

Educational Programming Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Eastwood Heights OOSH (the Service) provides an educational program that is based on the “My Time, Our Place” Framework for School Age Care developed by the Council of Australian Governments. In formulating and implementing its educational program the Service will endeavour to meet the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child attending the Service in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the National Quality Standard for School Age Care.

The National Law Regulations require that the educational program uses established principles and practices that contribute to the following outcomes:

- the child will have a strong sense of identity
- the child will be connected with and contribute to his or her world
- the child will have a strong sense of well-being
- the child will be a confident and involved learner
- the child will be an effective communicator.

It is a legal requirement that the educational program be planned, documented, evaluated and displayed on the premises. Our own philosophy will guide us in developing our educational program and practices. Educators will draw on their professional experience and their in-depth knowledge of the children being cared for and their families, and then collaborate with both children and staff to design the Service’s educational program. Ongoing learning and reflective practice is one of the key principles of “My Time, Our Place” and educators will continually reflect on the effectiveness of the educational program we offer.

Play-based learning is integral to the educational program. Educators recognise that play is a context for learning that:

- allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness
- enhances dispositions such as curiosity and creativity
- enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning
- assists children to develop relationships and concepts, and
- stimulates a sense of well-being.

PROCEDURE

The Approved Provider (the Parent Management Committee) and the Nominated Supervisor of the Service are responsible for ensuring that a suitable educational program based on an approved learning framework is delivered to all children attending the Service. The Nominated Supervisor will assist and guide other educators through the framework to deliver the educational program. Educators will be provided with time to prepare the educational program, and will use a variety of strategies to collect, document, organise, synthesise and interpret the information that they gather to assess children’s learning.

An ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children’s learning will underpin the educational program. Educators may use a variety of strategies to ensure ongoing critical reflection

of the program as well as of their own work with children to constantly improve their education and care practices. Educators will also be provided with opportunities to further their professional development and skills in childhood pedagogy and education and care practices. Training and development will be allowed for in the Service's annual budget.

Educational programs will be balanced and varied. They will provide for indoor/outdoor learning experiences, quiet/active times, individual/small group/large group times, time for individual educator/child interaction, children's individual and group interests (including activities that are physical, creative, exploratory, dramatic, musical, cognitive and involve construction), yet be flexible enough to allow for spontaneity and the unexpected. Educators will be mindful that children have been attending school all day and may just need to relax.

Educators will provide individual holistic programs that are responsive to children's lives, interests and learning styles, that promote each child's social, cultural, physical, emotional, intellectual, language and creative potential, and meet individual children's play and relaxation needs.

Educators will use observations of children's participation in past activities to plan for future activities, set up a learning environment that stimulates children's natural curiosity, encourage children to be actively involved in their own learning and decision making, and use the partnerships they have developed with families to enhance and individualise programs for children.

Programs will be planned with the children's involvement. Educators will endeavour to involve children through the following strategies:

- seeking out information about children's interests, valuing their contributions and ideas, and letting the child know they are appreciated
- providing a variety of resources and experiences and setting up the environment so that shelving for equipment and toys is easily accessible, allowing children to make choices about their activities, and observing children's preferred choice
- one-to-one discussions with children, where educators ask the children what they like to do and what they think about their experiences at OOSH
- observing group interests and interactions
- using interest questionnaires, or short surveys, for children to complete
- allowing children to raise issues and become decision makers
- involving children in interviewing other children about what they like and dislike doing
- encourage older children to manage some aspects of the program independently.

The educational program will be child-centred and will allow children to experience a variety of materials and pursue their own interests. Educators will offer appropriate choices to children, talk to them about the choices available to them, and help them to decide what to do if needed. In most cases there will be alternatives when a child does not wish to participate in a particular activity, or chooses to initiate their own experiences and play. The Service will provide a variety of toys for all children to play with regardless of gender. Both boys and girls will be encouraged to explore a full range of experiences and emotions.

Children will be challenged and encouraged to take 'safe' risks in order to:

- develop their problem-solving skills
- build resilience, confidence and social competence
- extend their physical strength, fitness levels and coordination
- learn about responsible risk management by raising their consciousness of risks and the consequences of particular actions or choices.

Educators will ensure that the supervision of children is in accordance with the Service's Supervision Policy, is appropriate to each child's stage of development, and protects the children's safety and well-being at all times. Educators will join in the children's play, appreciate their attempts to acquire new skills, and encourage children to try new experiences. Children will be regularly reminded of safety procedures for play equipment.

Educators will endeavour to use children's real life experiences to engage children in learning opportunities. Families are encouraged to share their cultural traditions, customs and beliefs with educators so that children's rights to have their cultures and identities acknowledged and valued can be upheld.

The educational program will be flexible in order to be able to respond to spontaneous play, children's interests, changes in the weather, visitors to the Service etc. Educators will monitor noise levels in the environment and adjust activities with children if necessary to ensure noise levels are appropriate and do not interfere with purposeful play or activity.

Statutory authority

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Section 168; Regulation 73-76)
- National Quality Standard (Standard 1.1)

Service policies

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Supervision Policy

National frameworks

- Framework for School Age Care in Australia, "My Time, Our Place" (2.1, 4.2, 4.3)
http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/my_time_our_place_framework_for_school_age_care_in_australia.pdf