



1.1 Educational Program and Practice Policy

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Legislative Requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

Who Is Affected By This Policy?

Children
Families
Staff
Practicum students

Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics:	I, II, III-5, III-6, IV-1, IV-2, IV-6, VII-1 VII-2
Early Years Learning Framework:	Outcomes 1–5, Principles – 1-5
Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations:	73-76, 103-105, 156(1), 115, 107, 108
National Quality Framework:	Quality areas – 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 3.1.1, 3.2.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3

Sources/References

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

Early Years Learning Framework, Belonging, Being and Becoming, Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments, 2009.

National Quality Framework, Australians Children's Education and Care Quality Authority 2017

Murray-Thomas, R. (2005). (6th Ed.), *Comparing theories of child development*. Belmont CA: Thomas Wadsworth

Siegler, R. & Alibali, M. (2004). *Children's thinking* (4th Ed.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall

Rogers, S. (Ed.), (2011). *Rethinking play & pedagogy in early child education: concepts, contexts & cultures*. New York NY: Routledge

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Aims

At Cootamundra Preschool, we are committed to giving children the very best start in order for them to live fulfilling and successful lives. We ensure that the development and educational needs of children attending the preschool will be met through our program planning cycle. Each child's learning and development is a part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation. We are critically reflective and research children's learning and development, both as individuals and groups, and this information is regularly used to implement the program.

The Cootamundra Preschools program, including the routines, are organised to maximise learning and each individual is supported to participate in the program. Educators ensure programming decisions contribute to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners, effectiveness as communicators, by ensuring each child's knowledge, ideas culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program. We document each child's progress and actively share it with families.

Educational Leader

The Cootamundra Preschool appoints a suitable qualified and experienced individual to work along side the director and provide educators direction on the program and to ensure children progress towards the outcomes of the approved learning framework. Parents and educators can seek support from the educational leader if they have any queries, concerns or suggestions relating to the services program. The educational leader will also provide feedback to educators and parents on their contributions, with a view to furthering their skills and knowledge.

The current Educational Leader is displayed in the front main entrance.

Program Framework

The Cootamundra Preschool is committed to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF is Australia's national framework and aims to ensure that all Australian children attending care and education services are provided with high quality programs in the crucial first years of life. The framework endorses the delivery of rich and relevant programs and recognize the importance of play based learning. Children have the right to be involved in their learning, effective learning environments, reflective educators and collaborative relationships between peers, families, educators and community. The EYLF describes childhood as a time of Belonging, Being and Becoming.

Through our commitment to the Early Years Learning Framework, we will ensure that:

- Each child's learning is based on their interests and strengths and guided by our educators
- Educators work in collaboration with families to provide relevant learning experiences for each child, based on their needs, interest, and family experiences, and to generate ideas for the program.
- Every child is equally valued and their achievement and learning celebrated.
- Educators observe and record the strengths and learning of each child.

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- The program is based on the children's interests, educators' extension of children's interests and learning, spontaneous experiences and family input.
- Where appropriate, the service liaises with external agencies and support persons to best educate and care for children with additional needs.
- The program is reflected upon by educators.

Educators provide programs and assess children's learning and development in relation to the 5 learning outcomes.

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

Please see Cootamundra Preschool's Cycle of Planning.

The Program

The Cootamundra Preschool's program encompasses everything we do at the Preschool, and where, how and why we do it. It is the thoughtfully set up and well resourced learning environments we create, the warm genuine interactions we have, the way we arrange and use our routines, events both planned and spontaneous- everything; learning is everywhere!

Our educators promote children's learning through:

- Relationships
- Play
- Environments
- Learning experiences and teaching strategies

We believe that the best program acknowledges that children learn best when engaged in hands on, challenging, meaningful, authentic experiences based on their strengths and interests, when they are given autonomy, and allowed to lead their on learning in co-constructive relationships with their educators.

Children need to be given time to engage in deep learning, facilitated by caring, skilled, and knowledgeable adults, who recognize when they can value-add and when they should stand back and allow children to discover for themselves.

It is our responsibility to know our children very well, know about play and development, listen to what children say, acknowledge their thinking, and facilitate their play.

Please see the Cootamundra Preschool Philosophy Statement.

Learning Through Play

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) defines play as "a context for learning through which children organize and make sense of their social worlds, as they actively engage actively with people, objects and representations.

At Cootamundra Preschool we are passionate about children's rights to play and it's vital role in their learning, development and wellbeing. We facilitate calculated risk-taking in play, offering thrilling opportunities for challenge,

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testing limits and exploring boundaries. We support play that is child-initiated and child-led. At Preschool we promote, engage in, and prioritise children's play in order to support children to grow into life-long lovers of learning.

Physical Activity

Cootamundra Preschool is committed to implementing the physically active message that supports the National Physical Activity Recommendations for children 3-5 years, which are:

- Preschooler (3-5 Years) should be physically active everyday for at least 3 hours, spread throughout the day. For preschoolers at least 60 minutes should be energetic play.
- Preschoolers should not be restrained or kept inactive for more than one hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping.

The indoor and outdoor (including the natural) environment and equipment are seen as being critically important elements in successful program planning and practice. The outdoor play area also exists as testimony to the recognition that physical activity and gross motor play are very important for preschoolers. Therefore great care is taken in the purchase and arrangement of these play environments and maintenance of equipment.

Cootamundra Preschool seeks to promote children's activity by supporting the development of their gross motor skills and fostering the emergence of their fundamental movement skills through a range of intentionally planned and spontaneous active play learning experience. Further we recognise the importance of supporting families to promote children's physical activity through positive, respectful and reciprocal relationships.

Educators actively role model appropriate physical activity behaviours. Staff will also ensure all physical activity is a fun experience for everyone to participate and not for competition.

Small Screen Time Recreation

The Staff will use technology and foster technological learning in children selectively and as is developmentally appropriate. Because screen viewing is an extremely passive activity, it would not be appropriate to use this as a predominant or ongoing activity due to the fact that preschoolers frequently need to be physically active. 'Technology' here refers to computer use, use of white boards, DVDs, television, ipad etc.

Cootamundra Preschool is committed to implementing the key messages about electronic media that support the National Physical Activity recommendations for children 3-5 years, such as:

- Screen time should be no longer than 1 hour in total throughout a 24hr period
- Educators model appropriate small screen behaviours to the children
- Small screen recreation should not be used for rewards or to manage challenging behaviours for any reason

Pedagogical Documentation

Pedagogical documentation can be defined as "a process of gathering artefacts, conversations, ideas, and displaying children's learning, energy and theories." It involves both the act of documenting and the analysis and reflection upon that documentation to inform our practice and beliefs. Educators think deeply - drawing from their knowledge of the child, and early childhood development, theories and research - and attempt to reveal what learning is occurring, what

theories are being formed and how we can best support progress. The collaboration between educators, children and families enriches this process and presents a fuller picture of the child, group, environment, curriculum choice or content.

Documentation as “Visible Listening”

Children are constantly creating and fine-tuning their own theories about our world and their place within it - “Who do I belong with?” “What will happen if I...?” “Why is that like that...?” It is through this process that they develop their identities, ways of knowing and learning, and their connections and relationships with others. Through documentation, we can track and support the evolution of these theories. Carla Rinaldi, a founding member of the Reggio Emilia approach to Early Childhood Care and Education, describes pedagogical documentation as “visible listening.” This “listening” involves gathering evidence of children’s and educator’s thinking (e.g. conversations, observations, creations, choices, beliefs, artworks and other artefacts,) to reflect upon, and inform the development of a rich curriculum and guide pedagogical practice. Our educators listen with open ears and minds, welcoming different perspectives and ways of knowing and viewing documentation as a vital part of the learning process for children and adults alike.

In relation to pedagogical documentation at Preschool, we:

- Use documentation to capture, celebrate, assess and promote children’s learning and development individually and within a group context.
- Engage with theorists and current research to guide, enhance and support our documentation and pedagogical practice.
- Can identify and support children who may require additional support.
- Use documentation as a tool for technical, practical and critical reflection
- Document ethically and always to advocate for children’s rights. To reveal to the greater public a view of children as capable and intelligent, and promote the importance of investing energy into early childhood care and education.
- Gather information in many ways and are mindful of ensuring that the documentation process does not impede children’s experiences, for example, when taking photos or asking questions, we avoid interrupting children’s work.

The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.