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Curriculum Policy

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

Date Created: July 2011 Date to be reviewed: November 2024 Version No: 9

Policy statement:

Yarrunga Early Learning Centre develops a curriculum that is based on contemporary theories and practices about how children best learn, grow, and develop.

Yarrunga provides a stimulating, nurturing, and engaging reflective programs for all children. Our curriculum is supported by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF V2.0) which guides Early Childhood educators in developing quality Early Childhood education programs. This Framework describes the Principles, Practices and Five Learning Outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.  The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning, as play is now recognised as the best vehicle for young children’s learning, providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and social and emotional development. Our Educational Leader supports educators in curriculum decisions.

Our programming takes into account the unique factors and context of the diversity of families, cultures and the local community in which our Centre is located. Educators utilise families understanding of their children to support shared decision-making about each child’s learning and development.

By working closely with families and, where necessary other professionals, Yarrunga Early Learning Centre draws on the Early Years Learning Framework, to enhance each child’s individual strengths, competence, self-esteem and supporting their needs.

We integrate the principles of high-quality interactions into our daily behaviours and communication that take place between our educators and with the children in our care is of a respectful manner.

Background:

Yarrunga is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all children through the development of programs which create stimulating, challenging play and learning experiences based on respect for the child's individual interests and level of development needs.

The Early Years Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children’s learning. It communicates these expectations through the following five Learning Outcomes:

* Children have a strong sense of identity,
* Children are connected with and contribute to their world,
* Children have a strong sense of wellbeing,
* Children are confident and involved learners, and
* Children are effective communicators.

Yarrunga Early Learning Centre uses the EYLF and Centre Philosophy to develop long term goals. These are embedded into everyday practice as they reflect the development of all children within our centre.

Educators value the importance of play and use a variety of teaching strategies. Play can be child-initiated and pleasurable, so through play, children are motivated to learn, explore and develop a positive disposition towards learning.

We believe that routines are a vital part of the child's learning and incorporate these naturally throughout the day. The program is flexible enough to capitalise on spontaneous learning opportunities and changing weather conditions, while encouraging children to take on new challenges.

Our educators acknowledge that differences exist and are valuable. Our program is inclusive, respectful and supportive of all individuals. We encourage children to pursue their own interests in the context of family life and the broader community.

We believe that our children are present throughout Yarrunga hence our documentation includes a wide variety of organic presentations capturing the holistic nature of children’s learning such as our Floor book, Room Displays, Group Plan and Individual Learning Journals (these are readily accessible for the children and families).

We consistently provide continuity of learning by ensuring the following play spaces are provided both indoors and outdoors: - creative arts, dramatic play, provocation area, projects / units of inquiry, construction, language/literacy, food preparation areas, physical activity.

Scope:

Each child has a primary educator, who develops a secure relationship of mutual trust and respect with that child and works with other members of the team to ensure a positive experience for the child and their family.

This policy applies to all educators at Yarrunga Early Learning Centre. Excerpts of the policy are provided to parents in the Parent Information Handbook which families receive on enrolment.

Relevant legislation:

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653) (Part 4.1, Clause 73 – 76) Accessed from <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653>

Location of Information:

This information is available to families on request or on Yarrunga’s web page and is included within the Staff Handbook.

Reference sources:

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a of 2010 Accessed from <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2010-104a>

Australian Government Department of Education [AGDE] (2022). Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.0). Australian Government Department of Education for the Ministerial Council. Accessed from

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf>

Early Childhood Australia. 2016. *ECA Code of Ethics* - Early Childhood Australia. Accessed from <https://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>

NCAC Quality Practices Guide (2005), Red Nose Australia https://rednose.com.au/accessed 12/3/18. Clothing & Comfort Policy.

Strategies:

Written Program and Child Progress Reports (Individual records)

Yarrunga acknowledges the relationship between our Philosophy, the ‘Centre’s Long-Term Goals Procedure’ that have been based on The Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being & Becoming and the NQS - Quality Area 1 Educational program and practice.

**Confidentiality** will be strictly monitored. Children and families will be identified by first names only.

Educators/staff will not disclose information to persons not involved in the normal care of children. Information will only be disclosed or discussed on a ‘need to know’ basis. (Privacy & Confidentiality Policy)

Each child’s learning and development is assessed as part of the ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation of learning experiences and reflection. Critical reflection will drive planning and implementation for both individual and group learning. (NQS p.97)

Children’s progress records are stored on the NAS where relevant Educators within the Centre can access when children move to another group. These records are the property of the Centre and are available to families on request. Records will always be stored securely and are confidential.

Educators take individual observations and maintain individual records for each child in care. Other relevant information from parents/guardian (Background Information Procedure) and outside professionals/specialists will be documented.

Records for each child will reflect all development areas of the child.

Educators will actively engage families and children in planning for children’s learning and development while ensuring that the curriculum is based on the interests and needs of the child.

If educators are concerned about a child’s development they may, in consultation with the Director and the child’s family, contact the Inclusion Support Facilitator with KU Inclusion Support Agency.

Individual records, parent input, curriculum reflections and staff discussion form the basis of programming for the individual child and the group as a whole.

Parents are able to access information on their children upon request. Educators welcome the opportunity to discuss individual children with their parents, Parent/ Educator meetings are offered twice a year in order to set individual goals for children’s learning. Educators are available throughout the year for meetings if the need arises or if requested by parents.

Educators will create and maintain a safe and healthy setting that enhances children’s autonomy, initiative, and self-worth, whilst respecting their dignity.

Educators and children will discuss and set limits for their rooms annually or as required. These limits are displayed in the rooms.

Based on the Centre’s Philosophy, curriculums will be inclusive, diverse, holistic and encompass all areas of child development.

Educators will ensure the programs are based on the current recognised best theoretical and practical knowledge about Early Childhood education and care, as well as on particular knowledge of each child’s development.

Yarrunga views parental input as vital to the planning cycle. Educators welcome and encourage parent’s suggestions and involvement into the curriculum.

Individual and group programs are available in each room including individual learning journals, floor books and room displays.

The educational programs offer children a flexible range of activities, materials, and resources, provided in both indoor and outdoor environments.

A balance of experiences will be provided to reflect each child's developmental level: quiet/active play, solitary play and small/whole group experiences.

Assessment and planning cycle, Room Goals and the Centre Long Term Goals for each child/group of children will be incorporated into the program and reviewed regularly.

Educators respect the rights of each child and will engage only in practices that are respectful of and provide security for children and in no way degrade, endanger, exploit, intimidate or harm them psychologically or physically.

**Educational Leader**

The Educational Leader will model professional and ethical practice while promoting the use of the Early Childhood Australia’s Code of Ethics as a guide for pedagogical decisions. The Educational Leader will lead the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle by: -

1. Supporting all educators to clearly articulate their learning and teaching intentions through documenting plans and evaluations of learning experiences.
2. Facilitating other’s learning through professional conversations, sharing resources and coaching.
3. Mentoring others and acting as an advocate for children in our community context and their transitions in learning and quality care.

**Programming Implementation**

The Early Years Learning Framework and our Centre Philosophy guides educators in developing an educational program and practices that support their beliefs and values about children’s learning.

Room Educators will be provided with a scheduled block of programming time each week. Additional time may be allocated if an educator is programming for a child with additional needs.

The input of all educators, including float staff, into the development of the overall program will be valued.

Educators will critically reflect in detail on all aspects of the program, their professional practice and children’s learning and development.

Yarrunga will allocate one child free day at commencement of each year for educators to attend Professional Development and set up rooms and one day at the end of the year to pack up and clean rooms.

Educators use a variety of teaching strategies as per Teaching Strategies for Young Children Procedure’ whilst interacting with children and in program implementation.

Each child’s learning and development is assessed or developed as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentations, planning, implementation of learning experiences and reflection.

Educators will actively support children to learn hygiene practices such as dental care, ear care, handwashing and cough and sneeze etiquette.

**Daily Routine**

Educators will be responsible for daily routines which reflect the developmental requirements of each group and include opportunities for simultaneous indoor/outdoor play where possible.

The daily schedule provides predictably to assist children to feel safe, secure and confident to explore and learn. As well as allowing flexibility, catering for the individual, weather and other environmental factors.

The schedule will be displayed in a prominent position in each room.

**Nappy Changing and Toilet Learning Routine**

The Centre adopts practices for toileting and nappy changing that are consistent with current advice from recognised health authorities. It is important that educators show sensitivity in nappy changing to ensure the comfort of the child being changed. Educators must endeavour to make nappy changing and toileting a pleasant and hygienic experience.

Children’s independence will be encouraged and supported in hand washing and dressing. Educators will encourage and assist children’s emerging skills during these times.

Educators will respect children’s autonomy and requests to use/attempt toileting to encourage independence and confidence.

Educators will monitor each other’s nappy changing and hand washing practices using the relevant procedures.

**Mealtimes Routine**

Educators will maintain a relaxed and pleasant meal/bottle time. Educators will sit, as role models, with children during mealtime and may eat a small portion of food with their group (if enough left over), while encouraging good eating habits and assisting where necessary.

Educators/staff will interact and communicate with children and encourage child to child interactions throughout the meal.

Children will be given the opportunity to self-serve a small portion of each main meal and more as requested unless during times of infectious outbreaks.

Educators will ensure children do not share cutlery or eat food handled by another child or that has dropped on the floor.

Educators will encourage age-appropriate social behaviour at mealtimes.

Each child is encouraged to be independent throughout mealtime. Self-help skills in serving and scraping of bowls, washing bowls where applicable, wiping their faces and hands will be encouraged.

Drinks (milk or water) are served with meals and at morning and afternoon teas.

Water is always available.

Dental hygiene will be encouraged at the end of the lunchtime meal. Children will be encouraged to have a drink of water. (Dental Care and Oral Health)

Food will not be withheld as a form of punishment.

Children's snacks will be prepared by staff with children's participation when appropriate.

Mealtimes will generally be between the following hours:

Morning tea 9.00am – 10.00am

Lunch 11.00am – 12.30pm

Afternoon Tea 2.00pm - 3.00pm.

Late afternoon snack 5.00pm

Mealtimes may be altered to accommodate a child’s individual routine and children are able to eat meals outside of routine times.

Eating areas and furniture will be arranged in a safe and attractive manner.

**Transitions**

The Centre recognises the need to move smoothly from one experience to another. Children need to feel secure, confident and connected to people, places, events, routines and understandings when they move into new environments.

We will conduct a smooth, unregimented transition between experiences and routines. Transitions are integrated into the program as learning opportunities.

Children will be given adequate warning of changes in schedule.

Simultaneous indoor/outdoor play is provided at different times throughout the day where possible.

Independence is encouraged according to the developmental level of each child.

When orientating into a new room at Yarrunga, children will regularly visit the next room for short periods of time to encourage a stress-free transition. (Moving to New Room Procedure). Educators will discuss with families the transition process prior to commencement.

Educators from each room will discuss an orientation process and share information regarding each child’s needs and interests.

**Transition to School**

Yarrunga recognises the need for a smooth transition from our Pre-school setting, to a school setting. We aim to use a combination of approaches and processes, including a Transition to School Plan to support the family and their children to:

* feel happy to be going to school
* feel confident about being there
* have trust in adults at the school
* make a positive start to their school experience in order to influence their future success at school.

The Transition to School Plan will include a range of aspects, including the child’s readiness for school as well as their orientation to school.

Educators will pre-plan transition visits and excursions with a number of local primary schools. Orientations are also arranged by schools, with families taking their children for a number of visits in fourth term.

Readiness is about the child making connections between what is familiar and what is new. It helps with their emotional regulation and resilience. It also involves the child being able to effectively engage in positive interactions and develop relationships with other children and significant adults such as Yarrunga educators and ultimately, school teachers.

Educators will assist children to develop the necessary skills in order to:

* feel confident in themselves as a learner; and
* adapt to a different learning context/s.

When possible, children will be encouraged to visit their proposed school to familiarise themselves with the school environment, such as learning where the toilets are, where the bubblers are and how to drink from them, where Out Of School Hours (OOSH) is located (if applicable), and where to put bags and hats when going inside. Yarrunga will facilitate this were possible during planned excursions and transition visits.

Educators will support and advise families about their child’s readiness for school, but ultimately respect the decision made by parents, while acknowledging the NSW Department of Education and Training’s policy that **“children must turn five by July 31 in the year they start Kindergarten. All children in NSW must start school by their sixth birthday.”**

Teachers and students from local schools are encouraged to visit Yarrunga.

**Additional Needs**

Educators will provide an inclusive curriculum where children of all abilities are able to participate in the program by building on existing program strengths. (Refer to Inclusion, Diversity & Anti-Bias Policy)

Children with identified additional needs will be supported to participate in the relevant room program. Professional Development and resources will be sourced to assist with inclusion.

The child’s primary educator, Additional assistant (when allocated) and family will discuss programming requirements and strategies identified for the child with additional needs. When required, the KU Inclusion Support Facilitator and other support professionals will be consulted. Access to Inclusion and Support assistance is facilitated through NDIS.

Children with additional needs and their families will be supported by educators in their transitions to school or to specialist services.