

Educational Program and Practice



Policy Objective

To ensure that all educational programs and practices in place at Hawthorn Child Care Centre meet the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations; are based in *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*; and are representative of each child's individual development, knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests.

Implementation

Regulatory Requirements

Hawthorn Child Care Centre delivers educational programs and practices in line with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The Centre will ensure that an educational program is delivered to all children being educated and cared for by the service that:

- is based on an approved learning framework
- is delivered in accordance with that approved learning framework
- is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child
- is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child.

The Regulations require the Centre develops an educational program which contributes to the following outcomes for each child:

- 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 wellbeing
- The child will be a confident and involved learner
- The child will be an effective communicator

The regulations require the documentation of:

- Assessments of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program
- Assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program.

Documentation must consider:

- The period of time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service
- How the documentation will be used by the educators at the service

Documentation must be prepared in a way that is readily understandable by the educators at the service and the family of the child.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require that information about the contents and operation of the educational program for the service must be displayed at the education and care service premises at a place accessible to parents of children being educated and cared for by the service. A copy of the educational program must be available at the education and care service premises for inspection on request.

The family of a child being educated and cared for by the service must be provided with the following information on request:

- Information about the content and operation of the educational program so far as it relates to that child
- Information about the child's participation in the program
- Copies of the child's documentation

Children's documentation will be kept until the end of three years after the child's last attendance at the service.

The Early Years Learning Framework

In line with the National Law and National Regulations, Hawthorn Child Care Centre is committed to the Early Years Learning Framework. The Early Years Learning Framework guides:

- The development of programs that promote children's learning and development
- The pedagogical practices of educators
- A planned and reflective approach to assessment and planning for each child.

The Framework includes principles, practices and learning outcomes that guide educational leaders and educators in their curriculum decision-making, and assist them in planning, delivering and evaluating quality programs.

A learning outcome is a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in collaboration with children and families. The Early Years Learning Framework promotes five learning outcomes that are designed to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of all children. These are:

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

Hawthorn Child Care Centre uses the Early Years Learning Framework, its principles, its practices, and its outcomes to underpin everyday practice. Centre educators are required to ensure that the educational programs they develop and deliver are based on the Early Years Learning Framework and are delivered in accordance with that framework.

Educational Program and Practice and the Hawthorn Child Care Centre Philosophy

The Hawthorn Child Care Centre philosophy is a critical document in the development of the Centre's educational programs and practices. The philosophy outlines our commitment to the development and implementation of educational programs and practices which:

- Are guided by professional documentation including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the National Quality Framework; and the Early Years Learning Framework
- Recognise, respect, and support the rights of all children in our Centre
- Encourage children to be an active part of our curriculum planning process
- Support and promote the holistic development of each child in our Centre
- Draw on a wide range of theoretical, child, family, and community perspectives
- Give children the opportunity and respect to learn and develop based on their individual developmental needs, interests and experiences, whilst also being supported to succeed and develop within a wider learning community
- Acknowledge and respect the knowledge, wisdom, and relationship each family has with their child.
- Work in partnerships with families to ensure that educators and families work collaboratively towards the best outcomes for each child

The Educational Program

Educational programs are developed using the Early Years Framework and all its elements; educator's personal pedagogies; the Centre philosophy; the National Regulations; the National Quality Standards; current knowledge and theories of child development; and our knowledge of, and interactions with, children, families, and our Centre and wider community. Our knowledge of, and interactions with, children, families, and our Centre and wider community allow the development of educational programs which are relevant to each child, respectful of their background, and recognise and build on their current strengths, abilities and interests.

Educational programs are an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection. Educators collect information on each child, analyse what that information tells them about how to support the child's learning further, document, plan experiences to incorporate into the program, implement the program and then reflect on what has been learned.

Collecting Information

Information is collected on children through a variety of methods including but not limited to formal and informal observations; photos; videos; professional conversations between educators; conversations with children; conversations with families; and previous educational programs.

Hawthorn Child Care Centre collects information on all children while also utilizing an observation cycle which focuses on a group of children according to the observational cycle in place in each room.

Analysing Learning

Educators use their knowledge of children, their family, and their community in conjunction with the Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes, the information collected on children, and current knowledge and theories of child development to determine how to support and develop the children's learning further.

Documentation

Educators at Hawthorn Child Care Centre share documentation about children's learning and development in ways that are accessible, understandable and meaningful for our families. This includes but is not limited to: the posting of individual observations on the SeeSaw app; group learning stories posted on the SeeSaw app; photos and videos posted on the SeeSaw app; daily newsletters posted on the SeeSaw app; the

collection of children's artwork in portfolios; and communication with families in both written (such as email) and verbal form.

Educators are required to ensure each child receives the following documentation as a minimum:

- 1 piece of artwork per month OR photos of the child at play and engaged in learning
- Children who attend care 4 – 5 days per week – 1 individual observation per month
- Children who attend care 2 -3 day per week – 1 individual observation every two months
- Children who attend care 1 day per week – 1 individual observation every three months

Children who attend ½ days and before/after kindy care only do not to receive formal written observations

Planning the Program

A written educational program is created which reflects the experiences planned to support and develop children's learning and meet the identified Learning Outcomes. Planning ensures that the educational program and practice responds to children's strengths, abilities and interests, and scaffolds and extends their learning. It ensures that educators' practice is intentional and supports children to progress towards the learning outcomes. As programs are created to reflect each child's current strengths, abilities, and interests, each program will be developmentally appropriate and inclusive of all children and families. Programs will provide for inside and outside play, individual and group activities, and allow for long periods of uninterrupted play.

Hawthorn Child Care Centre utilizes a model of emergent programming, which allows educators to plan for activities based on information collected on children while being responsive to children's changing interests and needs.

Hawthorn Child Care Centre recognises the importance of play-based learning and anchors our educational programs in play-based learning experiences. Play-based learning:

- Provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise, test theories and imagine
- Enables expressions of personality and uniqueness
- Promotes positive learning dispositions, such as curiosity and creativity
- Enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning
- Assists children to develop relationships and concepts
- Supports a sense of wellbeing and promotes a valuing of diversity

Hawthorn Child Care Centre also recognises the importance of routine and transitions as an opportunity of learning as well as their role in supporting children to feel safe and secure in the care environment. The learning which takes place during routine and transition periods will be reflected in the educational program as both planned and unplanned experiences.

Educators are supported to include the wider community in their program planning through incursions, and where possible, excursions.

Written educational programs are living documents that are added to as necessary to reflect the ever-changing needs and interests of children. All educators, children, and families are encouraged to contribute to the written educational program.

Implementation and Reflection

The educational program will be implemented and will document both the planned and unplanned, or 'spontaneous' experiences which take place across the span of the program. As the program progresses and evolves educators will monitor and document the learning which takes place, and critically reflect upon the program. The Early Years Learning Framework will guide educator's critical reflections.

The information about children gathered, analysed and interpreted will be:

- meaningful and relevant to children as individuals and in groups
- capture an understanding of their identity, knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture (including popular culture), abilities and interests
- descriptive of what children are investigating and exploring
- an authentic example of what children know, can do and understand
- focused on learning, progress and achievements

Working with Families

Hawthorn Child Care Centre seeks to work with families in all stages of the planning cycle. Educators seek information from families, using a variety of methods, to ensure that the information collected on children is accurate, and that the program which is implemented is representative of each child's knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests as well as the learning goals each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to contribute to the program in a number of different ways, including providing suggestions on experiences and activities; visiting the Centre to take part in the program; and providing feedback on the program.

Educational Program and Practice Responsibilities

Centre management, along with the Centre's Educational Leader, will ensure the following:

- That educational programs at Hawthorn Child Care Centre are based on an approved learning framework and are delivered in accordance with that framework
- That educational programs and practices are guided by the Hawthorn Child Care Centre philosophy
- That educational programs recognize the importance of interactions, routines and transitions as opportunities for learning
- That educational programs and practices are suitable for all children in our care, inclusive all abilities and developmental levels
- That educational programs and practices are inclusive of the child's voice, and support children to contribute their thoughts, ideas, knowledge, and interests
- That educational programs and practices view and support children as active participants and decision makers in the curriculum
- That educational programs and practices encourage and support the seeking and inclusion of families' thoughts, ideas, knowledge, and interests
- That the educational program and children's documentation is presented in a professional and timely manner
- That the educational programs are made available to families in a number of different ways, including on display in the room and on the SeeSaw app
- That team leaders and educators are provided with non-contact time each week

- Team Leaders are provided with 2 hours non-contact time each week. Additional planning time can be allocated upon request, pending availability
- Educators are provided with 45 minutes non-contact time each week
- That the Educational Leader is available to support educators in their development and implementation of the curriculum and cycle of planning, as well as provide opportunities and resources for knowledge building and critical reflection
- That children's documentation remains confidential to those outside of the child's family and educators and staff of Hawthorn Child Care Centre

Centre educators will ensure the following:

- That the educational programs are based on the approved learning framework and are delivered in accordance with that framework
- That the educational programs and practices are guided by the Hawthorn Child Care Centre philosophy
- That the educational program allows for the holistic development of all children, including but not limited to their emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development
- That all educational programs recognize the importance of interactions, routines and transitions as opportunities for learning
- That educational programs and practices are suitable for all children in our care, inclusive all abilities and developmental levels
- That educational programs and practices are inclusive of the child's voice, and support children to contribute their thoughts, ideas, knowledge, and interests
- That educational programs and practices view and support children as active participants and decision makers in the curriculum
- That educators work with families to encourage and support and inclusion of families' thoughts, ideas, knowledge, and interests in educational programs and practices
- That the educational programs are made available to families in a number of different ways, including on display in the room and on the SeeSaw app
- That educational programs and practices are developed based on educator's knowledge of each child so that the programs and practices are relevant to each child, respectful of their background, and recognise and build on their current strengths, abilities and interests
- That the Centre requirements for documentation are met for each child
- That all Centre educators contribute to the documentation of children's learning and development in line with the observational cycle put in place in each room.
- That documentation is professionally presented and made available to families in a timely manner
- That children's documentation remains confidential to those outside of the child's family and educators and staff of Hawthorn Child Care Centre

Changes to Existing Policy

The planning cycle image was removed. "National Law" was removed as part of the development of the educational program. Reference to monthly newsletters was removed. The documentation expectations were updated.

Regulations

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2019

National Quality Standards 1, 7

Sources

Child Care Centre Desktop

Department for Education and Child Development
Education and Care Services National Regulations
Guide to the National Quality Framework January 2020
The Early Years Learning Framework
Review Date: July 2020
Next Review Date: July 2021