



P.O. Box 1050, Woden, ACT, 2606
 Ph: 6281 3121 Fax: 6281 7077
 Email: wodenecc@tpg.com.au

CURRICULUM PLAN STATEMENT

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE

Document number:		Version:	4
Date of issue:	September 2013	Contact:	Reesha Stefek
Date of review:			
Updated:	September 2019		

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice		
1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
1.3	Assessment and Planning	Educators and coordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Regulations	
55	Quality improvement plans
73-76	Educational program and practice
118	Educational Leader
155	Interactions with children

Introduction

Woden Early Childhood Centre's (WECC) philosophy is based on the belief that children grow and develop through a social, constructivist approach to learning. That is, children develop through processes of social construction, through interactions with others and the environment around them.

We view curriculum as everything that is provided for the children to experience from the programs or services offered by WECC. It includes aspects such as:

- daily routines like mealtimes
- physical environment, materials and equipment
- provisions, experiences and activities
- the relationships, interactions and engagement of children with other children and educators
- partnerships and communication with families, other agencies and with the community.

The development of our curriculum is based on educators' ongoing professional development, so it is a living and dynamic process that changes over time. The changes are then based on our critical reflection in line with new meanings and new understandings of how children learn and grow, derived from contemporary theory, research and practice. We have many years of experience in early childhood

education, each educator has a wealth of knowledge to share, and we've used that experience to create early childhood programs and learning experiences that contribute to the success and growth of children. WECC has a developmentally appropriate curriculum for your child that will prepare them for the years beyond childcare. We believe family is everything and that parents are children's first teachers. Working closely with your family is important to us.

We also believe that the environment is the third teacher and it is a resource we use well. Children are provided with natural resources that are open-ended to stimulate and challenge their thinking. We spend large amounts of time in the outdoors creating environments that will engage children's thinking for years to come. This is play with a purpose and provides the children with a sense of contributing to their world, assisting them to develop problem solving skills and learning to negotiate with others.

What is a curriculum plan?

The Early Years Learning Framework says that a curriculum is - "all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development".

Source ACECQA Early Years Learning Framework pg. 9.

The curriculum is the philosophy that underpins the experiences, routines and the program. The curriculum consists of planned experiences, intentional teaching and spontaneous activities, as well as the routines. Every child and adult have the power to create the curriculum.

'The emergent curriculum is based on the child's interest and what is going on in the classroom. It builds on experience within classroom and community, teacher's interests, as well as living together. It is still planned but you do not introduce it to the children, the children introduce it to you. The stimulus for this curriculum can be anything for example learning about bones because of a peer that broke their leg, events in a child's life (i.e. divorce, death of a pet, a sibling being born) or part of everyday (dealing with conflict, routines). Any topic you choose can integrate language arts, art, motor skills, cooperative learning and responsibility. The benefit of the emergent curriculum is that it is socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful.'

Source Hub Pages

At WECC we encourage families to be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating of our program.

Within a holistic approach to curriculum there are opportunities for children to make choices and take on new challenges. These opportunities include:

- building on their interests, strengths, ideas and opinions
- strengthening their relationships and interactions with their peers, families, educators and the community
- developing their ability to acknowledge and confidently express their emotions
- progressing their need to investigate, negotiate, problem solve and think critically
- supporting their perspective of diversity, inclusion, social justice and equity
- developing their sense of identity and self-worth, and their relationship with the world
- supporting their physical, social, cognitive and linguistic development and learning needs

In order to provide a holistic approach to our curriculum we need to have an inquiry-based approach, strengths-based approach, anti-bias approach and a child-centered approach. We do this through noticing, observing, recognising and responding to the children. We make the most out of spontaneous teachable moments and take delight in the small things. It's a continuing process of collecting evidence and information, identifying the development of learning and reflecting upon our daily practices. The curriculum is supported through the provision of materials we provide, our interactions, our procedures and by respecting diversity in those involved with WECC.

We believe children have rights and that through a holistic approach we are able to support and meet their needs. This means valuing and respecting families, beliefs, cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices and lifestyle choices.

The Early Years Learning Framework for Children's Services is Australia's first National Early Years Learning Framework for Early Childhood educators. The aim of this document is to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to five years and through the transition to school. It is a flexible document with room for educators' ideas, creativity and personal philosophies. The Framework puts children's learning at the core and comprises three inter-related elements: Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes.

The following five Principles reflect contemporary theories and research evidence about children's learning and Early Childhood pedagogy. These principles underpin practice and focuses on assisting 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. Our educators draw on the rich pedagogical practices to promote children's learning by adopting the following Practices:

1. Holistic approaches
2. Responsiveness to children
3. Learning through play
4. Intentional teaching
5. Learning environments
6. Cultural competence
7. Continuity of learning and transitions
8. Assessment for learning.

The following Learning Outcomes demonstrate how the three elements of the framework combine to guide curriculum decision-making and assessment to promote children's learning. Children's learning is ongoing and each child's progression towards the outcomes will be in different and equally meaningful ways. Our educators plan with each child and the outcomes in mind. Knowledge of individual children, their strengths and capabilities guide our educators' professional judgement to ensure all children are engaging in a range of experiences across all the Learning Outcomes in ways that optimise their learning.

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators.

It is well recognised that the best way for children to learn is through the medium of play. In WECC we support each child's development by following a process-orientated, play-based curriculum. Put simply, this means that we provide a wide variety of play experiences based on each child's interests. All of these experiences are to facilitate and support certain aspects of the child's development. Learning occurs as the child experiences things for themselves.

It is not the final outcome of the experience that matters as much as how the child arrives there. For example, it is not really important whether or not a painting is what an adult considers to be an 'accurate' representation. Rather, it is important that the child is developing pre-writing skills through representation on the page and refining their hand-eye-co-ordination and fine motor skills. When the children learn in this participatory way, it is not only an enjoyable experience for them but a lasting one - the discoveries and

understanding that they develop will stay with them throughout their schooling, providing a sound foundation on which to build their learning.

Positive self-concepts

Through the curriculum we provide the children with positive messages about themselves and others, building their self-esteem and relationships with each other. We see them as capable and competent learners.

When children feel valued, they want to contribute, achieve and be part of something. Their behaviour is more likely to be appropriate to the learning environment. This is a learning process for them, and it takes time and patience, and we believe that the benefits are great not only for the child but for all involved. This is an investment of time and energy from educators who respect and value the children and allows the child to develop a positive self-image. We provide a warm, loving and supportive environment, where the child feels confidence, develops a strong sense of wellbeing and feels part of something bigger than themselves.

We feel that it is important that our children are valued and respected both by other children and other adults. A growing awareness of the needs of others is always emphasized in WECC e.g. experiences are left tidy or utensils clean to present to the next person using them.

We try to help our children develop ways of dealing with difficult situations if and when they arise, providing them with appropriate language and strategies.

Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. Therefore, if they choose an experience, they also choose the rules that go with that experience e.g. the child that chooses to cook also chooses to wash up, the child who chooses to dress-up hangs up the clothes afterwards.

We recognise that people who are respected themselves will show respect for others both now and in the future. We want to help you raise respectful citizens of the future.

Children's portfolios

A child's progress cannot be measured on results alone, but rather also on the skills and knowledge they are developing and refining throughout the year. Educators will regularly photograph and observe your child, with this information being entered into their portfolio on OWNA, which your child and you have access to at all times.

Each child will have a portfolio, which is used to document the time your child spends in care. Each educator in your child's room will contribute to their portfolio, and families are encouraged to contribute as well.

Included in the portfolios are photos, daily journals, learning stories and written observations on play and how this relates to the child's development and the learning outcomes. Based on these observations we develop the program for the room. We also create developmental summaries which are handed out half yearly.

Additional needs

WECC has access to additional support agencies if needed. These agencies assist educators to effectively educate and care for children who have additional needs.

Educators will also work in conjunction with other agencies, appropriate to the needs of the child. Room Leaders are available to discuss any concerns families may have in regard to the child's development and can advise on whether it be appropriate to seek further assistance.

Grouping of children

WECC has four rooms, Babies (birth to 18 months), Toddlers (18 months to 2.5 years), Intro (2.5 years to 3.5 years) and Pre-School (3.5 years to school age). For a child to move from the room that they are in there needs to be a vacancy in the next room, and the child needs to be ready (as does the family).

We transition the children over a two-week period, however sometimes the child has other ideas and we are happy to follow their lead. This may mean your child visits twice and then thinks they are in the 'big room'. If vacancies allow, then we are happy to facilitate this.

Learning centers

Learning Centers serve as an important tool to foster children's education and development. While each room is set up very differently from the next, they all have a variety of Learning Centers such as blocks, art and craft, creativity and a space for group times. Each Learning Centre offers different learning opportunities for the children. It may be something completely new to the child, something they have attempted previously, or it could be an old familiar activity that they really enjoy. Offering a variety of experiences for the children assists them develop and refine different skills. At all times it is important to remember that it is the process not the end product we are looking at, in relation to the children's learning and development.

The Environment

Educators also provide an established environment that is rich in interesting, relevant materials and equipment that is open-ended. The environment's natural features are nurtured and protected.

Aesthetics of the environment are important. Lack of clutter and thoughtful presentation of objects and materials highlight educators' respect for the environment, for children's work and the educators' workplace, as well as a welcoming space for families and others. The environment also reflects the cultural diversity and heritage of families within WECC and of the wider community.

A carefully planned and well-maintained environment enables:

- children to play and engage with materials in ways that foster curiosity and manage risk taking
- promotion of a sense of belonging
- children to understand and care for their environment, leading to a lifelong respect for the environment
- natural materials such as sand and clay, blocks, fabric and recycled materials and the use of paint and drawing implements to provide the daily tools children use to express their thoughts and ideas
- children to use their imagination and thinking abilities to investigate all the possible ways of how these materials can be used
- the use of indoor and outdoor spaces concurrently whenever possible, allowing children to have ready access to materials and equipment
- stability of the environment, materials and equipment. This provides children with time to become familiar with materials, to practice new skills or to reflect on and revisit ideas and consider possibilities for deeper or different meanings
- educators to add interest, complexity and challenge through adding materials to provoke new ideas and extend the possibilities of an investigation
- any changes in the stability of the environment to be discussed and negotiated with the children.

The Educational Leader

Under the laws and Regulations relating to the National Quality Standard (NQS), each service is required to appoint an Educational Leader to support, guide and mentor educators with planning, curriculum,

practice and ongoing learning. At WECC we define the role of Educational Leader as: A senior educator charged with the task of challenging, guiding, educating and sharing enlightenment with the team of educators. The Educational Leader is passionate about and focuses on pedagogy, philosophy, documentation, theory, learning, and researching. The Educational Leader has knowledge, understanding and the ability to implement the National Quality Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework. They also have a strong commitment to continuous Quality Improvement within WECC. Their role is to lead the development and implementation of the educational curriculum within WECC, to establish clear goals and provide educators with clear expectations for practices and learning. The Educational Leader works closely with each educator under the guidance of the Nominated Supervisor or Director.

Excursions

Visits to such places as the National Botanical Gardens, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Zoo and Aquarium, the library and the local shops are an important part of children's education and give valuable opportunities for language and social development. We feel that it is important for children to be able to participate in this as they get to know and understand their local area. Regular visits to our local parks contribute to this. Children witness the constantly changing environment as buildings are erected in our area. Such is the spontaneous nature of our practice that we will often respond immediately to interests by taking the children out of WECC. We will ask you to complete a permission form allowing this to happen. Do not be surprised to discover news of an impromptu trip when you collect your child.

Sources and references

- Guide to the National Quality Standard ACECQA (2011)
- ACECQA, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia– Being, Belonging and Becoming (2009)
- Hub Pages, <http://hamiltonk270.hubpages.com/hub/The-Project-Approach-Thematic-Planning-and-Emergent-Curriculum>

Authorisation

Jennifer Hayes
President
2019 WECC Management Committee