

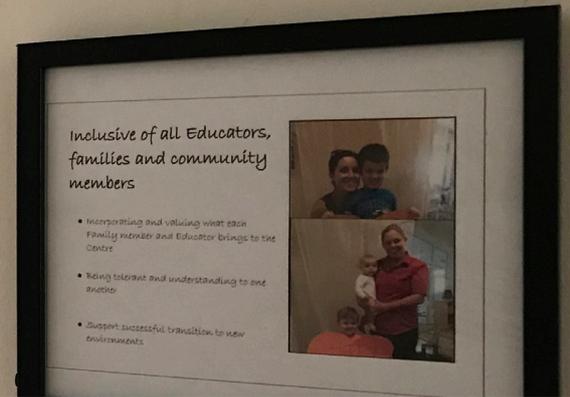
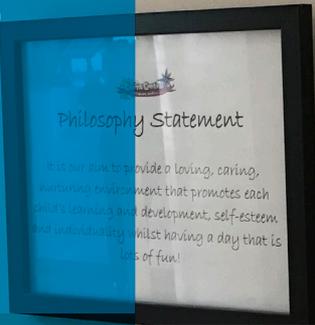


Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

QUALITY AREA 7

OUR PHILOSOPHY

REVIEWING YOUR SERVICE PHILOSOPHY



The statement of philosophy reflects the beliefs and values of those who are associated with a service. Together with the Approved Learning Framework, it assists educators in considering the service's approach to learning, development and wellbeing. It should also underpin policies and procedures, and guide all aspects of a service's operations and practices.

All services are required to have a current statement of philosophy in place which is reviewed on a regular basis. An effective way of communicating the philosophy is to ensure that it is included in the induction of new team members and in the enrolment and orientation of new families.

LINKS TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

7.1.1 Service philosophy and purpose

A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

A written statement of philosophy outlines the purpose and principles under which the service operates. It should also reflect the guiding principles of the National Quality Framework (section 3(3) of the National Law), and the Approved Learning Frameworks (Element 1.1.1).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REVIEW YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

Regularly reviewing the philosophy ensures it meets the needs of the service and all current stakeholders. With changes in children and families at the service, as well as educators, leadership and management, it is essential that the philosophy remains a 'living' document.

A review provides the opportunity to stop, reflect, and rethink about 'what we do and why we do it'. It also enables any new developments and opportunities to be considered, such as new research to inform practice, changes in legislation, professional

development opportunities, changes to policies and procedures, and conversations between educators, children and families.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

All those involved in the service should have a voice in the development and review of the statement of philosophy.

When the educational leader, nominated supervisor, co-ordinators and educators all contribute to the review of the statement of philosophy, they will have a better understanding of how the philosophy underpins everyday practices and decision-making.

Also, their involvement creates ownership – it encourages commitment and willingness to put the philosophy into practice.

Encouraging families, children, educators and key community stakeholders to be meaningfully involved may also be used to demonstrate how Quality Area 6 of the NQS is met. Inviting children to be involved and incorporating their views will show how their ideas are respected and valued, further developing their sense of agency (QA1).

THE REVISION PROCESS

The process for revising the statement of philosophy can include the following steps:

1. If relevant, consider the vision of the larger organisation your service is a part of.
2. Critically reflect on the existing philosophy (if you have one in place). Is it still relevant?
3. Identify and document the values and beliefs of all those involved in the service (including children, families, educators, staff, management and relevant community representatives).
4. Develop a shared vision. Reflect on how this might be achieved.
5. Decide what it should say and how it should look.
6. Draft the philosophy and obtain further input and feedback from those involved in the service.
7. Set timeframes for the next review.
8. Display the philosophy.

For steps 2, 3 and 4, the following table may be useful to evoke reflection and discussion:

Why? Philosophy	How? Practice	What? Principles
Why do you do what you do?	How does your philosophy shape and guide the operation of the service?	What is achieved?
Who is it benefitting?		What are the outcomes for children, families, educators and the community?
Why is it important?	What practices are embedded in the service, that promote the service's values and beliefs?	
	How do you involve children in the process of reviewing the philosophy?	

PRINCIPLES/OUTCOMES

When looking at principles/outcomes for your statement of philosophy, you may wish to consider the following:

- The rights and best interests of the child underpin all practice. Their safety, health and wellbeing are paramount. Each is respected without discrimination or bias, and has a voice.
- Children are viewed as successful, competent and capable learners who are given opportunities to construct their own understandings, contribute to the learning of others, and participate in decisions that affect them.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity are embedded in practice. Children are given every opportunity to succeed and their diverse circumstances, cultural background and abilities are respected and valued.

- Collaborative partnerships in the community are developed and maintained.
- Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are acknowledged, respected and valued.
- The child in the context of their family is valued. Trusting, supportive relationships and collaborative partnerships are developed and maintained with families.
- Management, team members and educators are dedicated to quality outcomes for children. They are professional, committed to lifelong learning, skilled, knowledgeable, reflective and collaborative.
- Continuous improvement, best practice and quality outcomes underpin practice. Current research, theories and understandings are considered and applied in the context of the uniqueness of the service, through a process of ongoing critical reflection.
- Children are supported to become environmentally responsible which is embedded in practice, program and policies.

It may also be helpful to refer to the:

- service's Quality Improvement Plan
- Guiding Principles of the National Quality Framework
- Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics.

ASSESSMENT AND RATING

During the assessment and rating visit the authorised officer may:

- discuss how the service's philosophy statement guides pedagogy and curriculum decisions
- observe the values stated in the service philosophy being reflected in the service's environment, policies and procedures
- sight documentation relating to the service's review of its statement of philosophy (such as staff meeting minutes, emails to families etc)
- sight evidence that the service's statement of philosophy is included in the induction process for all team members and in the enrolment and orientation process for families.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Visit the ACECQA website at www.acecqa.gov.au for:

[Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

[Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework](#)

[My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care](#)

Other useful resources:

[Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics](#)

[A simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)