

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

QUALITY AREA 1. | BWK VERSION 1.2



PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure that the educational program at Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc. is:

- based on an approved learning framework (EYLF, MTOP, VEYLDF)
- centred on child’s learning, development, wellbeing and safety
- designed to take into account the individual differences of each child; and
- based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- supporting each child to achieve learning outcomes consistent with the national *Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 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, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, families, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc., including during offsite excursions and learning experiences.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensuring that the educational program is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is based on an approved learning framework (<i>refer to Definitions</i>); 	R	R	√		√

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework; • is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child; • is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child (<i>National Law: Section 168</i>) 					
<p>Ensuring the educational program contributes to each child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a strong sense of identity • being connected with, and contributing to, their world • having a strong sense of wellbeing • being a confident and involved learner • being an effective communicator (<i>Regulation 73</i>) 	R	√	√		√
Designating a suitably qualified and experienced Educational Leader to direct the development and implementation of educational programs at the service (<i>Regulation 118</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring that the service's philosophy guides educational program and practice	√	√	√		√
Ensuring that assessments of each child's learning, development, needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program are documented (<i>Regulation 74(1)(a)(i)</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program are documented (<i>Regulation 74(1)(a)(ii)</i>)	R	√	√		√
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 (<i>Regulation 74(2)(a)(i)&(ii)</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring documentation is written in plain language and is easy to understand by both educators and families (<i>Regulation 74(2)(b)</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that there is a record of learning and development for each child, and that it is updated and maintained on an ongoing basis	R	√	√		√
Ensuring a copy of the educational program is displayed at the service and accessible to families (<i>Regulation 75</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that families 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 (<i>Regulation 76</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring regular communication is established between the service and families, and they are informed about their child's learning, development and progress	√	√	√	√	√
Undertaking critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation		√	√		√

Developing and evaluating the educational program in collaboration with the nominated supervisor, educators, children and families.		√	√	√	√
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BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

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 2022 V2 (Belonging, Being & Becoming)* (refer to Sources), the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to Sources) and *My Time Our Place, Framework for School age care in Australia 2022 V2* (refer to Source). The Frameworks are underpinned by contemporary theory and research evidence and provide educators with a thorough understanding of the pedagogical approach to of early childhood curriculum in Australia.

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. Educators daily practice and curriculum decision-making should be guided by an approved learning framework. An approved learning framework provides broad direction for educators to facilitate children’s learning. Each service must determine a method that suits their individual circumstances. To meet the requirements of the *National Regulations*, the assessment must include an analysis of each child’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 and support 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 V2 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 aim of *Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice* of the *National Quality Standard* is to ensure that the educational program and practice is stimulating and engaging and enhances children’s learning and development.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice
- Standard 1.1: The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development
- Standard 1.2: Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development
- Standard 1.3: Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

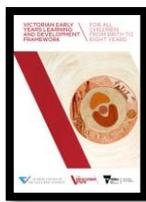
- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Approved learning framework: a guide which provides a vision for learning, pedagogical principles, practices and general goals or outcomes for children’s learning and how they might be attained. It provides a scaffold to assist educators to develop their own, more detailed curriculum relevant to their setting and the children and families attending. *The Early Years Learning Framework V2 (Belonging, Being & Becoming)*, *the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* and *My Time, Our Place V2; Framework for School Age Care in Australia* are approved learning frameworks for use in Victoria (*refer to Sources*).



Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework



The Early Years Learning Framework 2022 V2 (Belonging, Being & Becoming)



My Time, Our Place; Framework for School Age Care in Australia 2022 V2

Critical reflection: is a meaning-making process that assists informing future practice in ways that demonstrate an understanding of each child’s learning, development and wellbeing and implications for equity and social justice. It involves examining and analysing events, experiences and practices from a range of perspectives to inform future planning and decision-making (*Early Years Learning Framework 2022 V2 – refer to Sources*).

Educational program: a program referred to in section 168 of the Law. An educational program is to contribute to the following outcomes for each child:

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

Curriculum: in the early childhood setting curriculum includes all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning, development and wellbeing (*Early Years Learning Framework 2022 V2– refer to Sources; adapted from Te Whariki*).

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 should 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.

Learning: is the process of gaining knowledge, skills and dispositions and from birth children naturally use exploration to expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Life-long learning is acknowledged as a self-motivated process that extends intellectual, vocational and personal horizons which begins in early childhood and is continued throughout life. (*Early Years Learning Framework 2022 V2 – refer to Sources*).

Learning framework: Refer to approved learning framework above.

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

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

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2:* <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>
- 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
- Marrung – Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/aboriginal/Marrung_Aboriginal_Education_Plan_2016-2026.pdf
- My Time Our Place, Framework for School age care in Australia V2: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>
- Early Childhood Australia Professional Learning Modules <https://learninghub.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/modules/>
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Resources for Professionals:* <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Environmental Sustainability
- Inclusion and Equity
- Interactions with Children
- Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Road Safety and Safe Transport
- Sun Protection
- Supervision of Children
- Water Safety

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

- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).



ATTACHMENTS

- Our Curriculum for parents



AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc. In June 2023

REVIEW DATE: June 2025

ATTACHMENT 1



OUR CURRICULUM INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The term 'curriculum' is used to describe the sum total of the experiences, activities and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development.

At Bentleigh West Kindergarten we view children as competent learners. The Kindergarten's curriculum is based on a philosophy of teaching in a manner that is creative and stimulating, with a focus on learning from the child's perspective. Close observation of each child allows our staff to identify interests and strengths, which will then be incorporated into the curriculum.

The program is influenced by the emergent curriculum, and the 'Walker Learning Approach' which values children's ideas, makes learning more visible, celebrates children's competencies and challenges their thinking. Our curriculum is designed to allow children to make choices, scaffold their learning and developing, and it uses a range of different intentional teaching areas to conduct learning.

PLAY BASED LEARNING

Children today are immersed in technology and popular culture, and have increasing expectations placed on them regarding academic achievement. This places greater pressure on care and education environments to provide programs that focus on and maintain academic pursuits. However the importance of play as a vehicle for learning cannot be underestimated. Early childhood education has a long history of valuing play and this understanding is becoming more prevalent in primary education. It is also emphasised in the new national and Victorian frameworks for early years education and is being revitalised across many children's services. Promoting play based learning requires adults to rethink their notions of play and develop programs that integrate play and learning into the curriculum.

'Research shows that children are playing-learning individuals. In an open and tolerant atmosphere, where children are free to make their own choices, both play and learning dimensions will be present. Children do not separate play and learning unless they are influenced by adults.'

What is play based learning?

Play based learning draws from children's natural desire to engage in experiences based on their interests, strengths and developing skills. When children initiate play, they are more motivated to learn and develop positive dispositions towards learning. The educator's role in supporting play based learning is vital. Belonging Being and Becoming The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, outlines the many roles educators take in play and the range of strategies they use to support learning.

These include:

- Engaging in sustained shared conversations within play experience to extend children's thinking
- Providing a balance between child led, child initiated and educator supported learning
- Creating learning environments to support learning
- Interacting with babies and children within play to build attachment

- Supporting the inclusion of all children in play
- Recognising spontaneous teachable moments as they occur and using intentional teaching strategies such as demonstrating, and engaging in shared thinking and problem solving.

A play based program;

- Incorporates children's ideas and interests into planned experiences and routines
- Utilises children's ideas and interests to extend and create new experiences
- Utilises indoor and outdoor areas to facilitate play and learning
- Offers a variety of play spaces, e.g. art, dramatic play, sensory, construction
- Offers a range of open-ended experiences and materials
- Enables children to self select materials and play independently
- Enables children to transform play spaces
- Allows children to play for extended periods of time without interruption
- Allows children to extend their play and projects for extended periods
- Allows children to work alone or with others
- Caters for different abilities and learning styles
- Connects experiences to children's lives
- Links children's investigations to key learning areas or outcomes
- Offers flexible routines that have minimal disruption to children's play

Benefits of play based learning

'Play provides the most natural and meaningful process by which children can construct knowledge and understanding, practice skills, immerse themselves naturally in a broad range of literacy and numeracy and engage in productive, intrinsically motivating learning environments.' (Kathy Walker).

A play based program has many benefits for children as it facilitates the development of skills, dispositions and knowledge. An effective play based program can assist children to develop lifelong learning skills that will stay with them beyond the early learning environment.

Engaging in play based learning enables children to use and develop thinking skills such as problem solving, reasoning and lateral thinking. It offers opportunities to interact with others, develop communication strategies and work in collaboration with peers and adults. It can foster literacy, numeracy and the development of scientific concepts. As children are empowered to make decisions and initiate play, they become confident and motivated learners. This in turn fosters responsibility and self regulation. Play also provides children with many opportunities to resolve conflict, challenge unfair play and embrace diversity.

What does play based learning look like in practice?

The aim of the play based program is 'to promote a sense of wonder, exploration, investigation and interest in a rich range of materials, resources and opportunities in which the child can engage.' (Kathy Walker) The child is viewed as being instrumental to the way in which materials and equipment are selected and organised within the environment. Such environments are often described as child focused as children are constantly engaged in meaningful learning experiences. While children's interests form the basis of the program, the environment needs to be carefully planned and presented in ways that are inviting to young children.

All experiences are based on supporting a balance of child and adult initiated ideas and investigations, and utilise the indoor and outdoor areas equally. Specific play spaces or areas may be arranged within the environment to engage children in different areas of learning such as art, literacy and construction. Within each area children should be offered a range of open-ended and loose materials that can be used across different abilities and diverse interests. While this is particularly important for mixed age grouping within a single age group, it also enables children to explore their interests using their individual strengths and skills. As these aspects can differ greatly between children.

Play based program actively supports and includes all children. A key element of the play based program is the opportunity for children to pursue their interests for extended periods of time. Many programs for children rely heavily on themes, pre-planned activities and constant change. Regardless of how often children attend the program, it is vital for play spaces and experiences to be offered over extended periods. This enables children to fully explore materials and master new skills through repeated practice. When guided by children, the educator will soon become aware when experiences and materials need to be changed, extended or removed from the program.

It is also important to consider aspects such as storage and how children's play and learning will be displayed and shared with families. As children becoming increasingly competent, it is essential to offer more opportunities for self selection and independent play. Children should be free to move equipment and select materials from open shelving and storage areas. These opportunities empower children to construct their own learning and scaffold the learning of others. An effective program also supports self regulation and encourages children to become more responsible for their own play and learning.

The role of the adult in play based learning

A play based program does not limit or reduce the role of the adult in children's play. Although children are less likely to want adult intervention in their play as they become older, an interested adult can still play a critical role in enhancing children's play and learning. Effective play based learning requires adults to have a strong image of the child and view them as capable, competent co-constructors of the learning environment. The adult develops positive relationships with children and families and uses their observations of children, information from families and colleagues, and meaningful interactions with children to determine the curriculum. As this knowledge changes, the program is also adapted to mirror children's changing interests and skills.

The role of the adult in the play based program is to;

- Interact with and observe children to gain insights into their interests, skills and knowledge
- Be responsive to children's cues and the way they use the environment and materials
- Seek information from families and colleagues to better understand children and plan for their learning
- Create inviting play areas with open-ended materials
- Create an unhurried environment where children have time to explore and extend their investigations
- Seek out resources and information that will extend children's interests and learning
- Provide modelling and instruction when required
- Offer suggestions and encourage children to learn from each other
- Modify play areas as children's interest change
- Be an active learner