5 Interactions and relationships procedure
- QA 5 Inclusion procedure
- QA 5 Behaviour guidance procedure
- QA 6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities policy
- QA 6 Family participation procedure
- QA 4 Staff code of conduct procedure
- QA 4 Students, volunteers, and visitors procedure

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Agency – being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one’s world (DEEWR, 2022).

Curriculum – in the early childhood setting curriculum includes all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning, development and wellbeing. (Adapted from Te Whariki, NZ Ministry of Education 2017). (DEEWR, 2022).

Intentionality – is being thoughtful and purposeful in actions and making decisions and is something that both children and educators can do. Children are intentional in their thinking, ways of communication and learning and at times lead their own learning and the learning of others. Educators are intentional in the roles they take in children’s play and the way they intentionally plan the environment and curriculum experiences (DEEWR, 2022).

Learning framework – a guide which provides a vision for learning, pedagogical principles, practices and general goals or outcomes for children’s learning and how they might be attained. It provides a scaffold to assist educators to develop their own, more detailed curriculum relevant to their setting and the children and families attending. (DEEWR, 2022).

Learning Outcome – a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families (DEEWR, 2022).

Pedagogy – is the art, craft and science of educating. Pedagogy is the foundation for educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning (DEEWR, 2022).

Educational Program – A program that:

- is based on an approved learning framework; and
- is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework; and
- is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child; and
- is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child (National Law).

(ACECQA, 2023)

Authorised by resolution as at 21 May 2026:



Brett Walsh
Chief Executive Officer

LINKS TO STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

This policy relates to the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice.

Standard/ Elements	Concept	Descriptor
QA1		Educational program and practice
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Responsive teaching and scaffolding Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
1.3	Assessment and planning	Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
1.3.1	Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
1.3.2	Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
1.3.3	Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

This policy relates to the following law and national regulations:

Standard/ Elements	Concept	Related law and national regulations
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QA1		Educational program and practice
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
		Section 51(1)(b) Conditions on service approval (educational and developmental needs of children) Section 168 Offence relating to required programs Regulation 73 Educational program Section 168 Offence relating to required programs
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
		Section 51(1)(b) Conditions on service approval (educational and developmental needs of children) Section 168 Offence relating to required programs Regulation 155 Interactions with children Regulation 156 Relationships in groups
1.3	Assessment and planning	Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
		Regulation 74 Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program Regulation 75 Information about the educational program to be kept available Regulation 76 Information about educational program to be given to parents <i>Jurisdiction-specific provisions</i> NSW – Regulation 274A Programs for children over preschool age NT – Regulation 289A Programs for children over preschool age Qld – Regulation 298A Programs for children over preschool age

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Review Date	Role responsible for review
1.1	May 2022	Added Related Policy Documents section, reference to spontaneous play, reference to EYLF and state based kindy guidelines, discussed parent contributions to program.	Q2, 2024	SPI team
1.2	March 2024	Updated references, reflected updates to EYLF	Q1, 2026	Policy Manager
1.3	Nov 2025	Minor updates to wording. Links confirmed and updated.	Q3, 2027	Policy Manager