ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING CYCLE GUIDE AND PROCEDURE

The Assessment and Planning Cycle is a requirement of the National Quality Framework (NQF). An educational program must be designed using an approved learning framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 (EYLF), (and other jurisdiction-approved learning frameworks) and be child-centred. The program must align to the National Quality Framework including National Quality Standard (NQS), Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations. An educational leader collaborates with educators to design, implement, and critically reflect on an educational program that supports children's development learning and wellbeing. Thoughtfully planned experiences and environments encourage the children to feel a sense of control over their actions, be curious and investigate, and explore their understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them.

This procedure provides detailed steps for educators to follow when designing an assessment and planning cycle in reflection with the EYLF (V2.0) to support and extend children's development, learning and wellbeing. This procedure can be used in conjunction with the *Educational Program and Practice Procedure*.

Education and Care Services National Law or Regulations *(R. 73, 74, 75, 76, 118, 148, 168 and 254) NQS QA 1: Element 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 Programming practices and procedures*
Related Policy: *Educational Program Policy*



Diagram 2 Sourced from: EYLF 2022 (V.2.0)

The Guide to the National Quality Framework, Quality Area 1 – *Educational Program and Practice*, identifies the Assessment and Planning Cycle as the '*ongoing process used by educators to design programs that enhance and extend each child's learning and development*.' (p.131).

The Assessment and Planning Cycle includes observing/collecting information, analysing learning, planning, implementing and reflecting/evaluating. Each stage of the programming cycle is recorded through documentation and should be easily available to families. Our Service aims to develop an Educational Program which is thoughtfully planned, meaningful, challenging and engaging for all children.

OBSERVE/ LISTEN/ COLLECT INFORMATION		
Observations encompass the skills of listening, questioning, reflecting and documenting the progress and wellbeing of children to build a rich picture of each child. Educators use a variety of strategies to collect, document, organise, synthesise and interpret the information they gather to assess children's learning and plan for further learning and development. Whichever format you are implementing, (written templates, pro-forma, digital records, photo observations, learning stories) educators need to document the observation then analyse the experience looking for interests and potential growth. Ensure the observations are meaningful and more than just a description of what the child/ren is doing or have done. Documentation should be part of a meaningful pedagogical process you undertake to gain a deeper understanding of each child. Critical thinking is essential to making sense of observations. Asking critically reflective questions about what we observe assist educators to commit to continuing to develop their knowledge and skills in observing children. When documenting observations educators can consider: *What should be the focus of attention?* *What is worth recording and how?* *How can observations be organised to be meaningful and contribute to the requirements of the NQS?* *How can I ensure this information is relevant to individual children and reflects the whole child?* The use of digital apps may assist in sharing reflections and observations with families increasing their understanding of learning and making it easier for parents to share in decisions about their child's further learning and wellbeing.		
1	Educators will begin to collect information about each child from enrolment and during the orientation process from families to work in partnership to plan for each child's learning and development.	
2	Educators will gather key information through a variety of observations about each individual child on a continuous basis that builds educators knowledge about each child's knowledge, strengths ideas, culture, ability and interests.	
3	Educators will use a variety of methods to bring together information from families about each child's family background, family culture and child's community to be used when planning the program to support a child centred program	
4	Observations will record children's developmental progress, connections and participation within the program. Observation records may be stored and shared electronically with families.	

5	**Learning Stories:** A Learning Story is an observation method that records children's learning and development. A Learning Story takes on a written narrative of an event or interaction and can easily be shared with families in ways that are meaningful and focused. Learning Stories can provide documentation of children's knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests. **Anecdotal:** Anecdotal records are always written in the past tense. The observation begins when the child initiates an experience or activity and ends when the child stops participating. The record is factual and describes exactly what happened without including interpretations or judgements. The focus is on capturing what the child did, said, or how they behaved. **Running Records:** Running records are written in the present tense because they document what is happening in the moment. This immediacy helps capture the fluidity of a child's actions and interactions. The observer records everything that occurs during the observation period, often providing a minute-by-minute account. Running records offer a thorough and nuanced understanding of a child's behaviour in a specific context. This can reveal patterns in behaviour, social interactions, or learning processes that might not be evident through other forms of observation. This includes not only actions but also verbal interactions, body language, and any environmental factors that may be influencing the situation. **Sociograms:** A sociogram is typically presented as a diagram or map where each child is represented by a symbol (often a circle or a name) and lines or arrows are used to show the direction and strength of their interactions or friendships. It captures who the child interacts with most frequently, whom they prefer to play with, and who they might avoid or have less contact with. The thickness of lines or arrows can indicate the frequency or strength of these interactions. Sociograms help in identifying patterns in social interactions, such as cliques, popular children, isolated children, and reciprocal friendships. It can highlight whether a child is central to the group's social network or on the periphery. **Developmental Checklist:** Developmental milestones are important markers that indicate a child's progress in acquiring functional skills and completing age-specific tasks as they grow. These milestones provide a general framework for understanding typical child development across various domains, such as physical, cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Monitoring milestones allows for the early detection of developmental delays or issues. If a child consistently misses milestones, it may indicate the need for further assessment or intervention. **Time Sampling:** Time sampling is a systematic observation technique used to record the occurrence of a child's behaviour and track how frequently it happens throughout the day. This method involves noting the specific times or durations when a behaviour occurs, often by keeping a tally. Time sampling is particularly effective for understanding patterns in behaviour, identifying triggers, and implementing strategies to reduce negative behaviours. **Event Sampling (ABC):** Event sampling focuses on specific behaviours or events, providing detailed and actionable insights. It is particularly useful for identifying triggers, assessing the frequency of behaviours, and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. When used effectively, event sampling can support the development of targeted strategies to enhance a	

	child's learning and social environment, contributing to their overall well-being and development. Photos, Audio or Video Recording: Photos, videos, and audio recordings are invaluable tools for documenting and showcasing children's learning and development. They provide a rich, visual narrative that complements written observations, making it easier to capture and share the nuances of a child's experiences. By using these tools effectively, educators can create a more comprehensive and engaging record of each child's unique learning journey.	
6	Observations and formal recording of children's learning and development form a key aspect of the Assessment and Planning Cycle, A *Learning and Development Register* will be used to ensure all children are observed across the year.	

ASSESS/ ANALYSE/ INTERPRET LEARNING		
The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0 identifies 3 broad types of assessment. 1: Assessment 'for children's learning'- also known as formative assessment. 2: Assessment 'of children's learning'- also known as summative assessment. 3: Assessment 'as learning'. (P.25) Assessment and evaluation inform the educational program and form part of the ongoing assessment and planning cycle. Consider asking: • *What do I know about this child?* This may include considering a child's: o current knowledge o skills and abilities o strengths and interests o culture • *What does this information tell me about what and how the child is learning?* • *Where can this be found in my documentation?* • *Do I address the 'what', 'why' and 'how' children are learning?* • *How does this link to the Approved Learning Framework?* • *Are our assessment practices inclusive?* (ACECQA, 2019)		
1	The educator will complete an analysis of learning (as documented on the *Observation* or *Learning Story Record*) which will be used to identify the learning that took place within the observation and assist with identifying goals for each child for further learning and development	
2	An analysis of learning will guide future planning of experiences, activities, individual and group goals.	

3	The educational leader will provide mentorship to educators to ensure the educational program is developed using an analysis of each child's knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests.	
4	Our educators will document an assessment of children's learning to determine what children know, can do and understand, this assessment of learning is to be shared with families	
5	An ***Assessment of Learning Summary*** will be used to documented which records children's strengths, learning and development that identifies each child's progress in relation to learning outcomes from the approved learning framework (EYLF/MTOP V2.0)	

PLAN/ DESIGN

Working in partnerships with children, families and other professionals, educators plan for children's current and future learning and wellbeing. Educators need to identify children who may need additional support to achieve particular learning outcomes, reflect on pedagogy that will suit the context for children in the early years and school age contexts, communicate about children's learning and progress and evaluate the effectiveness of learning opportunities, environments and experiences offered.

The educational program documents children's goals planned and unplanned experiences, environment changes, transitions and routines, family input and community events. Planned experiences provide an opportunity for educators to think about how their intentions for future learning and development can support children as capable, competent people with agency and the ability to make choices and decisions.

The Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 (EYLF) encourages educators to reflect upon different theories and perspectives to inform their approaches to children's learning when developing an educational program that can provide opportunities to gain new insights and make balanced changes to their pedagogical understanding and practice.

Educators are intentional in their choice of appropriate learning and teaching strategies, content, resources, design of the use of time and indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Family input is documented within the educational program to strengthen connections and partnerships between educators, families and children. Families are encouraged to share information about their child that support educator's understandings of each child and contribute to the development of individual goals that influence the educational program.

When planning the educational program educators should consider:

- *What are my intentions for furthering learning and development?*
- *What strategies and experiences will I provide?*
- *How do I design and plan learning experiences and learning environments?*
- *How is our program equitable in following children's interests and needs?*

• *How do we decide on resources to support learning?* • *Is the planning visible and inclusive? (to children, families, educators)* • *How can plans be jointly constructed in collaboration with children and in partnerships with families?* • *Have we considered outcomes from the approved framework?*		
1	The educational leader will collaborate with room leaders, teachers and educators to ensure they plan experiences and activities based on individual and group goals that will maximise opportunities to extend emerging strengths, abilities and interests for each child.	
2	Educators will plan a contextual program that actively promotes or initiates the investigation of ideas, complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesising that supports the learning, development and wellbeing of each child.	
3	The educational program will include: • Authentic opportunities for children's voices, ideas, interests and points of view • Family feedback regarding children's learning, development and wellbeing • Community events and cultural celebrations • Resources and materials that support ongoing learning, development and wellbeing	
4	Our Service will display the educational program and make children's learning visible to share documentation in ways that are accessible, understanding and meaningful for children, families and visitors to the service.	
5	Documentation of the educational program and curriculum includes project or inquiry work which displays how children take the lead and are co-contributors within their own learning.	
6	Planned experiences and strategies that support individual and group learning goals and establish further development towards learning outcomes are documented.	
7	Educators will record any changes to the physical environment and reflect upon why these changes were made. The *Activity/ Floor Plan template* can be used to record changes to furniture or play areas.	

IMPLEMENT/ ENACT

Implementation is where the plans turn into action. (EYLF V2.0, 2022). The educational program is planned to support children's learning, development and wellbeing including interactions, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned experiences through a variety of child led, child initiated, and educator supported learning. Educators extend children's learning during structured and spontaneous adult-led experiences, child-led play, mealtimes and personal care routines, and indoor and outdoor environments. (EYLF V2.0, 2022).

Educators are intentional in the roles they take in children's play and the way they intentionally plan the environment and curriculum experiences. Intentionality requires educators to be thoughtful and purposeful in their actions and decision making. (EYLF V2.0, 2022).

By promoting a child-directed learning style educators encourage children to make decisions about the program, helping to set up their own play experiences or projects and are provided with support to make decisions and appropriate choices.

By using open ended questioning, providing feedback, challenging their thinking, and guiding their learning educators can develop meaningful relationships with children that are responsive to their evolving ideas and interests. Spontaneous teachable moments are used to respond to children's ideas and interests that scaffold children's learning.

1	Educators will use responsive teaching techniques and strategies during everyday interactions and routines, such as modelling and demonstrating, open-ended questioning, speculating, explaining and engaging in shared conversations to stimulate children's thinking and enrich their learning.	
2	Educators consider their pedagogical practices, using the approved learning framework to make informed decisions that extend children's play to support learning, development and wellbeing.	
3	Educators will use intentional teaching strategies that reflect contemporary theories and research to support children's play, leisure and learning	
4	Educators will listen carefully and respond to children's voices and accommodate for spontaneity, natural curiosity, individual needs and interests.	
5	Educators will develop and plan activities, routines and the learning environment for children to have opportunities to make decisions about what they will do and how they will do it.	
6	Educators will consider creating a learning environment that supports independence and self-help skills and promotes children to make decisions and have agency in their play.	
7	Educators consider how the educational program is aligned with the Service Philosophy in relation to the approach to everyday practices, pedagogy and teaching decisions.	

EVALUATE/CRITICALLY REFLECT

Educators use their assessment of, as and for children's learning to evaluate the implementation of plans (EYLF V2.0, 2022). They consider how meaningful and effective the plans have been for children's learning and wellbeing, considering children's cultural and linguistic identities and diverse capabilities.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) promotes and supports educators to engage in reflective practice through self-assessment.

Critical reflection requires review of an everyday situation, event or interaction. Educators can ask powerful questions to expand knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the situation or interaction. Critical reflection is important to strategic decision making and improving practices when planning an educational program for children and families.
Reflective discussions between the educational leader and educators will assist to deepen educator's self-knowledge, challenge pedagogical assumptions and consider new possibilities. The educational

leader is available to support and empower educators to develop critical reflection procedures that can change and improve practice through meaningful questioning techniques.

Educators can engage in guided questions to stimulate thinking that may lead to new insights and new possibilities with children and families. Educators need to show their own reflection on the experience/environment including their own professional practice. This can be recorded in a variety of ways. It is important that critical reflection occurs on a regular and systematic basis.

Critical reflection assists to:

- Identify practice strengths and challenges
- Identify future considerations and actions
- Contribute to organisational goals
- Review performance
- Improve program provisions
- Gain insights into roles and responsibilities
- Expands knowledge and understandings

1	Educators will use critical reflection to reflect on: • Children's learning and development • Children's planned and unplanned experiences • Practices and identified changes or improvements required • Children's participation in the program • How they are embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into every part of their planning and practice • All aspects of the educational program • Roles and responsibilities	
2	Educators will provide examples of documented reflective practices to support and guide educators to improve and adjust the program and their professional practices	
3	Critical reflection encourages educators to reflect upon previous events, interactions, and experiences that in turn guide curriculum decision making processes	
4	Areas of the program that may be reflected include: • Interactions and relationships with children • Transitions and routines • Planned experiences and unplanned/spontaneous activities • Child directed learning • The learning environment • Intentional teaching strategies • Responsive teaching strategies • Communications with children, families and colleagues	
5	Educators reflect how the service philosophy guides decision making of the Educational Program in relation to the assessment and planning cycle	

6	Educators will engage in analytical and diagnostic thinking to reflect on the education program and appropriate practices. Educators will use the *Critical Reflection Template* to record critical reflections on a regular basis	

REVIEW OF PROCEDURE			
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Approved by	Krystle Hills	Signature	
Procedure Reviewed Date	Modifications/Changes		