

# Information sheet

## My TIME, OUR PLACE

### Principles: Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning

Critical reflection is a meaning-making process that involves a deeper level of thinking and evaluation.

A robust culture of critical reflection is established when educators as a team, as well as children and families, are all involved in an ongoing cycle of review.

As professionals, educators are committed to lifelong learning and seek out opportunities to strengthen their professional knowledge and skills to support continuous quality improvement in practice.

This information sheet provides a summary of the amendments to the *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0, 2022 (MTOP V2.0)* Principle, Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning. It provides you with reflective questions as you consider your practice, service philosophy and children and young people's program in relation to this principle.



#### Links to the National Quality Standard (NQS)

The NQS recognises the potential of the educational program and practices to enhance each child's learning and development. The MTOP V2.0 Principle, Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning is reflected in several quality areas of the NQS, with a particular focus in:

##### QA1: Educational program and practice

**Element 1.2.1:** Intentional teaching – Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.

**Standard 1.3:** Assessment and planning – Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.

##### QA4: Staffing arrangements

**Standard 4.2:** Professionalism – Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.

##### QA7: Governance and Leadership

**Element 7.1.1:** Service philosophy and purpose – A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

**Standard 7.2:** Leadership – Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

Children’s learning is ongoing, and each child will progress towards the EYLF V2.0 Learning Outcomes in different and equally meaningful ways, noting that learning is not always predictable and linear.

## What is the change?

The approved learning framework Principle Ongoing learning and reflective practice has been renamed to Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning.

The content has been updated to provide a clearer definition and distinction between reflection and critical reflection.

The principle has also been broadened to include:

- how critical reflection is actioned and the process undertaken with other colleagues, children and young people, and families
- additional prompts to support critical reflection in everyday practice
- educators as professionals who are committed to lifelong learning and the role of professional learning to support critical reflection and practice change.

## Rationale for the change

- The expansion of this principle strengthens critical reflection as part of everyday professional practice.
- This principle focuses on critical reflection as a key practice to drive continuous quality improvement in school age care.
- The commitment educators make to life-long learning to support critical reflection and improve practice and the role of professional learning is described.

## What will the change look like in practice?

- Regular team meetings or similar opportunities occur which include a cycle of inquiry that collaboratively affirms, challenges, supports and provides opportunities for team members to learn from each other and continually improve programs, practices and policies.
- Educators collaboratively reflect, explore, identify and evaluate diverse perspectives with respect to their own settings and context to inform future practice so that children and families benefit.
- Educators question established practices and think about why they are working in particular ways. In such a climate, there is opportunity to engage in deep thinking about pedagogy, equity and children’s wellbeing and use this information to inform programs, practices and policies,
- The service team welcomes, reflects and draws on the voices, priorities and strengths of the children and families.
- Educators are committed to their own ongoing professional learning and development, actively seeking out opportunities that develop capabilities, as well as collaborating with their colleagues on aspects of practice.
- Team members are provided with a range of professional development strategies that challenge and extend current thinking, recognising that ongoing learning can take many forms. This may include:

- » professional learning experiences within settings, such as professional conversations within teams, coaching and mentoring, professional reading, practitioner inquiry and participating in collaborative research projects
- » learning opportunities offered by others, such as, pursuing further study, attending professional conferences and completing professional learning programs.
- Educators demonstrate a commitment to learn more, regardless of their experience and current knowledge and skills.
- Educators share their new knowledge and skills gained through professional learning experiences and encourage and support the ongoing learning of others.

## Practice is evident for school age children when:

- educators are curious, passionate researchers who journey with children, young people and others in search of best practice
- educators collaboratively explore, identify and evaluate diverse perspectives within their context, share insights and involve and empower children and young people in decision making related to programs, practices and policies.
- the school age care environment is a place of research where children and young people have the right to explore the unknown and curiosity is fostered.

## Reflective questions and provocations

- What questions do you have about your practice? What are you challenged by? What are you curious about? How do you use critical reflection to challenge your beliefs/biases?
- What other theories, knowledge and world views could help you and your team make sense of what has been observed or experienced? How might those theories, knowledge and world views shape what we see and affect our practice?
  - » ACECQA – [A critical reflection planning meeting \(YouTube\)](#)
- How have you and your team used critical reflection to inform who is advantaged/included when we work in this way? Who is disadvantaged, excluded or silenced? How will children and young people benefit?
  - » Melinda Miller – [Critical Reflection](#)
- What strategies have you developed to build and maintain community partnerships that strengthen the professional learning community and support continuous quality improvement, enhancing outcomes for children, families, and the service team?
  - » ACECQA – [Standard 4.2 Professionalism – Case study 1](#)
- Sonya Shoptaugh, believes that “to enter into a style of teaching which is based on questioning what we’re doing and why, on listening to children, on thinking about

how theory is translated into practice and how practice informs theory, is to enter into a way of working where professional development takes place day after day". What agency do educators have in determining their learning pathway?

- » ACECQA – [Standard 7.2 Leadership – Case study 1](#)
- When have you honoured the unexpected and given children and young people the right to explore the vast unknown with unabashed curiosity. How did critical reflection help?
  - » ACECQA – [Critical reflection in practice \(YouTube\)](#)

## ACECQA references and resources

- Australian Government Department of Education – [My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0, 2022](#)
- ACECQA – [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- ACECQA – [A critical reflection planning meeting \(YouTube\)](#)
- ACECQA – [Critical reflection in practice \(YouTube\)](#)
- ACECQA – [What is critical reflection?](#)
- ACECQA – [Standard 1.3 Assessment and planning – Case study 1](#)
- ACECQA – [Standard 4.2 Professionalism – Case study 1](#)
- ACECQA – [Standard 7.2 Leadership – Case study 1](#)
- ACECQA – [Meetings and reflective sessions](#)

## Other references and resources

- Deb Curtis and Margie Carter – *Learning Together with Young Children: A Curriculum Framework for Reflective Teachers* (Book)
- Diti Hill, The University of Auckland – [Critical reflection in early childhood education: a framework for personal and professional empowerment](#)
- Elizabeth M. Anderson – [Transforming Early Childhood Education through Critical Reflection](#)
- Melinda Miller – [Critical Reflection](#)