

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 5

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:

- the development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Elsa Macleod Kindergarten
- each child at Elsa Macleod Kindergarten is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Elsa Macleod Kindergarten is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the service
- promoting fairness, respect and equity
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children, families and educators/staff at the service.

2. SCOPE

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

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability. When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them [*Early Years Learning Framework*, p. 20; *Framework for School Age Care*, p. 19]

'Constructive everyday interactions and shared learning opportunities form the basis of equitable, respectful and reciprocal relationships between educators and children. Educators who are actively engaged in children's learning and share decision-making with them, use their everyday interactions during play, routines and ongoing projects to stimulate children's thinking and to enrich their learning. These relationships provide a solid foundation from which to guide and support children as they

develop the self-confidence and skills to manage their own behaviour, make decisions and relate positively and effectively to others.' (*Guide to National Quality Framework – refer to Sources*)

Child Safe Standard 7 requires services to have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children. When children feel respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. Enabling and promoting the participation of children within a service has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children, checking that what the service is doing is what children want and building the communication and leadership skills of children.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children. The development of this policy should also be informed by the service's *Code of Conduct Policy*.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

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.

Adequate supervision: entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage his/her behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: Behaviour that:

- disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development
- infringes on the rights of others
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Notifiable complaints: The Regulatory Authority is required to be notified of a complaint that alleges:

- a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service
- the National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

Complaints of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation.

Notification of complaints must be submitted within 24 hours through either the NQA IT System portal: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au> or where this is not possible, the Regulatory Authority must be contacted directly.

Inclusion Support Program: Funded by the Commonwealth Government to assist services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services; providing them with an opportunity to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers: <https://www.education.gov.au/>

Mental health: In early childhood, a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: The role of the PSFO Program is to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in preschool: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Serious incident: A serious incident (regulation 12) is defined as any of the following:

- the death of a child while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident at the service
- any incident involving serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which
 - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
 - the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb*
- any incident involving serious illness of a child while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis*.
 - *NOTE: In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatments related to serious injury or illness or trauma are required to be notified, not other health matters.

- any emergency for which emergency services attended. NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person/s at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.
- a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for at the service
- a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
- a child was mistakenly locked in or out of the service premises or any part of the premises.

Examples of serious incidents include amputation (e.g. removal of fingers), anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation, asthma requiring hospitalisation, broken bone/fractures, bronchiolitis, burns, diarrhoea requiring hospitalisation, epileptic seizures, head injuries, measles, meningococcal infection, sexual assault, witnessing violence or a frightening event.

If the approved provider is not aware that the incident was serious until sometime after the incident, they must notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of becoming aware that the incident was serious.

Notifications of serious incidents should be made through the NQA IT System portal (<http://www.acecqa.gov.au>). If this is not practicable, the notification can be made initially in whatever way is best in the circumstances.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Behaviour guidance practice note series* (DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*: <https://www.education.gov.au/>
- Early Childhood Australia *Code of Ethics*: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>
- *Guide to the National Quality Framework*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Inclusion Support Program (ISP), Department of Education and Training: <https://www.education.gov.au/>
- Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide*(DET): <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.unicef.org/>
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

PROCEDURES

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

- developing and implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, other staff and parents/guardians, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service
- ensuring parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff are provided with a copy of the *Interactions with Children Policy* and comply with its requirements
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and interactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (Regulation 156(2)). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal
- ensuring educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (Regulation 73) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (Regulation 155)
- ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service (Regulation 156(1))
- ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- supporting educators/staff to access resources and gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy, including promoting social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
- ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* and *Supervision of Children Policy*) and promotes the active participation of every child
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor and all other staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166)
- promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and educators, staff and other professionals, to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences
- referring notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*), grievances (refer to *Definitions*) or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator (refer to *Complaints and Grievances Policy*)

- informing DET, in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b))
- notifying DET, in writing, within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176)
- ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or professionals to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families
- ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk
- ensuring that parents/guardians and other professionals and support agencies (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour
- consulting with, and seeking advice from, DET if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed
- ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan
- ensuring that educators/staff at the service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and responses of a child/children with challenging behaviour.
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

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

- implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* at the service
- ensuring all staff and parents/guardians have access to the *Interactions with Children Policy* and comply with its requirements
- ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring that the environment is safe, secure and free from hazards (*Child Safe Environment, Supervision of Children Policy* and *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)
- considering the size and composition of groups when planning program timetables to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service. Smaller group sizes are considered optimal
- developing and implementing educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework (*Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework 2016*), that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- ensuring that educators provide education and care to children in a way that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for

- ensuring clear and straightforward documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- organising appropriate training for all staff to assist with the implementation of this policy
- ensuring all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166)
- ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- informing the Approved Provider of any notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*) or serious incidents (refer to *Definitions*) at the service
- ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- developing the behaviour guidance plan in consultation with the Approved Provider, educators and the parents/guardian of the child, and other professionals and services as appropriate
- supporting educators by assessing skills and identifying additional training needs in the area of behaviour guidance
- investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer (refer to *Definitions*), specialist children's services officers from DET or other agencies working with the child
- setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.
- providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home
- co-operating with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

All other staff are responsible for:

- assisting with the development and implementation of the *Interactions with Children Policy*, in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, parents/guardians and families
- providing access to the *Interactions with Children Policy* for parents/guardians and families
- complying with the requirements of the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- being aware of service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- providing adequate supervision of children at all times (refer to *Definitions* and *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- communicating and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- delivering educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework (*Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework 2016*), that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- providing education and care to children in a way that:

- encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
- allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
- offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
- has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- developing warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion
- supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others
- using positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- assisting the Nominated Supervisor to develop a behaviour guidance plan in consultation with parents/guardians and other professionals as appropriate
- implementing a behaviour guidance plan and incorporating identified strategies and resources into the service program
- undertaking relevant training that will enable them to guide children who exhibit challenging behaviour
- maintaining ongoing communication and consultation with parents/guardians
- providing regular progress reports to the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor on the implementation and effectiveness of the agreed strategies contained in an individual behaviour guidance plan
- documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (Regulation 74)
- being aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- engaging in open communication with educators about their child
- informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)
- informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour
- working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

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 unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

ATTACHMENTS

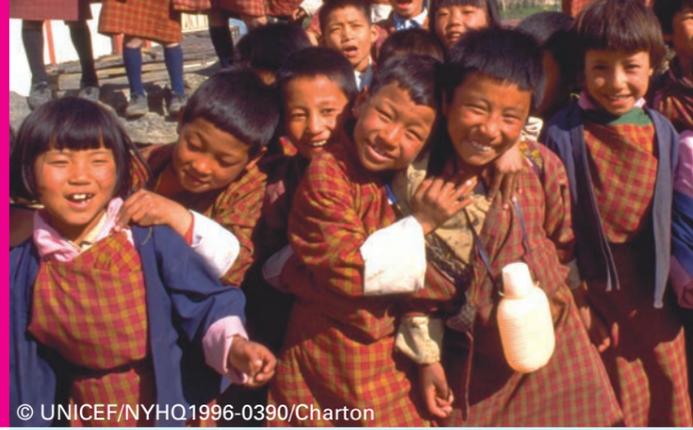
Nil

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Elsa Macleod Kindergarten in October 2017.

REVIEW DATE: AUGUST 2018

A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.



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- Article 1** Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.
- Article 2** The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.
- Article 3** All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
- Article 4** Governments should make these rights available to children.
- Article 5** Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights properly.
- Article 6** Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.
- Article 7** Children have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.
- Article 8** Governments should respect a child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.
- Article 9** Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might harm the child.
- Article 10** Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.
- Article 11** Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.
- Article 12** Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.
- Article 13** Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.
- Article 14** Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters.
- Article 15** Children have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

- Article 16** Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their family and their home.
- Article 17** Children have the right to reliable information from the media. Mass media such as television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.
- Article 18** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.
- Article 19** Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.
- Article 20** Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
- Article 21** When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether children are adopted in the country of their birth or if they are taken to live in another country.
- Article 22** Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children who are born in that country.
- Article 23** Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.
- Article 24** Children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Richer countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
- Article 25** Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.
- Article 26** The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.
- Article 27** Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.
- Article 28** Children have the right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthier countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

- Article 29** Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures.
- Article 30** Children have the right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live, as long as this does not harm others.
- Article 31** Children have the right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.
- Article 32** Governments should protect children from work that is dangerous or that might harm their health or education.
- Article 33** Governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.
- Article 34** Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.
- Article 35** Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.
- Article 36** Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.
- Article 37** Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in a prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their family.
- Article 38** Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.
- Article 39** Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.
- Article 40** Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.
- Article 41** If the laws of a particular country protects children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should override the Convention.
- Article 42** Governments should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure that all children get all their rights.

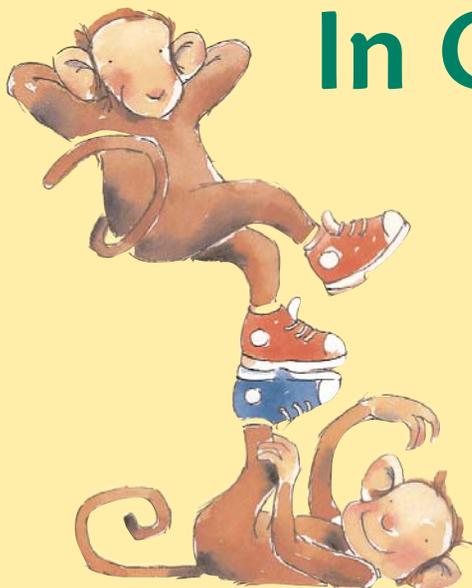
Go to www.unicef.org/crc to read all the articles.



unicef 

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In Child Friendly Language



"Rights" are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights. These rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Almost every country has agreed to these rights. All the rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. Sometimes, we have to think about rights in terms of what is the best for children in a situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. As you grow, you have more responsibility to make choices and exercise your rights.

Article 1
Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2
All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3
All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4
The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Article 5
Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6
You have the right to be alive.

Article 7
You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8
You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9
You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 10
If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11
You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12
You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13
You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14
You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

Article 15
You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Article 16
You have the right to privacy.

Article 17
You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18
You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

Article 19
You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 20
You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21
You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

Article 22
You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23
You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24
You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25
If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 26
You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27
You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28
You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29
Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30
You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

Article 31
You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32
You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33
You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

Article 34
You have the right to be free from sexual abuse. Article 35 No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 36
You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

Article 37
No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

Article 38
You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39
You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40
You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41
If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42
You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.

Articles 43 to 54
These articles explain how governments and international organizations like UNICEF will work to ensure children are protected with their rights.



unicef



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien





VISION

Professionals who adhere to this Code of Ethics act in the best interests of all children and work collectively to ensure that every child is thriving and learning.

PREAMBLE

Early Childhood Australia recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been nurturing and teaching children on this land for thousands of years. The *Code of Ethics* acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional ways of being and caring for children.

This *Code of Ethics* is informed by the principles in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1991) and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007). A Code of Ethics is an aspirational framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of childhood professionals who work with, or on behalf, of children and their families. In this *Code of Ethics* the protection and wellbeing of children is paramount and therefore speaking out or taking action in the presence of unethical practice is an essential professional responsibility.

Being ethical involves thinking about everyday actions and decision making, either individually or collectively, and responding with respect to all concerned. The *Code of Ethics* recognises that childhood professionals are in a unique position of trust and influence in their relationships with children, families, colleagues and the community, therefore professional accountability is vital.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The core principles in this *Code of Ethics* are based on the fundamental and prized values of the profession. They act to guide decision making in relation to ethical responsibilities. These core principles require a commitment to respect and maintain the rights and dignity of children, families, colleagues and communities.

- Each child has unique interests and strengths and the capacity to contribute to their communities.
- Children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- Effective learning and teaching is characterised by professional decisions that draw on specialised knowledge and multiple perspectives.
- Partnerships with families and communities support shared responsibility for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Democratic, fair and inclusive practices promote equity and a strong sense of belonging.
- Respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships are central to children's education and care.
- Play and leisure are essential for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Research, inquiry and practice-based evidence inform quality education and care.



DEFINITIONS OF TERMS IN ECA'S CODE OF ETHICS

A CODE OF ETHICS—defines the core aspirational values of the profession and provides guidance for professional decision making especially when there are conflicting obligations or responsibilities.

CORE PRINCIPLES—fundamental and prized values of the profession.

FAMILIES—the people who have significant care responsibilities for and/or kinship relationships with a child.

CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL—a person who works with or on behalf of children and families in education and care settings.

COMMUNITIES—a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

COLLEAGUES—includes employers and those with whom you work directly or more broadly.

STUDENT—a person undertaking study at a secondary or tertiary institution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The first *Code of Ethics* for the Australian early childhood profession was developed in 1988; it was widely cited and used for 19 years. The first review of the *Code of Ethics* began in 2003 with the second version launched in 2007. The second review of the *Code of Ethics* began in 2014 with the third (current) version approved by the ECA National Board in February 2016.

ECA is grateful to everyone who has contributed to the development and ongoing review of the *Code of Ethics* including those who have participated in consultation surveys, forums and workshops over the years as well as those who have provided advice and oversight through their service on reference and advisory groups. We would particularly like to acknowledge those engaged in writing each version of the Code.



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Code of Ethics



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children



IN RELATION TO CHILDREN, I WILL:

- act in the best interests of all children
- create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance their learning
- provide a meaningful curriculum to enrich children's learning, balancing child and educator initiated experiences
- understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing
- ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future
- collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity
- value the relationship between children and their families and enhance these relationships through my practice
- ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin
- negotiate children's participation in research, by taking into account their safety, privacy, levels of fatigue and interest
- respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment
- safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when shared on digital platforms.



IN RELATION TO COLLEAGUES, I WILL:

- encourage others to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours
- build a spirit of collegiality and professionalism through collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty
- acknowledge and support the diverse strengths and experiences of colleagues in order to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills
- use constructive processes to address differences of opinion in order to negotiate shared perspectives and actions
- participate in a 'lively culture of professional inquiry' to support continuous improvement
- implement strategies that support and mentor colleagues to make positive contributions to the profession
- maintain ethical relationships in my online interactions.



IN RELATION TO FAMILIES, I WILL:

- support families as children's first and most important teacher and respect their right to make decisions about their children
- listen to and learn with families and engage in shared decision making, planning and assessment practices in relation to children's learning, development and wellbeing
- develop respectful relationships based on open communication with the aim of encouraging families' engagement and to build a strong sense of belonging
- learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems
- respect families' right to privacy and maintain confidentiality.



IN RELATION TO THE PROFESSION, I WILL:

- base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whom I work
- take responsibility for articulating my professional values, knowledge and practice and the positive contribution our profession makes to society
- engage in critical reflection, ongoing professional learning and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession
- work within the scope of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications
- encourage qualities and practices of ethical leadership within the profession
- model quality practice and provide constructive feedback and assessment for students as aspiring professionals
- mentor new graduates by supporting their induction into the profession
- advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care.

IN RELATION TO COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY, I WILL:

- learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing
- collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families
- use research and practice-based evidence to advocate for a society where all children have access to quality education and care
- promote the value of children's contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities
- work to promote increased appreciation of the importance of childhood including how children learn and develop, in order to inform programs and systems of assessment that benefit children
- advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

