

Policy Title:	Programming
Effective Date:	14 th December 2010, April 2014
Review Date:	As necessary by the Policy and Procedure Development Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Inner City Care (ICC) will focus on programming to:

- create an environment that acknowledges and values the individual needs of all the children at the Centre.
- implement The Early Years Learning Framework in all Centre programs and document children's learning based on the learning outcomes and principles discussed in the EYLF document.
- provide an educational and care program, based on early childhood development and learning through play.
- ensure that the experiences and their presentation are developmentally appropriate.
- build a partnership between families and educators in order to establish continuity in the program and to help support families achieve their own goals.
- develop a high level of self-esteem and independence in children so they are able to explore, understand and function confidently in the world around them.
- foster each child's critical thinking about bias; developing the cognitive skills to identify bias, and the emotional empathy to know that bias hurts.
- be aware of and use the environment – indoor and out – as a second facilitator.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This policy was developed based on The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF), Programming and Planning in Early Childhood Settings by Arthur et al, the NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services and by educators and parent discussions since its first development.

It was reviewed in August 2007 and in July 2010 and some changes were made to include the Early Years Learning Framework document which was implemented by Australian Government on 1st January 2010 – Australia's first national framework in programming for children's learning. This policy was reviewed in 2014 and changes made to the Transition to School information.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- The EYLF document and our previous knowledge of programming for children's learning based on NSW Curriculum Framework, discuss the importance of providing a self-directed play based curriculum, which intrinsically motivates children to explore and discover their environment. It strives to achieve an appropriate balance between structured and free play whilst keeping a flexible attitude to cater to children's individual and daily needs. Routine times are also an important part of the daily program.
- The EYLF has a specific emphasis on play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.
- Play is pleasurable, process-oriented, and freely chosen. By allowing children to choose the experiences they engage in, ICC believes children are learning in a fertile

and supportive way. The learning process is at its best when it becomes a dual process for children and adults. By co-constructing with the children throughout their learning their natural curiosity and zest for learning and discovery is being encouraged.

- The educational focus is more on the process of exploration, manipulation, expression, sharing and active involvement than the product. The children will learn without pressure or expectation, without fear of failure and without judgment and comparison to others, thus building a healthy self-image and self-esteem.
- Early childhood educators play a large role in programming a successful and productive play environment. They must:
 - think about and plan for the whole of the child's experience,
 - have knowledge of child development theory, early childhood education and developmentally appropriate practices in order to interpret their observations correctly,
 - be selective in choice of equipment and material,
 - reflect the fact that children bring with them to the learning situation more than their developmental characteristics. They also bring specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and language through membership of a particular cultural group.
- Parents are integral in helping educators create realistic environments for their children. Thus educators must provide appropriate opportunities for families to be involved in the curriculum process.
 - by encouraging parents to share their cultures with others,
 - by regularly communicating with educators about children's home experiences and incorporating and extending children's home experiences and interests in the Centre environment.
 - by encouraging parents to express their expectations of the service,
 - by encouraging parents to provide regular feedback/evaluation.
- Parents are very welcome and are encouraged to spend time in the Centre. Parent participation is greatly encouraged in program development. ICC appreciates and values parent input about different cultures so we may truly represent each child's cultural background. Through parent involvement educators will become more aware of family concerns and aims for the children, and will be able to work with families towards meeting these needs.
- ICC educators aim to plan Centre programs in conjunction with our families in order to provide meaningful learning experiences for each individual child. EYLF points out that learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators work in partnership with families. Educators recognise that families are children's first and most influential teachers. ICC creates a welcoming environment where all children and families are respected and actively encouraged to collaborate with educators about curriculum decisions in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful.
- Each child is treated as an individual with their own unique needs and characteristics. Children with additional needs are no different. Partnerships also involve educators, families and support professionals working together to explore the learning potential in every day events, routines and play so that children with additional needs are provided with daily opportunities to learn from active participation and engagement in these experiences in the home and in early childhood or specialist settings.
- We aim to foster children's positive attitudes towards people of varied cultures and physical abilities through an anti-bias curriculum and develop children's ability to recognise unfairness and bias and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness (EYLF, 2009).

POLICY DETAIL/ BUSINESS RULES

- Educators work together on a regular basis to put together a written program. A number of components are involved in compiling the final programs. The programs are displayed to be shared by children, their families and the educators as co-constructors in the learning process.
- The skills, knowledge and attitudes of the educators at the Centre, shape more than any other factor, the quality of the Centre experience for children and their families.
- The environment reflects the children, their families and the educators as well as the wider community thus giving ownership and pride in the surroundings - photos, artworks, constructions, etc all reflect the Centre participators.

Individual Observations:

Educators take regular observations of all the children based on the following developmental areas: sense of self, the communicating child, the thinking, investigative, exploring, problem-solving child, the healthy, active, physical child, the social child, the feeling child, the creative child and the spiritual and moral child. Observations also include, assessments and work samples of children working towards and achieving the learning outcomes stated in the EYLF.

All educators are responsible for their focus children for whom they maintain Portfolios and ensure their development is closely monitored and documented. All educators also contribute to the general documentation process which is ever evolving and changing. The documentation reflects the learning experiences, interests, relationships and achievements which occur daily. Teaching decisions, reflections and future suggestions are also documented as they are discussed in staff meetings and during more informal chats. There is an ongoing and cyclical process of reflection and evaluation.

Also when devising aims and goals for children's individual programs as well as the group needs it is very important to obtain information from the children's families about their child and what their concerns are. Thus each parent is involved in the decision making process for their child and are asked to express what they feel is a concern or what they wish their child to achieve.

When the educators plan for experiences they ask themselves:

- Are children aware of the promotion and support of respectful, life enhancing relationships?
- How to adopt the experience or routines to better meet the needs and interests of the children?
- Is more or less teacher direction/support needed?
- What possible outcomes of the Early Years Learning Document are the children working towards achieving?
- Are individual children demonstrating age appropriate skills and knowledge?
- Who did the children play with?
- How much time did they spend at each experience?
- What resources and age appropriate equipment are available?
- What are the children's strengths, needs and interests?
- Did the children show gender related preferences?

- Do the children need to be leaders and teachers or at other times are they content to be followers?
- What spontaneous interactions have occurred that interested the children?

As the educators answer these questions and liaise with parents about their concerns and aims, the program begins to fill up on a daily basis and an emergent curriculum is constantly evolving.

ICC provides families with children's portfolios online which they can access in their own time..

Transition To School Program

ICC helps children to negotiate changes in their status or identities, especially when they begin full-time school. As children make transitions to school, we are committed to sharing information about each child's knowledge and skills with school so learning can build on foundations of earlier learning. ICC works collaboratively with each child's new educator and other professionals to ensure a successful transition (EYLF, 2009).

Starting school is a significant milestone in the life of any child and family. During the year prior to school entry the Frontroom educators at ICC will take the following steps to ensure a smooth and successful transition to school:

- Provide a developmentally appropriate program to develop school readiness skills and a healthy self concept/esteem. These school readiness skills include:
 - * Concentrating on the task at hand
 - * Persevering when faced with difficulties
 - * Responding positively to new situations
 - * Taking responsibilities for their behaviour as it impinges on others in the group
 - * Developing the communication skills necessary for group or individual play
 - * Developing positive feelings about themselves and others
 - * Experiencing a sense of self-satisfaction resulting from achievement
- Liaise with the local schools to discuss their expectations of skills and knowledge they would like the children to acquire before starting school.
- Discuss with families the transition to school procedures and provide them with information re: preparation for school, discuss their aims, goals, concerns and needs during Parent/Teacher meetings and organise an annual Transition to School Information Evening.
- Support each families decision about when to send children to school, acknowledging the NSW Department of Education and Training's policy that **"Children must turn five by July 31st in the year they start kindergarten. All children in NSW must start school by their sixth birthday"**.
- Educators will ensure the children become familiar with the different concepts related to the transition to school:
 - explaining routines, expectations, location of facilities, etc
 - provide relaxation and quiet activities during rest times and consider children's individual needs in the months leading up to school and whether a reduction in sleep times may prepare some children for the longer school day routine. Beds will still be available for any child that requires sleep.

- prepare the children by developing skills in putting on their own shoes, taking responsibilities for their own belongings, etc.
- In the months prior to starting school educators will:
 - organise for the children to have lunch provided in lunch boxes to familiarise them with this concept,
 - endeavour to organise excursions to the local schools,
 - encourage the children and their families to come back to visit the centre, ie. arrange a special Afternoon Tea. This gives the children an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of starting school with their previous caregivers.

“Spending time in a good children’s service helps children make a successful transition to school. An aim of every children’s service is that children will be contributing and comfortable members of the school community. This means that they will be confident, flexible and have the confidence and skills to engage effectively in a variety of interactions and relationships.” (NSW Curriculum Framework for Children’s Services)

AUTHORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring all ICC educators have training in this policy. All ICC educators are accountable for the implementation of this policy.

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009
 Education and Care Services National Regulations
 Interactions with Children Policy
 NSW Curriculum Framework
 Anti-bias Policy and Children with Additional Needs Policy
 Inner City Care Code of Ethics.

SOURCES

Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011)
 NSW Department of Community Services – School Readiness – www.community.nsw.gov.au/DOCSWR/assets/main/documents/school_readiness.pdf
 NSW Public Schools – www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/primary/startingschool.php
 Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth – School Readiness – Various school readiness papers – www.aracy.org.au

APPROVAL

Approved by Management Committee

Signature:

Title:

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