**Acacia Indochinese Community Support Association Inc.**
**Hội Tương Trợ Cộng Đồng Đông Dương Acacia**

**ACACIA CHILDREN'S CENTRES**
Reg No: A0039290V    ABN: 76 707 214 671

**Policy and Procedure**
**Educational program**

## Purpose

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

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

## Policy Statement

**Values**

Acacia is committed to:

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

**Scope**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day to day charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Acacia

**Background and legislation**

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (National Law) requires services to deliver an educational program (curriculum) that is based on an approved learning framework. In Victoria, approved learning frameworks for the early childhood sector are the *Early Years Learning Framework (Belonging, Being & Becoming)* (refer to *Sources*) and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*). These documents are underpinned by practices and principles that encourage reflection and provide educators with a thorough understanding of the pedagogy of early childhood curriculum in a contemporary context.

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

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

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

- pedagogical practices of educators and co-ordinators
- development of programs that promote children's learning across five learning outcomes"
  - ➢ Children have a strong sense of identity
  - ➢ Children are connected with and contribute to their world
  - ➢ Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
  - ➢ Children are confident and involved learners
  - ➢ Children are effective communicators

- The educational program must also be underpinned by the service's philosophy, *refer to Centre's philosophy.*

**Definitions**

**Agency:** Being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world.

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

**Belonging**:  Knowing where and with whom you belong

**Being:** *Being* recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life.

**Becoming:** Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. *Becoming* reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

**Co-construct:** Learning takes place as children interact with educators and other children as they work together in partnership.

**Critical reflection:** Reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice.

**Curriculum:** In the early childhood 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'.

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

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

**Inclusion:** Involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.

**Intentional teaching:** Educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always' been done that way.

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

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

**Learning relationships:** Relationships that further children's learning and development. Both the adult and the child have intent to learn from each other.

**Literacy:** In the early years literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing.

**Numeracy:** Broadly includes understanding about numbers, patterns, measurement, spatial awareness and data as well as mathematical thinking, reasoning and counting.

**Pedagogies:** Practices that are intended to promote children's learning.

**Pedagogy:** Early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching and learning.

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

**Scaffold:** The educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.

**Sustained shared Thinking:** Learning takes place as children interact with educators and other children as they work together in partnership. All involved are learning together, as the adult does not see themselves as the only expert.
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**Technologies:** Includes much more than computers and digital technologies used for information, communication and entertainment. Technologies are the diverse range of products that make up the

designed world. These products extend beyond artefacts designed and developed by people and include processes, systems, services and environments.

**Transitions:** The process of moving between home and childhood setting, between a range of different early childhood settings, or from childhood setting to full-time school.

**Wellbeing:** Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs - the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life (adapted from Laevers 1994). It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience

## Procedures

*The Approved Provider and persons with management or control are responsible for:*

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

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

- ensuring that the educational program is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 168)
- ensuring the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child are accommodated in the educational program (Section 168) (refer *to Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- displaying a copy of the educational program at the service in a location accessible to parents/guardians
- ensuring that each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation
- ensuring that there is a record of learning and development for each child, and that it is updated and maintained on an ongoing basis
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, educators, children and families
- ensuring regular communication is established between the service and parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development.
- ensuring that Educators develop a program which is based on the individual child and reflected their diverse cultural heritage and interests. Programs will also reflect the philosophy and goals of the centre

*Educators and other staff are responsible for:*

- delivering an educational program that is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (refer to *Definitions*)
- developing a program which is based on the individual child and reflected their diverse cultural heritage and interests.
- ensuring programs will also reflect the philosophy and goals of the centre
- ensuring programs will also reflect the specific curriculum that the centre follows *Refer to appendix 1*
- considering the developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child in the educational program (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- assessing and documenting each child's needs, interests, experiences, participation and progress in relation to the educational program in a way that is easy to understand for parents/guardians through the cycle of planning *Refer to appendix 1*
- making information available to parents/guardians about their child's participation in the educational program
- communicating regularly with parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development
- planning and participating in Excursions and incursions are an important part of our curriculum. These support and extend on what the children are currently learning or are interested in.
- developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, children and families.
- critically reflect on the best methods to use to teach for each area of our curriculum including in group work, individual work, adventuring outside of the centre on outings or inviting families' people to share their knowledge and skills with children. *Refer to appendix 1*

- Our educational curriculum to be delivered in various methods throughout the day. Through critical reflection our pedagogical practices are altered to suit the needs of the families, children, community and environment. *Refer to appendix 1*
- Follow five Principles that reflect contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children's learning and early childhood pedagogy. The Principles underpin practice that is focused on assisting all children to make progress in relation to the Learning Outcomes.

  1) Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
  2) Partnerships
  3) High expectations and equity
  4) Respect for diversity
  5) Ongoing learning and reflective practice

The principles of early childhood pedagogy underpin practice. Educators draw on a rich repertoire of pedagogical practices to promote children's learning by:

- adopting holistic approaches
- emergent curriculum
- being responsive to children. Will focus on balance and flexibility. Children will enjoy autonomy in their choices of learning experiences. Staff will ensure that there are real choices eg indoor or outdoor play, quiet or active play, individual or small group times, and large group experiences
- planning and implementing learning through play
- intentional teaching
- carrying out projects on subject that are child or adult focused
- creating physical and social learning environments that have a positive impact on children's learning
- valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families
- providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transition
- through everyday flexible and unrushed routines children are guided by educators within an enriched learning environment that help all children to feel secure, confident and included
- assessing and monitoring children's learning to inform provision and to support children in achieving learning outcomes

*Parents/guardians are responsible for:*
-  communicating regularly with the service in relation to their child's learning and development
- providing input to the development of the educational program in collaboration with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and children.

### References

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*: http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework
- *Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*: http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au

- *National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program*: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* – Resources for Professionals:
  https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldf.aspx
- *Marrung – Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026*
  https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/marrung.aspx

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**Appendix 1**

**Curriculum**

Acacia curriculum is influenced by the Early Years Learning Frameworks.

Acacia implements various curriculums throughout our overall daily educational program.  Each individual curriculum has an important place to teach children a holistic and dynamic play based program that caters for each individual child's needs.
Our curriculum experience includes the following:

1. Academic concepts/ areas such as:
   - STEAM
     - Science
     - Technology
     - Engineering
     - Creative Arts (drama, music, movement, visual)
     - Maths

   - Literacy
   - Environmental and Sustainability awareness
   - Community & cultural awareness

2. Cultural program,
   - Educators recognise bi- and multi-lingual as an asset and support these children to maintain their first language and learn English as a second language
   - Educators promote cultural awareness in all children, including greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being
3. Emotional Literacy
   - Acacia recognises the importance of teaching children to understand their feelings, so they can manage then in real life scenarios. P.A.TH.S is one example on a curriculum that is taught in all rooms
4. Health and safety
   - Road safety; Acacia understands the importance of teaching children the foundations of  using the roads and surrounding when walking, riding bike and being a passenger on a moving vehicle, please refer to our road safety policy.
   - Body awareness:  Teaching children to be aware of their own safety.
   - Healthy eating:  teaching children about nutrition.

- Smiles for miles:  Acacia places importance on making children and families aware of their own dental hygiene and practices.  Smiles for miles assists us to promotes these in our daily program.

5.  Sustainability
- Acacia promotes the importance of teaching children about environmental awareness to sustain their future in the modern world.

6.  ELLA
- Acacia provides a lingual program where children to understand another language and culture

7.  Animal Fun
- Acacia provides a movement program promoting physical activity and mental health

**Documentation**

**Why do we need to document?**

Gathering and analysing information about what children know, can do and understand is part of the ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning. It helps educators (in partnership with children, families and other professionals) to:

- Plan effectively for children's current and future learning
- Communicate about children's learning and progress
- Determine the extent to which all children are progressing in their learning outcomes and if not, what might be impeding their progress
- Identify children who may need additional support in order to achieve particular learning outcomes, providing that support or assisting families to access specialist help
- Evaluate the effectiveness of learning opportunities, environments, and experiences offered, and the approaches taken to enable children's learning

Reflecting on pedagogy that will suit this context and  children at Acacia. , While acknowledging the important role of documentation, we also believe that there is no prescription about how it is done.

There are no mandated recipes or templates for documentation and for very good reason. Recognising the uniqueness of each service, there is no one-size-fits-all approach and educators are empowered to explore a range of styles and methods to determine what works best for their children, families, services and community.

This approach recognises the professionalism of the sector and allows educators to focus their energies on documentation that supports quality outcomes for children.

Aspects relating to documentation  include:

- Documentation is an important part of our work with children and families, not just because it is a requirement
- Children's voices and ideas should be captured in planning, documentation and evaluation
- Even experienced educators need to try different methods to find what is realistic, achievable and relevant for the children, families, educators, the setting and establish some benchmarks that are regularly reviewed

- We need to be selective in what we choose to document, because it is not possible to capture all of the rich experiences and learnings that occur every day
- We need to share our documentation efforts and experiences, and continue to learn, grow and develop
- We need to constantly review and remind ourselves why we are documenting and for whom
- We need to be clear about what the standards, learning frameworks and, if relevant, the funding agreements are asking us to do, as there are a number of myths emerging.

Acacia adopts clear guidelines in relation to programming for individuals which also reflects guidelines set by the regulatory authority. Educators must ensure the following:

- Educators will maintain individual files for each child, which include, set goals gathered data and assessments of children's learning and developmental progress.
- All documentations and assessments of children and the program must be available and accessible to all families and children
- All documentation and assessments of children and program must be kept for 3 years ( refer to record keeping policy)
- Educators will communicate with families in various ways such as: parent information sessions, informal teacher/parent interviews, daily verbal or written communication via tablets or children's learning portfolios, newsletters and displays.
- Educators will collaborate with families formally or informally to create and evaluate goals that support and extend children's current and future learning outcomes

All educators are expected to document children's learning using the cycle of planning.
Educators at Acacia will document or gather children's learning using the following methods: (this are some samples but may alter through reflective practices)

- Collecting data by recording information shared by family or children
- Collecting art samples
- Recording written observations
- Recording information using Digital form;  photos, videos, audio devices

**Cycle of Planning**

The Early Years Planning Cycle outlines the process early childhood professionals use to collect and interpret evidence that contributes to a detailed, up-to-date, strengths-based picture of children's learning and development to inform planning and practice decisions. This Planning Cycle is used to support assessment for learning 'which is designed to discover what children know and understand, based on what they make, write, draw, say and do.' (VEYLDF p. 13)

**The Early Years Planning Cycle supports:**
- purposeful observations over time
- collecting, analysing and assessing individual and group learning and development in different contexts
- making plans about each child and groups of children
- sharing information and collaborating with children, families, colleagues and other early childhood professionals
- reflecting on all aspects of events and experiences

- applying context to inform practice decisions
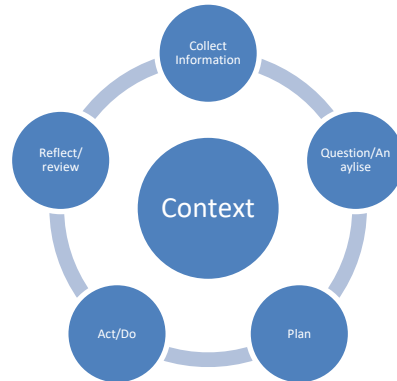


## Evaluation of Children's Program

According to VEYLDF and EYLF, assessment is designed to discover what children already know and understand, and then how their learning has grown through our program. .It make the educators aware of the best learning styles that promotes learning and participation for each individual child, therefore, enabling educators to plan the program for the future to best suit the group and provide the best outcome for each individual child's learning and development. All children benefit when assessment reflects a whole-child approach, providing a holistic view of learning and development.

Educators use a range of assessment tools processes and approaches to build on prior learning, avoiding duplication and ensuring the program is meaningful and respectful to each individual.

Educators at Acacia will evaluate individual children learning through the process of analysing observations and in summative assessments.
Educational theorist and their theories underpins our analysis and assessment process. All assessments are linked to the 5 learning outcomes of the EYLF and the academic concepts that each child has learnt.

Acacia believes that being open, honest and critically reflective in our self-assessment process and work helps to identify strengths in this area as well as identifying areas that need focus. This helps in identifying and informing families, other educators and professionals and authorised officers, how your documentation meets requirements and promotes each child's learning and development.

All educators, in collaboration, will reflect their teaching styles and pedagogical beliefs, to ensure that the current program reflects the current cultural context of the centre, families and community. We place a strong emphasis on team work and reflection as a whole body to provide the best inclusive and well-rounded experience and learning environment for all children

A quality improvement plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure that a reflective culture amongst educators is fostered.