

## **EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **AIM:**

Clarence Family Day Care educators will provide an educational program that is based on the approved learning frameworks and meets the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child attending the service. Educators will draw on their professional knowledge and their in-depth knowledge of each child to choose appropriate teaching strategies and design a learning and leisure environment that will engage children in active learning. Educators will work in partnership with coordinators, children, families and other professionals to:

- plan effectively for children’s learning and wellbeing;
- communicate with families about children’s development and wellbeing;
- evaluate children’s progress towards achieving intended outcomes and extending knowledge;
- identify children who may need additional support;
- evaluate the effectiveness of the education and care environment and the experiences offered, and the approach taken by educators to achieve the best learning and developmental outcomes for each child;
- reflect on their own professional practice and relationships with children and families and use this knowledge to improve the effectiveness of the program.

The Clarence Family Day Care **Interactions with Children policy** underpins the manner in which educators interact with children whenever they are at the service.

### **RATIONALE:**

This policy is underpinned by the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011, the National Standards for Education and Care and School Age Care, Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework and My Time Our Place, A Framework for School Age Care in Australia.

“A supportive active learning environment encourages children’s engagement in learning .... Active involvement in learning builds children’s understandings of concepts and the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning.” (Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia page 33)

“Play and leisure activities in school age care settings (that are based on the approved learning framework) provide children with the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning, personal regulation and contribution to the social environment .... Children engage when they are motivated and can participate in purposeful activities.” (My Time Our Place, Framework for School Age Care in Australia page 33)

The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, and Standard 1.1 of the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care requires that a program is delivered to all children being educated and cared for by the service that:

- a. is based on an approved learning framework; and
- b. is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework; and
- c. is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child; and
- d. is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child.

The Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011 require that the educational program contributes to the following outcomes for children:

- a. the child will have a strong sense of identity;
- b. the child will be connected with and contribute to his or her world;
- c. the child will have a strong sense of wellbeing;
- d. the child will be a confident and involved learner;
- e. the child will be an effective communicator.

It is also required that relevant information about the program and their child's participation in the program is shared with parents, and that the program is planned, documented and evaluated.

### **PROCEDURES:**

- The educator will be responsible for the development of an educational program that is based on the relevant approved learning framework, is developmentally appropriate to the needs and interests of children attending the service and reflects the philosophy of the service.
- Educators and staff will be provided with opportunities to further their professional development and skills in childhood pedagogy and education and care practices.
- Educators continually reflect on children's experiences, thinking and learning and document their observations and assessments using a variety of methods that may include: diary notes of children's comments and conversations, examples of children's work, photographs of children's participation and spontaneous play, noting changes that may be needed in the environment, discussing alternative teaching strategies with their colleagues.

### **Planning Programs**

- Educational programs will be balanced and varied (i.e. will provide for indoor/outdoor learning experiences, quiet/active times, individual, small group and large group opportunities, time for individual educator and child interaction, children's individual and group interests, including activities that are physical, creative, exploratory, dramatic, musical, cognitive and involve construction), and be flexible enough to allow for spontaneity and the unexpected.
- Educators provide individual holistic programs that are responsive to children's lives, interests and learning styles and promote each child's social, cultural, physical, emotional, intellectual, language and creative potential, and meet individual children's play and relaxation needs. Educators will use observations of children's participation, set up a learning environment that stimulates children's natural curiosity, encourage children to be actively involved in their own learning and decision making, and use the partnerships they have developed with families to enhance and individualise programs for children.
- Programs are planned with children's involvement. Educators involve children through the following strategies:
  - seeking information about children's interests and their families, valuing children's contributions and ideas and letting the child know they are appreciated;
  - observing very young children's responses to the environment and other people in order to gain an understanding of their interests, likes and dislikes;
  - providing a variety of resources and experiences, and setting up the environment so that equipment and toys are easily accessible, allowing children to make choices about their activities, and observing children's preferred choices;
  - one to one discussions with children during which educators ask them what they like to do and what they think about their experiences;

- observing group interests and interactions;
- using interest questionnaires, or short verbal surveys for children to complete;
- holding group meetings and allowing children to raise issues and become decision makers;
- involving children in interviewing other children about what they like and dislike doing at the service;
- encourage older children to manage some aspects of the program independently.
- The service will provide a variety of toys for all children to play with regardless of gender. Both boys and girls will be encouraged to explore a full range of experiences and emotions.
- The educational program will be child centered and will allow children to experience a variety of materials and pursue their own interests. Educators will offer appropriate choices to children, talk to them about the choices available to them, and help them to decide what to do if needed. There will always be alternatives available when a child does not wish to participate in a particular activity, or chooses to initiate their own experiences and play.
- Children will be challenged and encouraged to take ‘safe’ risks (with adult supervision) in order to:
  - develop their problem solving skills;
  - build resilience, confidence and social competence;
  - extend their strength, fitness levels and coordination through physically challenging activities; and
  - learn about taking safe risks by raising their consciousness of risks and the consequences of particular actions or choices.
- Educators will ensure the supervision of children is in accordance with the Clarence Family Day Care **Supervision Policy**, is appropriate to the child’s stage of development and protects their safety and wellbeing at all times. Educators will join in the children’s play (but also allow for “adult free” play), appreciate their attempts to acquire new skills, and encourage them to try new experiences. Children will be regularly reminded of safe procedures for using play equipment.
- Educators use children’s real life experiences to engage children in learning opportunities. Families are encouraged to share their cultural traditions, customs and beliefs with educators so that children’s rights to have their cultures and identities acknowledged and valued can be upheld.
- In the family day care setting educators incorporate learning experiences for children into everyday activities occurring in the home.
- Programs are flexible and will be adjusted to respond to spontaneous play, children’s interests, changes in the weather, visitors to the service etc.
- Educators monitor noise levels in the environment and adjust activities with children to ensure noise levels are appropriate and do not interfere with purposeful play or activity.

### ***Program Documentation***

*As a minimum requirement, educators will document details of meaningful or significant events for each child, that occur within the educational program of the service. Documentation may include, but will not be limited to, photographs, assessments of children’s developmental needs, interests and experiences, assessments of the child’s progress against the outcomes of the educational program, and for school aged children, evaluations of the child’s wellbeing, development and learning. It is expected that educators will document a minimum of one observation cycle per month for each child.*

### **Child Assessments**

- Each educator will be responsible for monitoring the individual development of each child in their care, and for evaluating their programs in relation to the approved learning framework, the service’s stated philosophy and individual children’s learning and development.
- Records of child assessments for the delivery of the program will be kept for 3 years after the date on which the child last attended the service (183,(2)(d)) in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, and may be accessed by the child’s family at any time.

- The records developed for individual preschool age children may incorporate observations of stages of development, children's interests, learning and play experiences, relationships with children and staff, strengths and abilities, child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program and recommendations for program planning.
- Records developed for individual school age children may include evaluations of the child's wellbeing, learning and development, and recommendations for program planning.

### **Daily Routines**

- Routines will be built around the regular events of the day i.e. arrival, snacks/drinks, toileting/nappy change, main meals, washing, dressing, sleeping and departure, and will take into account the developmental needs of individual children, children's attendance patterns, climate and physical environment, the numbers and ages of children within a given group, children with special needs, new children entering the group and family expectations.
- Flexibility is built into routines so that children's involvement in activities and any special needs are accommodated.
- Children will be provided with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other whilst being educated and cared for by the service.

### **Electronic Media**

- Television viewing will not be a regular part of the children's education or leisure program, and will generally only take place when a specific program enhances a particular learning or social experience for children.
- Programs will be carefully selected and chosen in accordance with the following criteria:
  - the program was made specifically for children within the relevant age range, ie. G rating only;
  - the program is entertaining and seeks to actively involve children;
  - the program enhances children's understanding and experience or encourages imaginative play;
  - the characters in the program treat each other with respect; and
  - the program does not include violence or scary images that are likely to disturb children.
- Educators will always view programs with the children and:
  - invite children to ask questions, describe their feelings and make sense of what they have viewed;
  - talk about the program, discuss activities, characters, stories, themes, likes and dislikes;
  - encourage the extension of any programs viewed by including suitable activities in future programs; and
  - ensure a program is turned off if for any reason it is deemed inappropriate for young children.
- Adults and teenage household members must be aware not to watch inappropriate programs whilst children are in care.
- Children will always be encouraged to participate in active play after sitting and watching a television program.
- When computers/ipads are available for children's use whilst at the service the following strategies will apply:
  - each child's computer/ipad use will be limited to a specified time period;
  - access will be carefully monitored to ensure developmentally appropriate, open ended non-violent games, software programs and online media that reflect the service's philosophy are being viewed;
  - all children are provided with equal opportunities to access;
  - educators will plan extension activities for the most popular computer/ipad games or programs that extend children's learning and encourage children to take part in active rather than passive activities.

### **Collaborative Partnerships with Families**

- Prior to commencing care, families will be asked to complete information sheets about their child's abilities, interests and behaviours, to assist educators to assess the child's current developmental level, and establish suitable routines for the child.
- Educators will initiate and facilitate regular on-going communication with families concerning their child's participation and changing interests. Families are informed promptly and sensitively of any issues or concerns in regard to their child.
- Programs will be available to children's families to facilitate discussion regarding any aspect of the program with the educator.
- Families will be encouraged to have input into program development, especially in relation to their own child's participation, and in sharing aspects of their culture, skills and interesting experiences. The extent to which families wish to be involved will be respected.
- Programs will reflect the cultural differences of all families using the service. The service will celebrate special events with the children that reflect the cultural heritage and ethnic origins of children attending the service and the wider community. Educators will work together with families to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of learning experiences for children.

**Relevant Legislation:** *Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011; 73 - 76*  
*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.*

**Key Resources:** *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011;*  
*Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming. DEEWR, 2009.*  
*Framework for School Age Care – My Time Our Place, DEEWR, 2009*  
*PSC Alliance Policy Template; [www.pscalliance.org.au](http://www.pscalliance.org.au)*