



EDUCATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

SUB CATEGORY: Human Resources

POLICY GOAL

Provide benchmarks for ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals in relation to their conduct with families, children, educators and others in the early childhood community.

RATIONALE

Our Code of Conduct is based on the Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics which outlines expectations of professional educators in relation to children, families, colleagues, the profession and community and society.

“Professionals who adhere to this Code of Ethics act in the best interests of all children and work collectively to ensure that every child is thriving and learning. The Code of Ethics is informed by the principles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). A Code of Ethics is an aspirational framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of childhood professionals who work with, or on behalf, of children and their families.

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. Being ethical involves thinking about everyday actions and decision making, either individually or collectively, and responding with respect to all concerned. The Code of Ethics recognises that childhood professionals are in a unique position of trust and influence in their relationships with children, families, colleagues and the community, therefore professional accountability is vital.

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.”¹*

Standard 4.2 (National Quality Standards) covers Professionalism:

“Professionalism is demonstrated when management, educators and other staff develop and maintain relationships with each other that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness. Team collaboration that is based on understanding the expectations and attitudes of team members, and build on the strength of each other’s knowledge, help nurture constructive professional relationships. These relationships reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding and conflict. For more information see Early Childhood Australia’s Code of Ethics (2016), a resource that guides the behaviour of early childhood professionals.

Element 4.2.1 Professional Collaboration - management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other’s strengths and skills.

What Element 4.2.1 aims to achieve Professional collaboration involves working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through open communication, information sharing, joint planning and the development of common understandings and objectives (Framework for School Age Care, p.12). In a collaborative environment, all staff are encouraged to respect and value the diverse contributions and viewpoints of their colleagues. Staff also share resources, provide constructive feedback, and work together respectfully and professionally to solve problems. Interactions between management, educators and staff are guided by Early Childhood Australia’s [Code of Ethics](#) (2016), the service’s code of conduct and the service philosophy. By collaborating effectively, service staff model successful working relationships for children.

A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when the educational leader, nominated supervisor, co-ordinators and educators are all contributing to continuous improvement at the service. In this setting, staff members can raise and debate issues including program quality, environment design, inclusion and equity, children’s wellbeing and working with families (Early Years Learning Framework, p. 13; Framework for School Age Care, p. 12). By drawing on each person’s diverse perspectives, skills, experiences and background, these discussions enhance the team and provide opportunities for educators to revise their practice and implement strategies for improvement. These discussions also provide educators with an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of how children learn and their role in supporting this, contributing to more effective and responsive programs for children.

Updating and maintaining educators’ knowledge is a joint responsibility of management and educators. This can be achieved through providing a range of professional development strategies that challenge and extend current thinking.”²

IMPLEMENTATION

- The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics applies to all members of management, educators, volunteers, students and other visitors.
- Compliance with the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics and this will form part of the expectations of employment at this Service.
- The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics should be reviewed by Educators as a team at least annually to ensure it is still aligned with their philosophy.

¹ Code of Ethics”, Early Childhood Australia (2016) (accessed on-line April 2020)
<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>

² “Guide to the National Quality Framework” Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2020

- The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics should be reflected upon during the educator appraisal process.
- In addition to complying with the Early Childhood Australia “Code of Ethics”, Educators are required to;
 - follow the centres Policies and Procedures at all times.
 - present themselves professionally at all times.
 - ensure that they are on-time for all rostered shifts so that the safety of children is not compromised.
 - communicate promptly any instances where themselves or another person has breached the Code of Ethics or service policies or procedures
 - always act in the best interest of the service, children, families and educators
 - ensure all actions taken are inclusive, fair and reasonable.
 - communicate in a professional, courteous and caring manner.
 - take time to understand others and consider their points of view
 - support others to follow the Code of Ethics
- The service should have available the brochures and posters for access by educators.
- A copy of the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics will be provided as part of the employment orientation checklist.
- Educators should regularly reflect as individuals, in small groups and as an entire team on professionalism and staff achievement of the Code of Ethics.
- Educators should take a collaborative approach to the implementation of the Code of Ethics.
- Expectations for students and volunteers are covered in the Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy.
- Specific expectations of conduct can also be found in the Human Resources Policies, including but not limited to:
 - Fit for Work Policy
 - Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy
 - Information Technology Policy
 - Social Media Policy

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

- Educators will be provided with a copy of the Code of Ethics upon employment
- A copy of the Code of Ethics will be displayed so that it is readily available to all educators, families and visitors.
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.

RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

- Staff Induction Checklist
- Annual Induction Refresher Checklist
- Recruitment, Selection and Employment Policy
- Appraisal documents
- “Code of Ethics”, Early Childhood Australia (2016)
- Fit for Work Policy
- Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy
- Information Technology Policy
- Social Media Policy

SCOPE AND ENFORCEMENT

The failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to;

- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination.

RECOGNISED AUTHORITIES AND DOCUMENTS WHICH GUIDE POLICY

- “Code of Ethics”, Early Childhood Australia (2016) (accessed on-line April 2020)
<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>
- “Guide to the National Quality Framework” Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2020
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (version February 2018)*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations (version Dec 2019)*

DATE CREATED: November 2011

REVIEW DETAILS:

Review Date	Details of Changes
January 2013	Addition under IMPLEMENTATION “The Code of Ethics should be reviewed by Educators as a team at least annually to ensure it is still aligned with their philosophy.”
January 2014	No changes made
June 2015	No changes made
April 2016	No changes made
October 2016	Updated to reflect the new Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics – refer to separate document
May 2017	Policy renamed to Code of Ethics and sources updated. Inclusion of Code of Ethics in Induction Checklists. Inclusion of the following under implementation for educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate promptly any instances where themselves or another person has breached the Code of Ethics or service policies or procedures• Always act in the best interest of the service, children, families and educators• Ensure all actions taken are inclusive, fair and reasonable.• Communicate in a professional, courteous and caring manner.• Take time to understand others and consider their points of view• Support others to follow the Code of Ethics
May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educators should regularly reflect as individuals, in small groups and as an entire team on professionalism and staff achievement of the Code of Ethics.• Educators should take a collaborative approach to the implementation of the Code of Ethics.• Professionalism must be maintained at all times and is further covered in the Etiquette, Professionalism and Grooming Policy.
May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated sources where applicable.
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated sources where applicable
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name changed back to Code of Conduct and included list of other policies which guide conduct in the workplace