



Educational Programs Policy

Policy Number: 8
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Rationale and Policy Considerations

"A supportive active learning environment encourages all children's engagement in learning Active involvement and engagement in learning builds children's understandings of concepts and the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning." (Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia page 50)

The Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012, and Standard 1.1 of the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care requires that a program is delivered to all children being educated and cared for by the service that:

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

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require that the education program contributes to the following outcomes for children:

- a. the child will have a strong sense of identity;
- b. the child will be connected with and contribute to his or her world;
- c. the child will have a strong sense of wellbeing;
- d. the child will be a confident and involved learner;
- e. the child will be an effective communicator

It is also required that relevant information about the program and their child's participation in the program is shared with parents, and that the program is planned, documented and evaluated.

Most relevant policies and procedures

- Interactions with Children
- Partnerships and Communication with Families
- Supervision
- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Community Involvement
- Guiding Children's Behaviour
- Sun Protection

Scope

This policy is written for children, families, educators and visitors of Lifestreamers Early Learning.

Policy Statement

- The service will provide an educational program that is based on the approved learning framework and meets the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child attending the service. Educators will draw on their professional knowledge and their in-depth knowledge of each child to choose

appropriate teaching strategies and design a learning and leisure environment that will engage children in active learning.

- Educators will work in partnership with children, families and other professionals to:
 - Plan effectively for children's learning and wellbeing
 - Communicate with families about children's development and wellbeing
 - Evaluate children's progress towards achieving intended outcomes
 - Identify children who may need additional support.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the education and care environment and the experiences offered, and the approaches taken by educators to achieve the best learning and developmental outcomes for each child.
 - Reflect on their own professional practice, and relationships with children and families and use this knowledge to improve the effectiveness of the program and teaching strategies.
- The service's Interactions with Children Policy underpins the manner in which educators interact with children whenever they are at the education and care service.

Policy Principles

- The nominated supervisor and early childhood teacher/educators will be responsible for the development of an educational program that is based on the relevant approved learning framework, is developmentally appropriate to the needs of children attending the service and reflects the philosophy of the service.
- Educators will be provided with opportunities to further their professional development and skills in childhood pedagogy and education and care practices.
- Educators continually reflect on children's experiences, thinking and learning and document their observations and assessments using a variety of methods that may include: diary notes of children's comments and conversations, examples of children's work, photographs of children's participation and spontaneous play, noting changes that may be needed in the environment, discussing alternative teaching strategies with their colleagues.

Planning Programs

- Educational programs will be balanced and varied (i.e. 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), and be flexible enough to allow for spontaneity and the unexpected.
- Educators provide individual holistic programs that are responsive to children's lives, interests and learning styles and 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, 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 individualize programs for children.
- Programs are planned with children's involvement. Educators involve children through the following strategies:
 - seeking information about children's interests, valuing children's contributions and ideas and letting the child know they are appreciated;
 - observing children's responses to the environment and other people in order to gain an understanding of their interests, likes and dislikes;
 - 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 choices;
 - one to one discussions with children during which educators ask them what they like to do and what they think about their experiences;
 - observing group interests and interactions;
- Lifestreamers Early Learning will provide a variety of resources 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.

- 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. There will always be alternatives when a child does not wish to participate in a particular activity, or chooses to initiate their own experiences and play.
- 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 strength, fitness levels and coordination through physically challenging activities;
 - learn about taking safe risks by raising their consciousness of risks and the consequences of particular actions or choices.
- Educators will ensure the supervision of children is in accordance with Supervision Policy, is appropriate to the child's stage of development and protects their safety and wellbeing at all times. Educators will join in the children's play, appreciate their attempts to acquire new skills, and encourage them to try new experiences. Children will be regularly reminded of safety procedures for play equipment.
- Educators 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.
- Programs are flexible and will be adjusted to respond to spontaneous play, children's interests, changes in the weather, visitors to the service etc.
- Educators monitor noise levels in the environment and adjust activities with children to ensure noise levels are appropriate and do not interfere with purposeful play or activity.

Child Assessments

- All educators will be responsible for working co-operatively to monitor the individual development of each child within their care, and for evaluating programs in relation to the approved learning framework, the service's stated philosophy and individual children's learning and development.
- Records of child assessments for the delivery of the education program will be kept for 3 years in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, and may be accessed by the child's family at any time.
- The records developed for individual preschool age children will incorporate observations of stages of development, children's interests, learning and play experiences, relationships with children and educators, strengths and abilities, child's progress against the outcomes of the education program and recommendations for program planning.

Daily Routines

- Routines will be built around the regular events of the day i.e. arrival, snacks/drinks, toileting/nappy change, main meals, washing, dressing, sleeping and departure, and will take into account the developmental needs of individual children, children's attendance patterns, climate and physical environment, the numbers and ages of children within a given group, children with special needs, new children entering the group and family expectations.
- Flexibility is built into routines so that children's involvement in activities and any special needs are accommodated.

Electronic Media

- Educational videos will not be a regular part of the children's education and will only take place when a specific program enhances a particular learning or social experience for children.
- Programs will be carefully vetted and chosen in accordance with the following criteria:
 - the program was made specifically for children within the relevant age range;
 - the program seeks to actively involve children;
 - the program enhances children's understanding and experience or encourages imaginative play;
 - the characters in the program treat each other with respect; and
 - the program does not include violence or scary images that are likely to disturb children.

- Educators will always view programs with the children and:
 - invite children to ask questions, describe their feelings and make sense of what they have viewed;
 - talk about the program, discuss activities, characters, stories, themes, likes and dislikes;
 - encourage the extension of any programs viewed by including suitable activities in future programs;
 - ensure a program is turned off if for any reason it is deemed inappropriate for young children.
- All websites and online content should be previewed by educators to verify their content, minimising the risk for children to view or engage with inappropriate images or videos. When using online content, the site should be accessed and ads played before allowing children to view the desired content.
- Screen viewing will be limited to a maximum 5 minutes per session.
- Screen viewing will not be planned for children under 2.5 years of age
- Children will always be encouraged to participate in active play after sitting and watching a screen

Collaborative Partnerships with Families

- During the enrolment process families will be asked to complete information sheets about their child's abilities and behaviours, to assist educators to assess the child's current developmental level, and establish suitable routines for the child.
- Educators will initiate and facilitate regular on-going communication with families concerning their child's participation. Families are informed promptly and sensitively of any issues or concerns in regard to their child. Recorded information will be available for discussion.
- Programs will be displayed in each indoor play area and in a position where families are able to see them and can discuss any aspect of the program with educators. The program will also be shared on the Playground Xplor app.
- Families will be encouraged to have input into program development especially in relation to their own child's participation, and in sharing aspects of their culture, skills and interesting experiences. The extent to which families wish to be involved will be respected.
- Programs will reflect the cultural diversity of all families using the service. The service will celebrate special events with the children that reflect the cultural heritage and ethnic origins of the children.
- Educators will work together with families to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of learning experiences for children.
- The service will include permissions in the enrolment form regarding individual children's access to electronic media and the service's current policy. Educators are always ready to discuss any particular concerns a family may have in regard to their child watching or using electronic media at the service.

Related Legislation and Documents

- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.
- The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care
- The Early Years Learning Framework

Document History

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Educational Programs Policy	12/2013
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