

POLICY ON ETHICAL CONDUCT

- Introduction:** This policy relates to conduct within the care and education services.
- Ethical conduct guides the behaviour and decisions within the care and education setting and is founded in respect for and the valuing of children, families, educators and the extended service community.
- Aims:** As providers of an Early Childhood Service we aim to ensure that all staff show respect, honesty, integrity, inclusivity, social and cultural responsiveness while providing education and a safe and nurturing environment for the children in their care.
- Goals** The centre community will uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with the *ECA Code of Ethics (2016)* *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)* and service philosophy and policy.
- Strategies**
- Educators will be familiar with the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families and other educators in the centre.
 - Educators will be familiar with the ECA Code of Ethics and service philosophy. This will guide conduct and decision making within the centre.
 - Ethical conduct and decision making will occur with reference to legislation and statutory documents and through a process of critical reflection. Decision making processes will be clear and the service director/co-ordinator will be accountable for decisions and able to demonstrate how those decisions are made.
 - The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor of the service ensure all Educators are made aware of their obligations through personal discussions, staff meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice.
- The service community will work together in the best interests of the children and families and will act in a manner which will enhance the standing of the early childhood sector. This involves a full understanding of role responsibilities and obligations combined with collegial practice and collaborative decision making.
- Implementation:** All staff will be expected to conduct themselves in an ethical manner as outlined in the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics.

“EARLY CHILDHOOD AUSTRALIA CODE OF ETHICS

In this Code of Ethics the protection and wellbeing of children is paramount and therefore speaking out or taking action in the presence of unethical practice is an essential professional responsibility.

Core Principles

The core principles in this Code of Ethics are based on the fundamental and prized values of the profession. They act to guide decision making in relation to ethical responsibilities. These core principles require a commitment to respect and maintain the rights and dignity of children, families, colleagues and communities.

- Each child has unique interests and strengths and the capacity to contribute to their communities.
- Children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- Effective learning and teaching is characterised by professional decisions that draw on specialised knowledge and multiple perspectives.
- Partnerships with families and communities support shared responsibility for children’s learning, development and wellbeing.
- Democratic, fair and inclusive practices promote equity and a strong sense of belonging.
- Respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships are central to children’s education and care.
- Play and leisure are essential for children’s learning, development and wellbeing.
- Research, inquiry and practice-based evidence inform quality education and care.

I. In relation to children, I will:

1. Act in the best interests of all children.
2. Create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children’s agency and enhance their learning.
3. Provide a meaningful curriculum to enrich children’s learning, balancing child and educator initiated experiences.
4. Understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children’s learning, development and wellbeing.
5. Ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future.
6. Collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity.
7. Value the relationship between children and their families and enhance these relationships through my practice.
8. Ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture or national origin.
9. Negotiate children’s participation in research, by taking into account their safety, privacy, levels of fatigue and interest.
10. Respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment.
11. Safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when share on digital platforms.

II In relation to Colleagues, I will:

1. Encourage others to adopt and act in accordance with this Code and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours.
2. Build a spirit of collegiality and professionalism through collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty.
3. Acknowledge and support the diverse strengths and experiences of colleagues to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills.
4. Use constructive processes to address differences of opinion to negotiate shared perspectives and actions.
5. Participate in a ‘lively culture of professional inquiry’ to support continuous improvement.
6. Implement strategies that support and mentor colleagues to make positive contributions to the profession.
7. Maintain ethical relationships in my online interactions.

III In relation to Families, I will:

1. Support families as children's first and most important teacher and respect their right to make decisions about their children.
2. Listen to and learn with families and engage in shared decision making, planned and assessment practices in relation to children's learning, development and wellbeing.
3. Develop respectful relationships based on open communication with the aim of encouraging families' engagement and to build a strong sense of belonging.
4. Learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems.
5. Respect families' right to privacy and maintain confidentiality.

IV In relation to Profession, I will:

1. Base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whom I work.
2. Take responsibility for articulating my professional values, knowledge and practice and the positive contribution our profession makes to society.
3. Engage in critical reflection, ongoing professional learning and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession.
4. Work within the scope of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
5. Encourage qualities and practices of ethical leadership within the profession.
6. Model quality practice and provide constructive feedback and assessment for students as aspiring professionals.
7. Mentor new graduates by supporting their induction into the profession.
Advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care.

V In relation to Community and Society, I will:

1. Learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning development wellbeing.
2. Collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families.
3. Use research and practice-based evidence to advocate for a society where all children have access to quality education and care.
4. Promote the value of children's contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities.
5. Work to promote increased appreciation of the importance of childhood including how children learn and develop, in order to inform programs and systems of assessment that benefit children.
6. Advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

Source: The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016)
Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW)
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:168
Links to National Quality Standard: 4.2.2

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