

Early Learning

Educational Program and Practice Policy

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- Working in partnership with children and families
- supporting each child to strive for learning outcomes consistent with their needs and an approved learning framework;
- providing a high quality curriculum and pedagogical practice that is based on contemporary theory reflective practice, critical analysis and planning;
- providing an educational program where children are active agents in their learning can learn through play and are supported to make decisions, problem-solve and build positive relationships with others;
- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices;
- Recognising the value of and involving children and families in, the development and review of a collaborative educational program and practice
- developing programs that are accountable to children and families, organisation and funding and regulatory bodies;
- Communication that informs and invites participation by others in the Educational program and practice

Executive Summary

Children learn from birth and their interactions with the world around them will build the foundation for their lifelong journey of learning. Uniting Early Learning recognises children’s agency and views from birth and will provide educational programs that; are simultaneously nurturing and engaging, will enhance children’s learning and development, and are based on approved learning frameworks that support children to be confident and creative learners.

Program development will be in accordance with the Uniting mission, promise, values, foundation and guiding principles, service philosophy and compliant with relevant legislation and funding guidelines. Contemporary pedagogical theories and perspectives will guide educators to develop programs that support and extend children’s learning, development and wellbeing. Each child is recognised as a citizen, with the right to participate in decisions that affect them, which includes their learning. Their developmental strengths, challenges, interests, capabilities and participation will actively influence the creation of learning environments and programs.

Each service will implement a program planning cycle, built on the principles of continuous improvement, which will include a suite of documentation that demonstrates each child’s progress correlated to the learning outcomes of the educational program. Educators will collect evidence, analyse and use a professional inquiry approach to develop intentional teaching strategies, for both individuals and groups of children.

It is expected that educators, children, families, and other relevant professionals will work together in partnership, to co-construct and evaluate learning programs. Cultural and social contexts will be valued and included, to reflect the diversity of local communities. Regular communication between the service and parents will provide ongoing information about the content and implementation of the educational program, their child’s participation in the program and documentation relating to assessments or evaluations of their child.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY		
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer		Page 1 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0
Date Published	29/3/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022
			Policy No. 026

Current Environmental Context

The following current, approved learning frameworks are underpinned by practices and principles that encourage reflection and provide educators with a thorough understanding of the pedagogy of early childhood curriculum in a contemporary context.

- *Belonging, Being and Becoming* – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- *My Time, Our Place* – Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*

All educational programs delivered in a Uniting Early Learning service will contribute to the following learning outcomes for each and every child:

- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with, and contribute to his or her world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

A copy of the educational program will be displayed at the service and be accessible to all, including parents and is presented in a manner that children can make connections with.

The guiding principles of Uniting Early Learning (refer to *Attachment 26b*) services and the documented service philosophy is to underpin the educational program.

To support children to be curious and enthusiastic participants in their own learning, play, leisure and wellbeing experiences provided will be child focused and respectfully value and reflect children's thinking, ideas and interests.

Educators will include information from a wide range of sources to help them assess and plan effectively. The content of learning experiences and activities; will include; literacy, numeracy, science, engineering, the arts, the humanities, and technology. The physical environment plays a key role in the delivery of quality programs and is to be considered at all stages of planning. A variety of intentional teaching strategies are to be used to maximise children's learning opportunities and to make learning visible to all.

A pedagogical leader will be nominated to lead the development and implementation of the educational program at the service. This person will have suitable qualifications and experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the relevant approved learning framework, enabling them to guide other educators in planning and reflection, and to mentor colleagues in implementation practices (refer to *Attachment 26d*).

Attachment 26a: Responsibilities relating to the Education Program and Practice Policy

Attachment 26b: Uniting Early Learning Guiding Principles

Attachment 26c: Early Years Planning Cycle

Attachment 26d: Educational Leader Responsibilities

Attachment 26e: Educational Leader appointment criteria

Form 26.1: Educational Leader Acceptance-[Click here](#)

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY		
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 2 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	

Reference/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Uniting Child Safety Policy – Uniting adopts the Uniting Church Australia National Child Safety Policy Framework, 2019 and the principles of this Policy Framework

- *Code of Conduct* Policy
 - *Environmental Sustainability* Policy
 - *Inclusion, Diversity & Equity* Policy
 - *Interactions with Children* Policy
 - *Nutrition Oral Health and Active Play* Policy
 - *Participation of Volunteers and Students* Policy
 - *Sun Protection* Policy
 - *Supervision of Children* Policy
 - *Water Safety* Policy
 - *Assessment for Learning Tool*. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/earlyyears/ey-curriculum-resources/Pages/IntentionalTeaching.aspx>
 - *Belonging, Being & Becoming* – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: [click here](#)
 - Children’s Services amendment Act 2019
 - Children’s Services Regulations 2020
 - *Developing a Culture of Learning through Reflective Practice*. Information Sheet. National Quality Standard. Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (Oct 2016)
 - *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: s168
 - *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: 173, 74, 75, 76.
 - *Educators’ Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*: <http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
 - [National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice](#)
 - *Supporting Agency: Involving children in decision making*. Information Sheet. Quality Area 1 National Quality Standard. Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (Oct 2016)
 - [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Resources for Professionals](#):
 - *Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 5 2014*. Standard 5, 5.1, 5.2
- The Child Care Act 2001 (Tas)

This policy is shared with the whole service community with opportunities to provide feedback/input

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 29/03/2021

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by: 01/04/2022

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY		
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 3 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	

Attachment 26a: Responsibilities relating to the Education Program and Practice Policy

Approved Provider

- Ensure that the educational program is based on an approved learning framework.
- Designate a suitably qualified and experienced Educational Leader to direct the development and implementation of educational programs at the service.
- Ensure assessments of each child's learning and participation in the educational program are conducted and documented.
- Ensure that parents are consulted, can provide input into the program, and are provided with information about the content and implementation of the educational program, their child's participation in the program and documentation relating to assessments or evaluations of their child.
- Develop and evaluate the educational program in collaboration with the Responsible person, educators, children and families.

Responsible Person

- Maintain a current knowledge of contemporary practice which is reflected in the program.
- Ensure that the educational program is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework.
- Ensure that the service's philosophy guides educational program and practice.
- Ensure the educational program contributes to each child:
 - developing a strong sense of identity
 - being connected with, and contributing to, his or her world
 - having a strong sense of wellbeing
 - being a confident and involved learner
 - being an effective communicator.
- Ensure a copy of the educational program is displayed at the service and is accessible to parents and children.
- Ensure the developmental needs, strengths, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child are accommodated and documented in the educational program (refer to *Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Policy*).
- Ensure that each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation.
- Ensure that assessments of each child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program are documented.
- Ensure documentation is easy to understand and to make connections with.
- Ensure that parents are provided with information about the content and implementation of the educational program, their child's participation in the program and documentation relating to assessments or evaluations of their child.
- Develop and evaluate the educational program in collaboration with the Educational Leader, educators, children and families.
- Ensure there is a current record of learning and development for each child, and that it is updated and maintained on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure regular communication is established between the service and parents in relation to their child's learning and development.
- Ensure the staff record includes the name of the Educational Leader at the service.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY			
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 4 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	

Educators

- Maintain a current knowledge of contemporary practice which is reflected in the program.
- Implement an educational program that is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework.
- Consider and ensure the developmental capabilities, interests and experiences of each and every child are included in the educational program.
- Assess and document each child's capabilities, interests, experiences, participation and progress in relation to the educational program in a way that is easy to understand for parents.
- Develop and evaluate the educational program in collaboration with the Educational Leader, other educators, children and families.
- Make information available to parents about their child's participation in the educational program.
- Communicate regularly with parents in relation to their child's learning and development.

Parents

- Develop and evaluate the educational program in collaboration with the Responsible person, educators, and children
- Communicate regularly with the service in relation to their child's learning and development
- Provide input to the development of the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Responsible person, educators and children

Note: *Volunteers, contractors and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.*

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY		
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 5 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	

We are Uniting

Early childhood services

Guiding principles

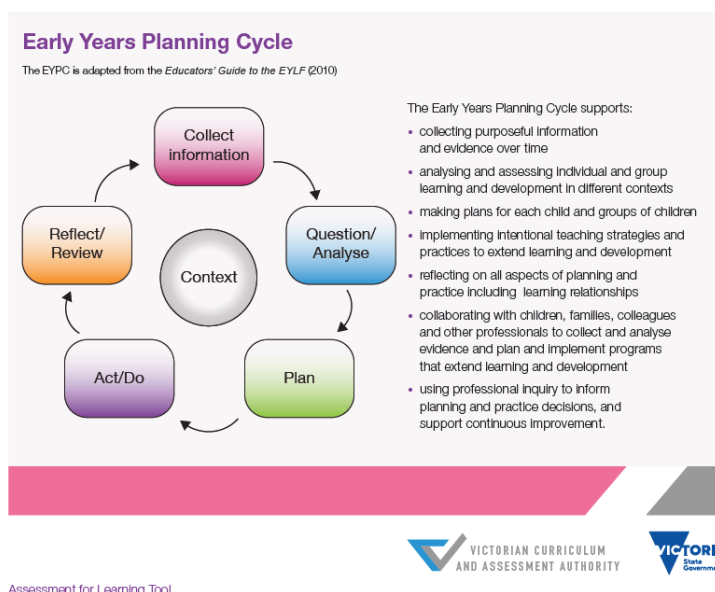
At Uniting early childhood services we...

Theme	Principle
Inclusiveness	Welcome and engage each child and their family as active and contributing members of the community
Children/citizen	Recognise each child's value and place in our service and the wider community
Equity	Support all children and families to access opportunities
Learning	Nurture children to be confident and creative learners
Quality	Act to deliver high quality education and care

Uniting

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY			
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 6 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	

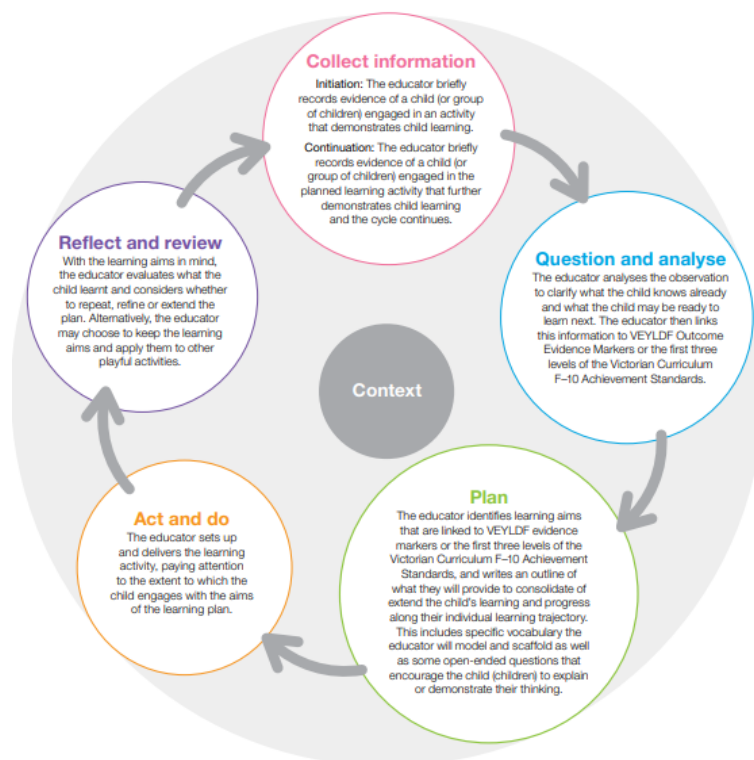
Attachment 26c: Early Years Planning Cycle



Structure of the learning plans

The learning plans in this resource are written in everyday language and follow the structure of the Early Years Planning Cycle.

Early Years Planning Cycle



DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY		
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 7 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	

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Please refer to the Uniting Intranet/Document Management System for the latest version.

Attachment 26d: Educational Leader Responsibilities

Educational Leader Responsibilities

The objective of the Educational Leader position is to provide pedagogical leadership and work in collaboration with educators to facilitate a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement.

The Educational leader has an influential role in inspiring, motivating, affirming, and challenging or extending the practice and pedagogy of educators. The role will mentor and coach colleagues in a professional manner, to maximise children's learning opportunities and develop exceeding quality educational programs.

Expectations to fulfil this role include:

- A thorough working knowledge and understanding of the relevant law and regulations that relate to service provision.
- A robust knowledge and understanding of the National Quality Standards and the approved early learning frameworks.
- Providing expert advice and leadership in curriculum and pedagogy.
- Assisting other educators and colleagues to integrate the Uniting vision and the early year's strategic outcomes into program planning.
- Developing agreed educational goals, practice, and behaviors in collaboration with the service team.
- Coaching and mentoring other educators to support a process of continuous inquiry and improvement in program development.
- Leading and being part of reflective discussions about pedagogy and implementing the approved learning framework.
- Supporting educators to implement integrated teaching and learning approaches.
- Assisting in the documentation of children's learning and how these assessments can inform program planning decision making.
- Challenging existing practices with a focus on quality outcomes for children.
- Developing, promoting, and involving educators in creative initiatives to share best practice.
- Supporting educators to actively encourage parental involvement in developing and implementing the curriculum of the service.
- Actively developing and supporting positive working relationships with other early childhood professionals such as: Maternal and child health nurses and Early intervention specialists, local primary schools, and the broader community to support quality outcomes.
- Linking the service program to the community by working with other community services and groups such as, Aboriginal Elders.
- Promoting and committing to the continuity of learning within the service, and any other early learning programs the children may attend, and in their transition to school.
- Playing an active role in the teaching, learning and assessment quality assurance process as appropriate and when required.

Ensuring compliance with established policies and procedures and that they continue to align with legislative and statutory requirements.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY		
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 8 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	

Attachment 26e: Educational Leader appointment criteria

Selection Criteria for nomination [\(Click here for the Educational Leader Acceptance form 26.1\)](#)

- Suitably qualified and experienced.
- Strong educational leadership skills.
- Demonstrated coaching and mentoring skills.
- Knowledge of contemporary theories, pedagogy and the relevant learning frameworks.
- A commitment to inquiry-based learning.
- Demonstrated skill at supporting educators of varying abilities and learning styles.
- Demonstrated high level knowledge and understanding of the National Quality Standards and related regulatory standards.

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE POLICY		
Content Owner	Early Learning-Executive Officer			Page 9 of 9
Document Author	EL Practice Manager	Document Version	V 5.0	Policy No. 026
Date Published	29/03/2021	Revision Due Date	01/04/2022	