

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 1

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Greenbrook Kindergarten on 12th April 2021

Addendum: Attachment 1 “Outdoor and All Weather Play at Greenbrook Kindergarten” was adopted by the Approved Provider of Greenbrook Kindergarten on the 15th September 2021

REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2023

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure that the educational program (curriculum) and practice at Greenbrook Kindergarten is:

- based on an approved learning framework
- underpinned by critical reflection and careful planning
- stimulating, engaging and enhances children’s learning and development.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Greenbrook Kindergarten is committed to:

- providing an educational program that is based on reflective practice, critical analysis and planning
- supporting each child to achieve learning outcomes consistent with the national *Early Years Learning Framework* and/or the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*)
- providing an educational program where children can learn through play and are supported to make decisions, problem-solve and build relationships with others
- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices
- involving families in the development and review of educational program and practice.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Greenbrook Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law) requires services to deliver an educational program (curriculum) that is based on an approved learning framework. In Victoria, approved learning frameworks for the early childhood sector are the *Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being & Becoming)* (refer to *Sources*) and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*). These documents 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.

Part 4.1 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (National Regulations) outlines the operational requirements for educational program and practice within services, including the requirements for documentation of assessments in relation to the educational program. There is no prescribed method in the National Law or National Regulations for documenting assessment of children's learning. Each service must determine a method that suits their individual circumstances. To meet the documentation requirements of the National Regulations, the assessment must include an analysis of children's learning. Collecting this information enables educators to plan effectively for each child's learning and development. It can also be used by educators to stimulate reflection on their own values, beliefs and teaching practices, and to communicate about children's learning with children and their families.

The National Regulations require the appointment of an Educational Leader to lead the development and implementation of the educational program (or curriculum) at the service (Regulation 118). This person will have suitable qualifications and experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the *Early Years Learning Framework* and/or the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*, enabling them to guide other educators in planning and reflection, and to mentor colleagues in implementation practices (*Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations*, p85 – refer to Sources).

The *National Quality Standard* is linked to the approved learning frameworks. Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice focuses on “enhancing children's learning and development through the:

- pedagogical practices of educators and co-ordinators
- development of programs that promote children's learning across five learning outcomes” (*Guide to the National Quality Standard*, p20 – refer to Sources).

The educational program must also be underpinned by the service's philosophy.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Sections 168, 301(3)(d), 323
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 73–76, 118, 148
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice
 - Standard 1.1: The educational program enhances each child's learning and development
 - Standard 1.2: Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Approved learning framework: A document that outlines practices that educators and co-ordinators must use to support and promote children's learning. The *Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being & Becoming)* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* are approved learning frameworks for use in Victoria (refer to Sources).

Critical reflection: Reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice (*Early Years Learning Framework*, p45 – refer to Sources).

Curriculum: All interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development (*Early Years Learning Framework*, p45 – refer to Sources; adapted from Te Whariki).

Each child: A phrase used in the *National Quality Standard* when an individualised approach is warranted and educators are required to modify their response to meet the needs of an individual child. An example is 'each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture and interests provide the foundation for the program'.

Educational Leader: The Approved Provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, co-ordinator or other individual to lead the development and implementation of educational programs at the service (Regulation 118). This person must have a thorough understanding of the *Early Years Learning Framework* (or other approved learning framework), be able to guide other educators in their planning and reflection, and mentor colleagues in the implementation of their practice.

Learning: A natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth, as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development.

Learning framework: Refer to **approved learning framework** above.

Learning outcome: A skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families.

Learning relationships: Relationships that further children's learning and development. Both adult and child have intent to learn from one another.

Play-based learning: A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social world as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:*
<http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
- *Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:*
<http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- *National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program:*
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/ngsplp
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Resources for Professionals:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/profresources.htm

Service policies

- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*
- *Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy*
- *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

- *Water Safety Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management and Control are responsible for:

- ensuring that the educational program is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 168)
- ensuring the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child are accommodated in the educational program (Section 168) (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- ensuring 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 (Regulation 73)
- designating a suitably qualified and experienced Educational Leader to direct the development and implementation of educational programs at the service (Regulation 118)
- ensuring the staff record includes the name of the Educational Leader at the service (Regulation 148)
- ensuring that the service's philosophy guides educational program and practice
- ensuring that assessments of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program are documented (Regulation 74(1)(a)(i))
- ensuring that assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program are documented (Regulation 74(1)(a)(ii))
- ensuring documentation of assessments includes reflection on the period of time the child is at the service, and how documented information will be used by educators at the service (Regulation 74(2)(a)(i)&(ii))
- ensuring documentation is written in plain language and is easy to understand by both educators and parents/guardians (Regulation 74(2)(b))
- ensuring a copy of the educational program is displayed at the service and accessible to parents/guardians (Regulation 75)
- ensuring that parents/guardians 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 (Regulation 76)
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, children and families.

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day to Day Charge are responsible for:

- ensuring that the educational program is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 168)
- ensuring the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child are accommodated in the educational program (Section 168) (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- displaying a copy of the educational program at the service in a location accessible to parents/guardians
- ensuring that each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation

- ensuring that there is a record of learning and development for each child, and that it is updated and maintained on an ongoing basis. Individual planning may be shared in hard copy, via email or on the Story Park Online Platform with parents / guardians.
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, educators, children and families
- ensuring regular communication is established between the service and parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development.

Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- delivering an educational program that is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*)
- considering the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child in the educational program (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- assessing and documenting each child's needs, interests, experiences, participation and progress in relation to the educational program in a way that is easy to understand for parents/guardians
- making information available to parents/guardians about their child's participation in the educational program. This may be shared in hard copy, via email or on the Story Park Online Platform with parents / guardians.
- communicating regularly with parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development. This may be shared in hard copy, via email or on the Story Park Online Platform with parents / guardians.
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, children and families.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- communicating regularly with the service in relation to their child's learning and development. This may be done through conversation with the teacher, via email or on the Story Park Online Platform.
- providing input to the development of the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and children.

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

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Outdoor and All Weather Play at Greenbrook Kindergarten

OUTDOOR AND ALL WEATHER PLAY AT GREENBROOK KINDERGARTEN

POSITION STATEMENT:

GREENBROOK Kindergarten implements outdoor and all-weather play as a core component of curriculum delivery.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The United Nation's Rights of the Child tells us PLAY and access to play is a fundamental right for all children. The EYLF/VEYLDF (curriculum and practice guiding documents) and the National Quality Frameworks (NQF) provide evidenced based guidance to support high quality curriculum decision making in ECEC.

At our service we do this best through our Indoor/Outdoor delivery model, incorporating all weather play and, at times, a fully outdoor curriculum.

Families may have concerns or differing sets of beliefs about outdoor and all weather play. We aim to share information, articles and links that can support families to learn about our approaches as well as remain open to feedback and discussion to ensure all perspectives are heard and reflected upon.

Our philosophy asks us to respect our natural world and provide opportunities to connect with and learn from land as our Nation's First people, The Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nation have for thousands of years. Play is the driver of these connections. Children's opportunities to engage with natural materials and explore the outdoors and the world around them drive learning.

Recently, we have needed to deal with the Covid -19 pandemic. Evidence based advice from relevant stakeholder organisations such as Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Chief Health Officer has been that outdoor play is best during periods of peak threat (e.g.: lockdowns and times of restrictions).

We provide outdoor and all weather play all year with processes in place to manage risks as they arise. We are committed to always ensuring the health and wellbeing of children by staying alert and looking for signs of hyperthermia in cold weather and heat stroke/heat exhaustion in hot weather.

RESEARCH

We understand and acknowledge concerns from families about play outside during colder, wet weather. Families can feel worried about their child becoming sick, being exposed to elements and potential play that leaves children wet and/or dirty.

We might believe that stopping children playing outdoors during cold wintry days will help prevent them from becoming sick. Professor Raina MacIntyre, (Professor of Infectious Diseases Epidemiology and Head of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales) suggests that,

'exposure to cold weather will not give you a cold because colds are caused by viruses. There is an association between cold weather and the winter season, and common colds because transmission of cold viruses is much higher in cold weather. It's likely that colds and influenza outbreaks peak in winter because we tend to huddle together in small, often stuffy, unventilated spaces. It's also unlikely that exposure to cold weather will exacerbate the symptoms of a cold'.

Research shows that there are a number of physical and developmental benefits children receive from spending time outdoors.

These include:

- Opportunities to play in the spaces best suited to their learning style or type of 'intelligence'
- Using/developing and practicing whole body skills including running, jumping, leaping, balancing, coordination, stamina, and strength. Many health professionals recognise the critical importance of outdoor play for the overall health and wellbeing of children, including addressing the issues around childhood obesity.
- Improvements in recovery from injuries
- Increases to children's levels of happiness
- Reductions in the occurrence of illness
- Improvement in developing learning skills and dispositions such as curiosity, wonderment, exploration, experimentation, hypothesising, questioning, theorising, using trial and error and so on.
- Improvement in executive functioning, social skills, and emotional/behavioural regulation.
- Increased confidence, self-esteem, independence, and reduced stress.
- Increased understanding of safe risk taking
- Building responsibility to care for the environment, to have greater understanding of sustainability and great respect for the natural world and all it contains. We can call this "Eco Literacy"
- Experiencing learning by engaging with the 5 senses. We know this type of learning is critical to young children and is key to deeper levels of understanding.

Our own experiences and reflections during the COVID-19 pandemic also supplemented our professional knowledge.

We noted that:

- Children were able to mitigate colder temperatures by engaging in more movement-based play or by adapting play to more sheltered parts of the outdoor area. Children often independently proactively chose to 'get moving to get warm' if it was very cold.
- Children acknowledged and were able to understand the need for warm layers of clothing.
- Children began to be able to make informed decisions about clothing. For example, I will take my coat off while I play this running game but then I'll put it back on as I will cool down really quickly.
- There were virtually no absences due to illness. Children on the whole remained healthy.
- Children adapted play to their environment, making use of resources in flexible and positive ways that continued to see excellent progression in learning and development

WHEN DO WE SEEK SHELTER OR PLAY INDOORS ONLY?

Risks we will assess in making choices about moving play to sheltered areas or indoors include but are not limited to:

- Storm activity including lightning, strong winds and hail activity.
- Dust storms or dust/air borne debris
- Environmental conditions such as heavy fog or mists.
- Swarming insects such as bees
- Smoke haze
- High winds, particularly if the winds result in equipment moving and the large Ironbark tree in the corner near the garage becoming unsafe (dropping branches)
- Extreme heat or cold. There is no 'trigger' temperature. The decision will be made dependent on the judgment of the educators, based on how children are responding to the temperatures and relevant advice from trusted sources (see below)
- Heavy rain.
- Wind chill factor vs actual temperature.

The following resources that may support educators make informed decisions include, but are not limited to:

- Relevant Australian weather apps/sites. Primarily this will be the Bureau of Meteorology app/site including the rain radar function.
- DET/DH direct send information
- Health.vic website
- Vic emergency app.
- Sunsmart app.

CLOTHING:

We will support children and families to make appropriate clothing choices by:

- Acting as role models for children by ensuring we are also dressed appropriately to weather and to requirements of Sunsmart.
- Sharing Sunsmart information during enrolment and orientation processes and at key times of the year (e.g.: when seasons change and UV ratings reach 3 or above consistently)
- Providing spare jackets for outdoor play in cold weather. If children come without an outdoor jacket or coat, we aim to have one they can use while at kinder.
- Providing wet sensory play gear such as waterproof pants and jackets and gumboots so families don't need to provide their own.
- Encouraging families regularly to have appropriate spare clothing for the season.
- Keeping a good supply of kindergarten spare clothing, including socks and sometimes shoes, if a child does not have their own.

ENVIRONMENTS, EXPERIENCES AND ACTIVITY:

Our all-weather play environments will always reflect the needs, interests and ideas of the children present and can include, but are not limited to, all year round:

- Sensory play involving mud, dirt, sand, and water play. We will also include dough and clay play.
- Natural loose parts such as sticks, leaves, gumnuts, bark, seed pods etc
- Opportunities for large muscle physical play such as running, climbing, swinging, and jumping etc
- Quieter spaces for relaxing and resting with seating, cushions etc
- Traditional 'indoor' experiences like books, puzzles, musical instruments and arts and crafts
- Embedded literacy and numeracy learning
- Opportunities to explore STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics)
- Organised games with rules
- Socio-dramatic and imaginative play
- Free, child led and directed play.
- Teacher guided experiences.
- Supporting independence, self-help and self-care skills as we guide children through learning how to navigate dressing and undressing themselves and organising their own belongings.

Reference materials and links:

We acknowledge the following as sources that helped guide and inform us in the development of our outdoor and all-weather play approaches. We also acknowledge our experiences and expertise as practicing pedagogues within the ECEC profession as inspiration.

<https://www.playaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/LibraryDownloads/outdoorplayguide.pdf>

<https://www.careforkids.com.au/child-care-articles/article/728/the-educational-angle-on-gardners-theory-of-multiple-intelligences>

<http://thespoke.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/importance-outdoor-play-winter/>

<http://rethinkingchildhood.com/2011/11/28/nature-4/>

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

<https://www.child-encyclopedia.com/outdoor-play/according-experts/influence-outdoor-play-social-and-cognitive-development>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322977792_Ecoliteracy- Role of Early childhood Education

<https://www.abc.net.au/health/talkinghealth/factbuster/stories/2008/04/02/2205865.htm>

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/qug-carer-toc~qug-carer-physicalactivity~qug-carer-physicalactivity-toddlers~qug-carer-physicalactivity-toddlers-outdoor>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/heat-health/policy>