

Quality Area 1

Educational Program and Practice Policy

The Australian Early Years Learning Framework guides educators in developing quality, early childhood education programs. The framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years, as well as their transition to school.

Ooranga educators are informed by the Australian Early Years Learning Framework along with the Education and Care Services National Regulations to ensure the playgroup and preschool services they deliver enhance learning and development of all children.

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Responsibilities

This policy is to be implemented by all Ooranga educators.

Inclusion

Inclusion of all children and families is a core value of the organisation. Ooranga programs and practices aspire to encourage equality irrespective of gender, race, culture and ability. Children are not treated any different from each other according to their gender or background and we strive to develop programs that enable children of all abilities to continue to grow and develop in a safe and secure environment.

Educators will enable children with a developmental delay or diagnosed disability to participate fully in the preschool activities, through modification of activities or the environment. This may include collaboration with allied health professionals, purchase of specific resources or employment of additional staff.

Child Development and Interests

Preschool educators use a number of sources of information to inform curriculum development. Information provided by families through the preschool enrolment form and direct communication with educators is supplemented by educator observations of children whilst at preschool. Children, families and the community are encouraged to be actively involved in program decision making. These records are used to plan activities within the centre and are evaluated at the end of each week. These evaluations contribute to the ongoing program. Observations of individual children are compiled with work samples and photographs which are presented to children at the end of the preschool year.

Program Considerations

Ooranga Playgroups, for children aged from birth to 6 years, are operated at a different venue each week day over a fortnightly period across three local government areas in northern NSW during school terms. The fortnightly playgroup program incorporates activities to stimulate all areas of child development; cognitive, gross and fine motor, social and emotional.

Ooranga Preschools are operated for two days each week, in seven different locations, for children aged between 3 and 5 years. The preschools operate for 6 hours, usually from 9am to 3pm and follows NSW school terms. Each venue is located in a unique rural community and as a result, enrolment numbers at each venue vary each year.

The weekly program is available at each preschool venue for parents to read. Parent feedback and suggestions are encouraged. The preschool weekly program is developed in line with the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standard. The following streams of information are also incorporated;

- Individual children - Individual interests, strengths, aspirations and goals are identified for each child. These are created in consultation with children, families and educators. Individual children are observed, assessed against learning outcomes, and further extended as part of an ongoing cycle.
- Critical Reflection- a weekly critical reflection and program evaluation is completed by the team at each service. This process informs future planning and educational practice.
- Partnerships with families- Educators strive to actively engage families in program decision making.
- Professional Practice- Educators implement the weekly program through a planned and reflective approach. Professional collaboration within the team contributes to deliberate and purposeful program implementation.

Play based learning

Play is a form of natural enquiry that facilitates all areas of child development. Play is the child's "work". Children learn to solve problems, anticipate difficulties, plan ahead, communicate with others, negotiate differences and ask for guidance and help when necessary. Play is a complex, dynamic and multi-faceted approach to learning that occurs in all spaces of the preschool and beyond.

Children will be given opportunities to engage deeply, in sustained periods of child-led play. During these times educators will be responsive to the needs, goals and learning dispositions to enhance each child's learning. Educators will observe, respect and facilitate teachable moments as they occur.

Environment

The experience of enjoying and caring for the environment helps children build an appreciation of the natural world and fosters a healthy outlook on the impact of the wider community.

Flexible Daily Routine

We provide a variety of general activities that adhere to a flexible daily routine. Children feel very secure when they know what is happening next in the day. Each service will develop a flexible routine that is responsive to the seasons. This flexible routine will be displayed within the setting for viewing. The

routine will vary according to the season to accommodate outdoor and indoor play, consider weather elements and the needs of the children present.

Sleep and Rest

Children have different sleep, rest and relaxation needs. Children of the same age can have different sleep patterns and each child's comfort must be provided for. Educators will ensure that there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs. Educators will ensure that children who do not wish to sleep are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences, while those children who do wish to sleep are allowed to do so, without being disrupted. If a child requests a rest, or if they are showing clear signs of tiredness, regardless of the time of day, a comfortable, safe area will be available for them to rest.

Set-Up and Pack-Up

Ooranga provides educators with 30 minutes each morning, prior to the children's arrival for setting up and completing a safety check of the venue.

Each afternoon, Ooranga provides educators with 30 minutes to ensure they have fulfilled their cleaning, paperwork and team meeting obligations.

Transition to School

The transition from preschool to primary school is a period of change for a child and their family. The relationship between the preschool, primary school and family are important to make the school transition as smooth as possible. Ooranga supports continuity of learning and transition by sharing information and engaging with strategies that support children and families.

Ooranga educators will liaise with local schools to support a smooth transition to school for individual children. Educators will work in collaboration with schools and families to support the individual strengths and needs of each child to assist children to experience a positive transition between school environments. This will include talking positively about moving on to primary school with the children and families. Ooranga educators will seek additional support for children and families if required through the NSW Department of Education Early Intervention Itinerant Support Program.

Related Documents

Other relevant policy documents; Children's Health and Safety Policy, Relationships with Children Policy, Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Policy.

Relevant procedures; Documentation.

Ooranga Preschool Philosophy

Ooranga Mission Statement/Philosophy

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2009), *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

Regulatory References: Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2019 and Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, including termination of employment or cancellation of Ooranga membership.