

# Educational Program and Practice

## Policy statement

At Goodstart Early Learning (Goodstart) the early learning curriculum is play-based and child-centred to enhance each child's learning, development and well-being.

Key educator relationships and small groupings are key strategies that support the success of these educational programs within Goodstart centres. The rich connections created by key educator relationships allow educators to have a deeper understanding of children's motivations and interests, enabling them to more effectively plan for children's learning.

Educators make ongoing professional judgements when designing and delivering their educational program, these curriculum decisions are based on individual children's knowledge, understanding, development, skills, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests.

At Goodstart both the program (curriculum) and educator practice (pedagogy) is informed by an approved learning framework, underpinned by the Early Years Learning Framework.

Goodstart educators are responsive to children and engage in intentional teaching with an inquiry orientation. They are skilled in recognising opportunities in the learning environment and deliver the curriculum using a number of teaching strategies in order to extend and assess children's learning, development and well-being.

At Goodstart children have a voice and are viewed as decision makers in the centre. Educators promote each child's agency from birth, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events in their world. This approach builds children's communication and literacy skills, as well as self-efficacy, confidence and promotes them to be active participants within their learning environment.

Goodstart is committed to its social inclusion agenda to support the inclusion and participation of children and their families within our early learning centres. Goodstart teachers and educators endeavour to ensure access and ongoing participation of children and their families to maximise children's outcomes, particularly children who are vulnerable.

Goodstart educational programs and practices value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and connections to community and country.

## What does this policy apply to?

**This policy relates to the National Quality Standard's Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice;**

- ▶ QA1.1 The development of a curriculum that enhances each child's early learning, development and well-being.
- ▶ QA1.2 The development of pedagogy that facilitates each child's early learning, development and well-being.
- ▶ QA1.3 Curriculum and pedagogy is implemented in a planned and reflective way.
- ▶ QA1.3 Documentation is displayed and provided to families about the curriculum. Individualised assessment of children's early learning, development and well-being are provided to families regularly.

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Standard/ Elements	Concept	Descriptor
QA1		Educational program and practice
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
1.3	Assessment and planning	Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.
1.3.1	Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
1.3.2	Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
1.3.3	Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

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**It is Goodstart’s policy, in compliance with QA1.1, that all curriculum offered to children is:**

Inquiry oriented and play-based which means that:

- ▶ The curriculum is child-centred and built upon the knowledge educators have on individual and groups of children within the centre, this may include information about children’s knowledge, understandings, development, skills, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests.
- ▶ Goodstart educators are expected to use an approved learning framework that brings together ideas, philosophies and approaches to guide the development of their curriculum as identified by ACECQA (ACECQA: 2013, p,21). Educators use a variety of methods to support their curriculum decision making. They may refer to;
  - EYLF’s outcomes, practices and principles or an approved learning framework;
  - The Goodstart Practice Guide and The 3-5 Guide;
  - The assessments for, of and as learning and the analysis of children’s learning and development;
  - Theoretical perspectives and evidence-informed teaching practices; and
  - Individual centre philosophy
- ▶ Goodstart educators are deliberate, informed, purposeful and planned throughout curriculum decision making and follow an ongoing planning cycle where they observe (information gatherings), analyse learning (question), document, plan, implement (acting and doing) and reflect (reviewing). Further detail can be found in Goodstart Practice Guide and The 3-5 Guide.
- ▶ Children are viewed as active participants and decision makers within the curriculum and their learning. They have an ownership and voice on the direction of their own learning, development and well-being.
- ▶ Goodstart educators understand the impact that the learning environments have upon children’s learning, development and wellbeing. All aspects of the curriculum, including routines are organised and designed in a way that maximises the outcomes for children (ACECQA: 2013). They are organised and deliberately when planning the learning environment (interactions, space, time and experiences), to amplify children’s learning. For further detail please refer to The Goodstart Practice Guide and The 3-5 Guide.

**It is Goodstart’s policy, in compliance with QA1.2, that all educators will engage in pedagogy that:**

- ▶ Utilises a range of theoretical perspectives and evidence-informed practices throughout their professional practice to promote children’s learning, development and well-being.
- ▶ Is planned, deliberate and intentional when making curriculum decisions.
- ▶ Utilises critical reflection to strengthen and continuously improve their pedagogy.
- ▶ Is responsive and inclusive when enacting the curriculum and uses a range of intentional teaching (pedagogies) strategies to enhance and extend each child’s learning, development and well-being.
- ▶ Demonstrates an understand that foundational to their program is respect for each child as unique, capable, strong, able and competent learners. They understand their vital role of listening and responding appropriately to children as they support them to extend on their ideas and play experiences.

**It is Goodstart’s policy, in compliance with QA1.3, that all educators will participate in critical reflection that:**

- ▶ Is intentionally thoughtful and ongoing throughout the implementation of their curriculum and afterwards on both individual children and groups of children’s learning and development.
- ▶ Promotes active engagement on how children learn and develop. Reflective practice is ongoing and underpins each element of the planning cycle." (The Goodstart Practice Guide: 2016, p91)
- ▶ Fosters ongoing learning, reflection and planning for continued improvement to the educational program and practice and to ensure best outcomes for children and families.

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- ▶ Aids curriculum decision making that leads to action-taking to improve the planning process.
- ▶ Informs a culture of professional inquiry and ongoing learning to understand current curriculum perspectives to inform pedagogy and curriculum decision making. Critical reflection is a process that strengthens educators' capacity to understand the impact of their teaching approach on children's learning, wellbeing, and development. (The Goodstart Practice Guide, 2016, p.91).
- ▶ Through interchange with colleagues promotes professional dialogue, debate and challenge.

**It is Goodstart's policy, in compliance with QA1.3, that all educators will:**

- ▶ Make visible to families, colleagues, children and other professionals' the documentation on their curriculum to make explicit both group and individual learning, development and well-being. This documentation is used as the basis for shared reflection, discussion and further curriculum planning.
- ▶ Engage families in professional conversations and communications about the curriculum and the assessment for, of and as learning for their child/ren.
- ▶ Work in partnerships with families, recognising the important role families have in their child/ren's life to support them to identify with and make meaning of themselves and their world.

**This policy relates to the following sections of the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations:**

STANDARD/ ELEMENTS	CONCEPT	NATIONAL LAW OR REGULATIONS
<b>QA1</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	Program	Section 51(1)(b) Conditions on service approval (educational and developmental needs of children) Section 168 Offence relating to required programs Section 323 Approved learning framework Regulation 73 Educational program Regulation 74 Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program Regulation 155 Interactions with children Regulation 156 Relationships in groups
<b>1.2</b>	Practice	Section 51(1)(b) Conditions on service approval (educational and developmental needs of children) Section 168 Offence relating to required programs Regulation 155 Interactions with children Regulation 156 Relationship in groups Regulation 73 Educational program

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		Regulation 74 Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
1.3	Assessment and planning	<p>Section 168 Offence relating to required programs</p> <p>Regulation 73 Educational program</p> <p>Regulation 74 Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program</p> <p>Regulation 75 Information about educational program to be kept available</p> <p>Regulation 177(1)(a) Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider – the documentation of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of the educational program</p> <p>Regulation 178(1)(a) Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by family day care educator – the documentation of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of the educational program</p> <p>Regulation 155 Interactions with children</p> <p>Regulation 156 Relationships in groups</p> <p>Regulation 76 Information about educational program to be given to parents</p> <p>Regulation 111 Administrative space</p> <p>Regulation 118 Educational leader</p> <p><b>General transitional and saving provisions</b></p> <p>Regulation 254 Declared approved learning frameworks</p> <p><b>Jurisdiction-specific provisions</b></p> <p>NSW – Regulation 274A Programs for children over preschool age</p> <p>NT – Regulation 289A Programs for children over preschool age</p> <p>Qld – Regulation 298A Programs for children over preschool age</p>

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## Related documents

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Goodstart documents that support this policy:

[BM1 Code of Conduct Policy](#); [NQS2 Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy](#); [NQS5 Guiding Children's Behaviour Requirement](#); [NQS5 Individual Support Plan Procedure](#) [NQS6 Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Policy](#);

## Responsibilities

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This policy is to be implemented by: All Goodstart Early Learning employees

## Definitions

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**Agency:** “being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one’s world.” (EYLF, 2009, p.45)

**Children’s voice:** Educators must intentionally seek out children’s voices, ideas and points of view to understand a child’s life experiences and to determine how these impact on the child’s learning, development and well-being. Educators incorporate and consider this information when designing the learning program. (Goodstart: 2018)

**Critical Reflection:** A process that involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. It is a system of “reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice” (DEEWR: 2009, p. 45)

**Curriculum:** In the early years setting, curriculum means “all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines, and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development”. (DEEWR: 2009, p 9)

**Educational Program:** The educational program is referred to as what is recorded and documented about the curriculum. The educational program is often what is displayed to families and the centre community.

**Educators:** Valued, qualified staff (Certificate III, Diploma, Bachelor or higher qualified) that work with, and teach children in a Goodstart centre.

**Pedagogy:** Early childhood educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning. (DEEWR: 2009 p. 46)

**Reflective Practice:** It is the ability to examine the activities within daily work and to use this evaluation as a means of improving practice and knowledge. (ECA: 2012)

**Approved Learning Frameworks:** The approved provider and nominated supervisor of an approved service must ensure that a 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, and is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child (ACECQA: 2013, p.140)

There are two national declared approved learning frameworks:

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

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There are also declared approved learning frameworks specific to certain jurisdictions.

## References

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