

# Information sheet

## MY TIME, OUR PLACE

### Environments

Quality indoor and outdoor active learning environments invite all children and young people to participate at a level they are comfortable participating in, whilst also introducing an element of challenge to scaffold their learning and build their confidence in their abilities.

Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the strengths, culture, languages, interests and capabilities of each child and young person, and reflect aspects of the local community.

This information sheet supports the Practice, Environments from *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (MTOP) V2.0*.

It provides you with reflective questions as you consider your practice, service philosophy and program in relation to this practice.



### 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 Practice, Environments is reflected in several quality areas of the NQS, with a particular focus in:

**QA2:** Children's health and safety

**Element 2.1.1:** Wellbeing and comfort – Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

**Element 2.2.1:** Supervision – At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

**QA3:** Physical environment

**QA5:** Relationships with children

**QA6:** Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

**Element 6.2.2:** Access and participation – Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

**QA7:** Governance and Leadership

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

**Element 7.2.1:** Continuous improvement – There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

## Welcoming, safe and inclusive environments reflect, respect, affirm identities, and enrich the lives of children, young people and families.

- This practice provides a definition of indoor and outdoor learning environments, including physical, [temporal](#), social, intellectual and [trauma-informed](#) elements. Educators use these elements when collaborating with children and young people to prepare the spaces for play and leisure.
- The theme of [culturally safe](#) environments is illustrated where environments are responsive to the strengths, culture, language, interests and capabilities of each child or young person and reflect aspects of the local community.
- Contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families can assist in building an [intercultural space](#) where both western and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are shared.
- Opportunities for children and young people to learn on Country are recognised.
- Outdoor learning environments provide children and young people with access to play spaces in natural environments and may include plants, trees, edible gardens, open spaces, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements from nature.

### What might this look like for school age children?

- Children and young people's right to play and leisure are key elements of the service philosophy.
- Resources provided reflect the breadth of age groups and interests, curiosities and capabilities of the children and young people sharing the environment and are accessible to children and young people so they can choose and be responsible for their actions.
- The spaces promote the development of life skills, such as growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling.
- Access to digital technologies and media is provided, enabling children and young people to access global connections and resources and encourage new ways of thinking and communicating.

### What does this look like in practice?

- Environments for school age children are welcoming, safe and inclusive, reflect, respect and enrich the lives and identities of children and young people and families participating in the setting. They share meaning, knowledge, and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity.
- Diverse opportunities to socialise and develop relationships are provided and educators are attuned as to how children and young people develop social skills through quiet play, such as talking to friends, having spaces and time for small and large groups of children and young people to gather and opportunities to socialise through physical play in open spaces to develop physical skills and social skills, such as team building and leadership.
- A culture of sustained shared thinking, conversations and collaborative opportunities is evident amongst educators, children, young people, families and community in preparing and creating environments which cater for diverse interests, needs and curiosities and promote a sense of ownership and independence.
- Approved providers and educators are aware that the accessibility of resources and the way in which environments are set up may prevent some children from participating and make [reasonable adjustments](#), where practical, to accommodate all children and young people, enabling all to participate and succeed in learning and the development of positive feelings of self-worth.
- The learning environments reflect an intercultural space where both Western and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are shared.
- Educators participate in and offer opportunities for children and young people to learn on Country and seek further information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections and relationships with Country.

### Reflective questions and provocations

- The environment is made up of many spaces, including physical, temporal, social and intellectual elements. How does the service's vision statement promote and support the child and young person in these spaces. How does the OSHC vision statement support children and young people's right to play and leisure? How does the program support children and young people's imagination??
  - » Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog - Children's right to play](#)
- How has the environment been made safe, inclusive and reflect a respect for the rights of children to participate in play and leisure?
  - » ACECQA - [Information sheet – QA3 Inclusive environments](#)
- What opportunities are available to promote curiosity, diversity, a sense of ownership and independence?
  - » Deadly Story – [Life & Lore](#)
- What features in the learning environment encourage open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature?
  - » ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 The environment as 'The Third Teacher'](#)
- What is the role of wonder in children and young people's lives? How has it been given a place in the daily life of services for school age children?
  - » ACECQA – [We hear you blog – The endless possibilities of using digital devices in OSHC safely](#)

- School age children are particularly social and are interested in building friendships. How does the environment nurture and sustain relationship building? How has relational pedagogy influenced your thinking about children's relationships?
  - » Be You – [Planning for Empowerment: Growing a mentally healthy generation](#)

## 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 – [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(DDA\) resources](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 Inclusive environments](#)
- ACECQA – [We hear you blog – The endless possibilities of using digital devices in OSHC safely](#)
- ACECQA – [Standard 3.1 Design – Case study 1](#)
- ACECQA – [Standard 5.2 Relationships between children – Case study 2](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 The environment as 'The Third Teacher'](#)
- ACECQA – [Mapping the updated MTOP to the V9 Australian Curriculum](#)

## Other references and resources

- Australian Human Rights Commission – [Child Safe Organisations - National Principles Video](#)
- ChildSafe Australia – [Developing a ChildSafe Culture](#)
- Deadly Story – [Life & Lore](#)
- Deadly Story – [Your rights](#)
- Early Childhood Intervention Australia – [Working Together Agreement](#)
- Megina Baker & Jen Ryan – [Playful provocations and playful mindsets: teacher learning and identity shifts through playful participatory research](#)
- Reconciliation Australia – [Family and Kinship \(YouTube\)](#)
- Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog – Children's right to play](#)  
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- UNICEF – [The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children's version](#)