CHCPOL002
Develop and implement policy

Updated
for revised
NQS

One World for Children Pty Ltd

aspire
learning resources

CHCPOL002

Develop and implement policy

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1

Aspire is committed to developing quality resources that meet the needs of our customers. However, occasionally Aspire finds, or is notified of, errors. Please refer to our website at www.aspirelr.com.au to see if there are any updates that may be relevant to you.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this book is accurate; however, the author and publisher accept no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury arising from such information.

Except where an information source is acknowledged, the names and details of individuals and organisations used in examples are fictitious and have been devised for learning purposes only. Any similarity to actual people or organisations is unintentional.

All websites referred to in this unit were accessed and deemed appropriate at time of publication.

Aspire Training & Consulting apologises unreservedly for any copyright infringement that may have occurred and invites copyright owners to contact Aspire so any violation may be rectified.

CHCPOL002 Develop and implement policy, Release 2

Contents

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCPOL002 Develop and implement policy,* Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help
Summaries	▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

Researching new policy initiatives

Policies are an integral part of any regulated service. They are the formal set of principles and guidelines that underpin a service's philosophy, values and goals. Your role in contributing to the development of policies is crucial, including research and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

Well-developed and well-written policies provide a framework for all staff to ensure work is carried out in a consistent manner that reflects current legislation and the service's mission and objectives.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

1A Evaluating existing policies

As an educator, part of your responsibility is to contribute to the review, evaluation and development of policies on an ongoing basis. It may also be your responsibility to undertake research and consultation prior to developing a new policy or amending an existing one. In some cases, you may need to prepare a policy proposal prior to any review or consultation so as to justify the need to change an existing policy or write a new one.

Government policy

Policies made by national, state/territory or local governments impact and regulate the type of policy your service develops. When a government policy is developed, it is formalised into legislation and becomes mandatory for each service to implement. For example, the development of service-based policy in education and care services must meet the benchmark set by the National Quality Standard (NQS). The NQS forms part of the National Quality Framework (NQF), which is built upon policies that are expressed through the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and Education and Care Services National Regulations. The NQS influences service policies by guiding your focus in various areas, such as your educational program, health and safety, environmental attitudes and relationships with parents and children.

It is also useful to be aware of any global trends and initiatives in care and education, and to identify how your service's policies align with or complement these.

Policy frameworks

To prepare for a new policy or amendment, you need to be familiar with current national, state/territory and local government legislation and policy relating to education and care, and how this translates into your service policies. In addition, you need to be familiar with your service's culture, philosophy and goals, and any requirements from stakeholders that may impact policy development, such as input from funding bodies.

In recognition of the link to the NQS, many services use the seven quality areas as a framework for organising and presenting their policy documents.

Education and care service policies

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 168 and 169 list the policies and procedures that must be developed and maintained by all regulated education and care services. The national regulations must be available at every regulated service, including family day care services. You can also find the regulations at the following website: http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-national-regulations.

Examples of other government policies that directly impact childhood settings are priority of access guidelines, funding policies, licensing guidelines and immunisation policies. Further information about these policies is contained in regulations, standards and codes of practice, which can be found within your service or at: http://aspirelr.link/acecqa. They are also available from each state and territory's department of education and care.

Education and care services must include policies for:	
▶ interactions with children	▶ first aid and emergency procedures
▶ incident, injury and illness, including infectious diseases and medical conditions	▶ dietary requirements, nutrition, food and beverages
▶ children with special needs	▶ child-safe environments, sun protection and water safety
▶ delivery and collection of children and excursions	▶ staffing code of conduct, including confidentiality and health and safety
▶ dealing with complaints	▶ people responsible
▶ anti-discrimination, volunteers and students	▶ enrolment, orientation and payment of fees
▶ acceptance and refusal of authorisations	▶ governance and management.

Organisational policies and procedures

Organisational policies and procedures will also provide information about how to:

▶ recognise and respond to illness

▶ respond to accidents

▶ recognise and respond to children at risk of neglect or child abuse.

Always ask your supervisor if you are not sure.

Watch this video to learn more about organisational policies and procedures.

v0003

Generic policies

Generic policies are based on laws and regulations that affect all workplaces, regardless of the industry or industry sector.

Generic policies that may impact an education and care service include: industrial laws, such as awards, compulsory superannuation and workers' compensation; corporation regulations; noise abatement; and water restrictions.

You should be able to identify the legislation or government policy that links to each service policy. For example, confidentiality links to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).
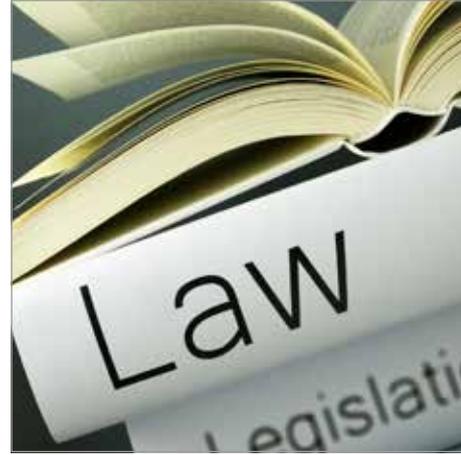
Codes of practice

Codes of practice are frameworks that provide guidance on how an organisation may implement certain policies. Some codes of practice may be associated with legal requirements. For example, guidance on the implementation of WHS requirements, as set down in the Act and regulations, is outlined through a number of codes of practice. It is not compulsory to use these codes of practice, as there is scope for an organisation to develop and customise its own.

Some codes of practice may be set by industry organisations. For example, Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is a peak early childhood advocacy organisation acting in the interests of young children, their families and those in the early childhood field. ECA has developed a code of ethics that provides a basis for critical reflection, a guide for professional behaviour and principles to inform individual and collective decision-making. Here is an extract from ECA's Code of Ethics.

Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics

Core principles

▶ 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.

In relation to children, I will:

▶ act in the best interests of all children

▶ create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance their learning

▶ provide a meaningful curriculum to enrich children's learning, balancing child and educator initiated experiences

▶ understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing

▶ ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future

▶ collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity

▶ value the relationship between children and their families and enhance these relationships through my practice

▶ 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

▶ negotiate children's participation in research, by taking into account their safety, privacy, levels of fatigue and interest

▶ respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment

▶ safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when shared on digital platforms.

In relation to families, I will:

▶ support families as children's first and most important teacher and respect their right to make decisions about their children

▶ listen to and learn with families and engage in shared decision-making, planning and assessment practices in relation to children's learning, development and wellbeing

▶ develop respectful relationships based on open communication with the aim of encouraging families' engagement and to build a strong sense of belonging

▶ learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems

▶ respect families' right to privacy and maintain confidentiality.

In relation to colleagues, I will:

▶ encourage others to adopt and act in accordance with this code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours

▶ build a spirit of collegiality and professionalism through collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty

▶ acknowledge and support the diverse strengths and experiences of colleagues in order to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills

▶ use constructive processes to address differences of opinion in order to negotiate shared perspectives and actions

▶ participate in a 'lively culture of professional inquiry' to support continuous improvement

▶ implement strategies that support and mentor colleagues to make positive contributions to the profession

▶ maintain ethical relationships in my online interactions.

In relation to community and society, I will:

▶ learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing

▶ collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families

▶ use research and practice-based evidence to advocate for a society where all children have access to quality education and care

▶ promote the value of children's contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities

▶ 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

▶ advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

In relation to the profession, I will:

▶ base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whom I work

▶ take responsibility for articulating my professional values, knowledge and practice and the positive contribution our profession makes to society

▶ engage in critical reflection and ongoing professional learning, and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession

▶ work within the scope of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications

▶ encourage qualities and practices of ethical leadership within the profession

▶ model quality practice and provide constructive feedback and assessment for students as aspiring professionals

▶ mentor new graduates by supporting their induction into the profession

▶ advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care.

Sourec: The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics extract is reprinted with permission (www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

Duty of care

Under health and safety legislation, employers have a duty of care to maintain a healthy and safe work environment. This means that employers are legally obliged to ensure workers are able to carry out work safely and without risk to their health.

This legislation also places responsibility on workers. To help avoid incidents, workers need to read all service policies and ask questions if they are unsure of their role.

Duty of care also exists under common law where individuals may have a responsibility for the wellbeing of other people.

Policies and procedures need to reflect the duty of care requirements that people should adhere to in the workplace. Here are some examples of duty of care for employers and educators.

Employers have a duty of care to ensure workers have:

▶ a safe working environment

▶ access to policies and procedures that ensure safe working practices

▶ regular information and training.

Educators have a duty of care toward:

▶ the children they care for

▶ their employer and other workers

▶ the parents of the children they care for.

Human rights

A person's rights are being violated when they are judged based on their values, discriminated against due to their individual needs or placed in a situation where they may feel unfairly treated. All services must be available to all individuals regardless of their personal values, beliefs, attitudes and culture, to ensure non-judgmental, ethical practice. This can be achieved by assessing each individual and situation equally and by promoting your organisation's relevant policies and procedures.

Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure

Confidentiality and privacy are some of the most important issues you face when considering the legal and ethical aspects of your role. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) protects all personal information handled by businesses (including education and care services). The Act includes 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) that regulate the handling of personal information.

Individual states and territories also have specific privacy and confidentiality legislation, which only applies to that state or territory; for example, the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) or the *Information Act 2002* (NT).

There is also a range of policies and procedures that link to confidentiality; for example, your service may have a security policy that covers all the organisational systems used for processing, storing and transmitting personal information.

Rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and individuals

Rights and responsibilities are central to your position within any service. They not only play a significant role in determining specific actions or ways to conduct certain tasks, but they are also governed by legislative requirements and organisational policies and procedures. Each educator, supervisor, manager, family and individual has certain roles and responsibilities relevant to their participation and involvement within the environment. Each of these groups and individuals needs to be aware of your organisation's expectations and specific policies and procedures to ensure they are abiding by these whilst on the premises.

It is a regulatory requirement (Regulation 171 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations) that all education and care services must ensure that copies of current policies and procedures are readily accessible to the staff members working in the service.

Health and safety

Health and safety legislation is designed to protect the health and safety of everyone in the workplace. It also sets out the health and safety duties and rights of people in the workplace. Currently, Victoria and Western Australia are the only states not following the national model; they are governed by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2014* (Vic.) and the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* (WA), respectively.

Under health and safety legislation, you must:

▶ take reasonable care of your own health and safety

▶ not adversely affect the health and safety of others

▶ comply with any reasonable instruction given by your manager

▶ cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety in the workplace.

Organisation focus and philosophy

The way a policy is developed varies with the individual service and the type of policy. While service policies are based on the Education and Care Services National Regulations and other legislation, they also evolve from considering the following factors. (This is not an exhaustive or comprehensive list.)

Policy development considerations may include:

▶ the service's philosophy

▶ issues that arise concerning the program, its management and its service recipients

▶ the service's business plans and goals

▶ needing to overcome a problem

▶ precedents experienced

▶ current practices relating to childcare and education

▶ family and/or community feedback

▶ management needs, including financial issues

▶ requirements of funding bodies

▶ general discussion.

Example

Accessing policies and procedures

Whitney is afraid that if she allows staff and parents access to the policies and procedures, someone might copy them and use them at another service. She is not aware that legally she must allow all staff to access all policies and procedures so that they can refer to them and follow them.

When the regulatory authority assesses the workplace, the service is fined.

Practice task 1

Access a service's policies and procedures handbook and check which of the policies listed below are covered.

- ▶ Sun protection
- ▶ Water safety
- ▶ Interactions with children
- ▶ First aid and emergency procedures
- ▶ Incident, injury, trauma and illness, including infectious diseases and medical conditions
- ▶ Dietary requirements, nutrition, food and beverages
- ▶ Anti-discrimination
- ▶ Children with special needs
- ▶ Excursions
- ▶ Child safe environment
- ▶ Delivery and collection of children
- ▶ Staffing code of conduct, including confidentiality and health and safety
- ▶ Dealing with complaints
- ▶ Responsible person
- ▶ Volunteers and students
- ▶ Enrolment and orientation
- ▶ Acceptance and refusal of authorisations
- ▶ Governance and management
- ▶ Payment of fees

If they are not covered, is the service breaching regulations?

1B Evaluating current policy trends and their impact

Your job role is likely to include reviewing and evaluating policies to see that they are working effectively. Amend and write new policies due to changing trends to ensure that your practices are not outdated. It may be that particular aspects are a priority because of issues the service is experiencing, or there may be gaps, inadequacies or inconsistencies in the service's existing policies that need to be addressed.

You may need to prioritise areas to help identify where to start, especially if there are a number of areas to be addressed. You may also find that when you start working on one policy or issue, its impact will flow on to other areas and you will need to update or modify other policies for consistency.

Industry trends

Changes occur constantly in education and care services. Best practice is about continuous improvement; this is essential if you are to match the community's values and needs. There is constant research and development in education and care theory and this may provide updates to curriculum, actions and expectations. Government policy and promises are also reflected in funding and fee administration. Policies and procedures need to reflect these industry trends in formalised policy statements.

Examples of issues that may arise and need to be addressed:

▶ A new government policy may need to be discussed within the service to clarify what it means and how it will be implemented.

▶ An out-of-date policy may require additional research before it is rewritten.

▶ A service policy may be inconsistent with a national regulation and need to be rewritten.

▶ A policy may no longer relate to the service as its service-recipient base has changed.

▶ A funding policy might alter due to a change in funding, a change in submission or application for funding, or a change in administration of funds and fees.

Policy trends

In some cases, state/territory or local policy may differ to national policy. Policy trends, as industry trends, are about continuous improvement and changes will be occurring regularly. To keep up with trends you might find it useful to subscribe to a notification service or newsletter.

You can subscribe to the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) newsletter at: http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-newsletter. These newsletters provide the latest news and information on the NQF.

Identifying currency and relevance

When changes are made to legislation, services need time to alter and adapt their policies to meet the new expectations. In the Education and Care Services National Regulations, these are called 'transition and saving arrangements'. Transition provisions are arrangements that are allowed to remain in place for a particular length of time; saving provisions are arrangements that are allowed to remain in place indefinitely or until amendments take place. These transition arrangements or provisions are sometimes called 'grandfathering clauses'.

When transition and saving arrangements are in place, you must review policy prior to the expiry of the arrangement. Your service must be completely ready when the transition takes place.

When reviewing a service policy to see whether it needs to be upgraded or amended, consider the following areas to determine how they affect the policy you are working on:

▶ Current general legislation

▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations

▶ Your service's values and goals

▶ The people receiving services (the children and their parents)

▶ Other stakeholders in the service, such as board members, sponsors and committees

Example

Policy transition

In the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Regulations 133 and 134 relate to the requirement for an early childhood educator to be present in a centre-based service for a specified number of hours. It is a transition provision, and the requirements in Regulations 133(1)(b) and 134(1)(b) do not apply to the service before 1 January 2020.

Practice task 2

Research the summary of changes that have come into effect within education and care services from October 2017 at http://aspirelr.link/nqf-summary-changes.

Choose one of the changes. Explain the change and how it will affect policy.

1C Completing research and consultation

Once you understand the specific legislation and policies that govern your service, you may need to undertake further research and consult with others to ensure you have the most relevant and current information, and that it relates specifically to your service and the issue you are dealing with.

It is essential that you consult widely to ensure policies align with legislation, reflect current practice, are relevant to the service and are worded so that their intent and implementation procedures are clear.

The following diagram describes a policy development and maintenance process. Those involved in the policy development and/or the consultation process are referred to as stakeholders and are seen at the centre of the diagram. You need to know who should be involved and how they can be involved.

How does government/ service/ organisational culture influence policy?

Evaluation – checking that the policy works

Identify the need for policy

Stakeholders

Putting the policy into action

Ensuring the content of the policy is current and reflects appropriate practice

Principles and practices of policy development

When developing policies, you need to understand and implement the principles and practices of policy development. These include understanding:

▶ how the policy reflects the service culture, values and objectives

▶ the scope of the policy

▶ the content of the policy, including related issues

▶ how the policy should be written, ensuring it meets the needs of those it serves and is easy to understand

▶ resourcing and implementation issues, such as ensuring the actions that underpin the policy are realistic and acceptable.

Meeting legal and ethical obligations

You must always follow your organisation's policies and procedures to ensure you meet your legal and ethical obligations.

For example, you have a legal duty of care to keep children safe and healthy whilst in your care, and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of their information.

You also have an ethical obligation to respect cultural diversity and support inclusive practice in your work so that everyone is treated fairly.

Watch this video to learn more about meeting legal and ethical obligations.

Research methodologies and tools

The following information outlines the research and consultation methods that can be used to gain the information you need.

Investigating legislation at the national and state/territory levels

Make sure that:

▶ you understand the wording of the policy/legislation and can clearly explain it to others

▶ the national policy aligns with the state/territory policy

▶ the policy is relevant to your service

▶ you check if the policy needs to be reworded to reflect the service's specific circumstances.

Identifying and using written sources of information

Sources may include:

▶ national legislation for child care and education

▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations

▶ organisational policy manual

▶ sample policies (you can find some sample policies at: http://aspirelr.link/sample-forms-and-templates and http://aspirelr.link/owfc-centre-policies).

Checking the service's policy documents

Check that the policy:

▶ matches what is occurring in the service now

▶ meets organisational requirements

▶ follows or links with legislation (where relevant)

▶ demonstrates current information

▶ reflects the values and beliefs of individuals

▶ includes reference to information that backs up and/or supports the policy.

Consulting with others

To check or confirm wording, relevance and currency, you may refer to:

▶ colleagues

▶ parents

▶ other organisations

▶ government agencies

▶ funding bodies.

Consultation principles

Consultation should be undertaken as a policy development strategy, and should be an ongoing process at all stages of policy development (investigation, writing, reviewing draft and final documentation, implementation and monitoring).

Prior to involving stakeholders, you must identify what you need from the consultation process. This includes who to consult with and what information you require from them. Remember that consultation may not just be providing a policy document or draft and asking for feedback; it involves using people appropriately to support particular research areas on policy. They might give an opinion, provide a professional explanation, reflect on an experience or give another perspective.

You can identify the right people and methods by following the simple principles listed below. These allow you to clarify who you need to involve and how you can involve them.

Subject	Some stakeholders may be skilled in areas that link to the policy you are developing; for example, if you are developing an infectious disease policy, a parent who is trained as a doctor may provide relevant information.
	Some stakeholders may be skilled in policy development itself. They may be able to assist in consultation activities, writing documents or researching the policy.
	Some policies do not need stakeholder involvement in their development as their topics are direct reflections of a regulation or standard. They may, however, need stakeholders to proofread, check for accuracy, simplify terms or check for words that need to be defined.
Timing	Identify whether your policy review must be completed within a specific time frame or if you can allow time for wide and extensive consultation over a period of weeks or even months.
	When you are short on time, you may choose to involve particular stakeholders who are easily accessible and have time to offer. Of course, they must also have the right knowledge, skills and experience.

Make information accessible	Think about the information you need to provide to bring your consultation together. Often, not all stakeholders have the level of knowledge, skills or experience you need for them to participate adequately. You want to make the information easy to follow, but still have the depth of detail required for success.
Welcome feedback	Providing different ways for stakeholders to be involved shows that you are open to feedback and want your policy review and development process to reflect the service, stakeholders and community. When the right stakeholders are involved in the right ways, they will feel the policy belongs to them and change processes will be more streamlined.

Consultation methods

To enable relevant stakeholders to be productive and consistent, some services create a policy development subcommittee. This committee may be made up of the relevant stakeholders as well as decision-makers and policy-writers, with their role being to develop policies and procedures for the service, and to assist others to understand policies so they can contribute to their development. It may also monitor and evaluate policies and procedures.

Some methods for consulting with stakeholders include:	
▶ letters and emails	▶ phone calls
▶ newsletters and brochures	▶ maps, models and displays
▶ exhibitions	▶ meetings
▶ submissions	▶ surveys
▶ graffiti sheets	▶ presentations
▶ forums	▶ community events.

Consultation documentation

Make sure you keep a record of your research and document all of your findings. Include references to policies, procedures, standards, legislation or regulations so that you can refer to them at any time.

By keeping the records of development used when contributing to writing or redeveloping a policy, you will find you can refer back later if there are questions. You will also find that when it comes to reviewing the policy again, you can refer back to your previous research to check currency.

Whenever a strategy is implemented, make sure all discussion, ideas, suggestions and points of view are promptly recorded and documented accurately so the information can be referred to at a later date. Include people's names, contact details and quotes, if appropriate.

Involve key stakeholders

It is not expected that you will have all the answers, expertise or experience to carry out the work alone. Accessing the skills and knowledge of others gives you the opportunity to identify a range of issues from different points of view, and provide guidance and support as you develop a policy. For example, you may find that you need advice about differing legislation and organisational expectations. It is useful to know who to ask when you need help.

Open and constructive communication is crucial to policy development. You need to identify who the stakeholders are and where their input will be useful so you can involve them at the right time.

Stakeholders may include any people or organisations that link with your service and can provide helpful information.

Examples of stakeholders include:

- colleagues
- children
- families
- other organisations
- funding bodies
- community groups
- management
- government agencies.

Stakeholder input

Stakeholders will bring their own perspective, understanding and interests to the issue and provide information you may not have considered previously. For example, stakeholders may help you identify:

- current legislation and how it affects education and care services
- which policies should be developed first and which are less important
- what information is most important
- the most serious issues or concerns
- how to word a particular policy statement
- how best to implement new policies or changes.

Stakeholder engagement

No matter which method you use to communicate with your stakeholders, their response will only be useful and timely if you engage with them while managing the consultation process.

To do this you need to do the following.

Techniques to engage stakeholders

Be prepared

Have what you need ready and provide it to stakeholders. Ensure the right people receive or are asked about the right information.
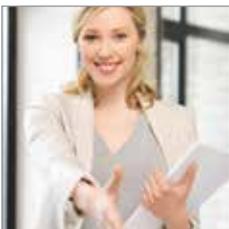
Clarify roles

Let your stakeholders know what you want from them. Document this and provide it with any other materials. Be sure they know who is making decisions from the start so they are not confused.

Set time lines

Clarify your feedback or participation deadlines. Check in to see how things are progressing. Make sure meetings are on time and finish at the suggested time. Book to speak with stakeholders so they are prepared.

Welcome stakeholders

Use the opportunity to develop a stronger relationship with them.

Respect confidentiality

Keep shared details private.

Manage conflict

Approach disagreements promptly to avoid conflict. Deal with conflicts of interest or opinion immediately to avoid further issues.

Provide resources

If you want people to write things down, provide pens and paper; if you want to talk on the phone, call them. Present your resources in sustainable ways and avoid wasting paper. Resources should be neat and in good order.

Thank stakeholders

Let them know they are valuable to the process. Individual feedback based on the contribution they made is the best way to do this.

Example

Communicating with stakeholders

Rohina works at an education and care centre in a community that includes many Sudanese people. She leads the review of the service's nutrition policy. She uses a variety of methods to share and gather information, including:

▶ meeting to discuss the policy with a committee who are interested and have skills and knowledge about nutrition

▶ placing items in the newsletter for all parents to read and asking for feedback or ideas

▶ bringing the policy topics up at staff meetings so that all staff can contribute

▶ inviting a nutritionist/dietitian to speak at a parent get-together/education night

▶ asking the nutritionist/dietitian if they are able to assist in menu planning

▶ gathering information about costs and suggesting ongoing requirements such as menu changes and updates

▶ surveying parents and children about the foods currently offered and what they would like to see in the future

▶ engaging a cook from the Sudanese community who will enable the service to add familiar and healthy Sudanese items to the menu

▶ gathering information about meatless dishes and the health of vegetarian children, as two children require vegetarian meals.

Practice task 3

Access a service policy related to the delivery and collection of children from a service. List the stakeholders you think are most influenced and/or affected by this policy and identify why they are linked.

1D Facilitating open and constructive discussion about policy issues

Different stakeholders need to have the opportunity to discuss the issues involved in policy areas relevant to them during a development process. This may happen at different stages depending on each service and on the stakeholders involved. It is especially crucial to consult when policy is being developed in an area that may be controversial or that people may feel strongly about. Everyone needs to have a chance to express their views before too much work is done on developing the actual policy.

To resolve these controversial topics it is necessary for you to conduct constructive discussions that achieve resolutions.

To conduct constructive discussions you can follow these steps.

Set the stage

Make sure your discussions are at the right place at the right time.

Avoid getting emotionally involved

If you feel strongly, keep calm and focus on listening. Avoid criticising the other person and try to view things from their perspective.

Use active listening

Don't interrupt, use body language to show you are listening, summarise what you hear and ask questions.

Stay on subject

Focus on the issue or topic and work toward solutions. Avoid moving on or including a variety of different topics.

Prompt discussion

Use phrases to get things started such as, "What are your ideas?" or, "What do you think about …?"

Clarify the information you have discussed

Ask for more information, what the person means, how the other person sees the connection and for people to give specific examples.

Take notes

To let the other person or people know you value their input, take notes to show you are using their ideas. You might say, "I will just jot that down, it's a good point!"

Achieving resolutions

Resolutions can be reached following the constructive discussion. To achieve these resolutions you should evaluate and compare ideas. In some situations you might be the decision-maker, and in other situations the stakeholder might make decisions.

Resolutions are about evaluating information and comparing it so that you can clearly identify an outcome. You will be looking at the evidence, opinions and examples you gained in the constructive discussion and bringing them to an outcome.

Example

Constructive discussion

A policy at Maraya Children's Service Centre states that if a child requires medication, such as paracetamol, the child must be deemed too unwell to attend the service. This decision was made following constructive discussion with all parents and educators, where concerns were raised about health and spread of infection within the service. Parents and educators had noticed that because ill children were attending the service, they were passing on infections to other children who had severe chronic illnesses such as asthma.

This policy is service specific, as the Education and Care Services National Regulations and the School Exclusion Table do not exclude children requiring paracetamol for mild illnesses. The constructive discussion that occurred allowed the stakeholders to make informed and value-based decisions that suited the service's community as a whole.

Practice task 4

Which mechanisms can be used to support a constructive discussion?

Summary

▶ To prepare for a new policy or amendment, you need to be familiar with current national, state/territory and local government legislation and policy relating to education and care, and how this translates into your service's policies.

▶ The Education and Care Services National Regulations 168 and 169 list the policies and procedures that must be developed and maintained by all regulated education and care services.

▶ Changes occur constantly in education and care services. Policies and procedures need to reflect these industry trends in formalised policy statements.

▶ When changes are made to legislation, services need time to alter and adapt their policies to meet the new expectations.

▶ It is essential that you consult widely to ensure policies align with legislation, reflect current practice, are relevant to the service and are worded so that their intent and implementation procedures are clear.

▶ Consultation should be undertaken as a policy development strategy, and should be an ongoing process at all stages of policy development.

▶ Despite the method you use to communicate with your stakeholders, their response will only be useful and timely if you engage with them while managing the consultation process.

▶ Different stakeholders need to have the opportunity to discuss the issues involved in policy areas relevant to them during a development process.

▶ Resolutions can be reached following the constructive discussion. To reach these resolutions you should evaluate and compare ideas.

Learning checkpoint 1
Researching new policy initiatives

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Harriet is responsible for evaluating the service's policies relating to safety. She is reviewing the sun protection policy and is unsure of a few details.

1. List **seven** education and care services policies relating to safety that are required by Regulation 168 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

2. Harriet is unsure about current trends relating to sun safety. Go to the SunSmart website (http://aspirelr.link/sun-smart) and list at least **four** current trends Harriet should include in the policy.

3. Harriet wants to consult with stakeholders to develop the sun protection policy. Identify one stakeholder outside of the service who would be able to assist with this consultation.

4. Which **three** methods might Harriet use to communicate with all stakeholders?

5. To achieve resolutions on the policy, what **two** things should Harriet do?

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

Drafting policies

A policy may take a variety of forms depending on the type of service it is reflecting and the legislative or mandatory requirements that are set out. The policy statement itself may be simply one or two sentences; however, the policy document may be structured to include specific headings and information that spans a variety of areas.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

2A Selecting and using policy formats and structures

The most important aspect of policy writing is ensuring policies are presented in such a way that the intent and purpose are clear, there are no ambiguous statements and the policy is easy to implement. The document needs to use language others can understand, it should be set in a clear and well-spaced font so it is easy to read, and it should be formatted to comply with organisational requirements.

Policy structure and format

Policy formats must be clear and easy to follow. You can do a search online for 'policy formats' and many examples will come up. The format should be consistent across all your policies, as should the headings and structure you choose. This provides a professional appearance, and makes reading and understanding the policy easier for stakeholders as they will become familiar with it and understand where to find the content.

The following table provides examples of the headings you could include in any policy document. To create a complete policy, it is recommended that you use these headings to create a strong structure. You might review these headings as part of your consultation process so that you can identify which headings are right for your service and what order is most clear.

Policy number	This is used for tracking and organisation.
Title of the policy	This is the name of the policy. Ensure the name is clear enough for you to read and understand what it is about.
Rationale	This is why you have this policy; why it is important. This section also defines the issue and relates to philosophy and legislation.
Scope	Who does the policy apply to and who will be required to adhere to it?
Definitions	This section clarifies words or ideas that may not be known by all readers.
Purpose	What is the policy set to achieve? What are its aims?
Policy statement	This is the body of the policy; that is, what it is about.
Links to legislation or guidelines	In education and care services, this will refer to the EYLF/MTOP, NQS, etc. Legislation may be Commonwealth-based or part of state/territory guidelines. The policy must include when the legislation is to be updated so it can be checked for further updates when required.

Links to resources and sources	This should list the websites, books, legislation and specialists you accessed.
Links to other policies	This should list connections to other policies that give more detail about what is required or expected.
Procedures	This describes how tasks can be completed.
Implementation	The policy should include an addendum that identifies the implementation procedures, including human, time and financial resource implications.
Evaluation and review mechanisms	This refers to approval or ratification dates (the date the policy was approved for implementation) and the date the policy must be reviewed.

Example

Policy structure and format

One World for Children's Centre

Routines: Version 1

Policy

One World for Children's Centre's routines are planned; however, they are flexible for children's changing needs.

Relevant legislation and standards

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

Background

Routines are not simply about caring for a child's physical needs, but are occasions for social interaction, conversation and learning related to self-help and growing independence. Every transition between routines and activities is recognised and used as an opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge in your child.

Our routines are flexible, having been developed to provide a framework for the staff to meet the children's physical needs, yet are also predictable, providing the children with a sense of security and familiarity throughout the day's progression.

Routine activities divide each day into blocks of time, and form a reference point for other activities that occur within the program for the children who do not yet understand the concept of time. This is important for young children's developing self-confidence and trust.

Team leaders are responsible for:

▶ developing effective room routines

▶ implementing the routine and making changes if the routine is not working

▶ making spontaneous changes to the routine based on weather, children's needs and special events

▶ supporting educators, students and volunteers to follow the routine

▶ using routine times to interact with babies and children to build attachment

▶ using routines to undertake intentional teaching

▶ seeking opportunities within the routine for spontaneous learning

▶ minimising the times during which children are expected to do the same thing at the same time

▶ initiating one-to-one interactions with babies and toddlers, ensuring routine times are positive interactions for learning.

Educators are responsible for:

▶ implementing the routine

▶ supporting students and volunteers to follow the routine

▶ using routine times to interact with babies and children to build attachment

▶ using routines to undertake intentional teaching

▶ seeking opportunities within the routine for spontaneous learning

▶ minimising the times during which children are expected to do the same thing at the same time

▶ initiating one-to-one interactions with babies and toddlers, ensuring routine times are positive interactions for learning.

Policy review

Date reviewed: 14 February 2018

Two weeks' consultation beginning: 14 February 2018

Date for review: February 2020

This policy will be reviewed biannually unless there are any regulatory or legislative requirements and/or any feedback from staff, parents and the community.

Practice task 5

List the possible headings that might be included in a policy structure.

2B Drafting policies

When writing any form of informational document, it is suggested that you write a draft copy to enable you to put together all the information you have. This process will allow you to see any gaps and gain some sense of achievement. The draft will help you to plan the next stages.

In a draft it is expected that not everything will be perfect. A draft is an opportunity for you to put ideas together and then prepare to gather more ideas as you work toward completion.

Reflecting the service's culture, values and objectives

Policies should be influenced by and reflect the legislation they are based on, as well as the service itself.

The community services industry, like many industries, commonly uses initials or acronyms to refer to various agencies, concepts and forms. It is a common courtesy to all readers to spell out the whole name and place the initials in brackets the first time you use the name that you intend to abbreviate in your document. Thereafter, it is acceptable to use the letters only. For example: *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF), *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOP), National Quality Framework (NQF) and National Quality Standard (NQS).

The following information describes how different services' cultures, values and objectives impact policies.

Philosophy

Policies need to reflect the things your service believes in and the practices it feels are important. These may relate to theory, research or standards.

Mission

The mission can be used to keep your policies on track. It expresses how your service operates and what you do, so policies need to be in line with this.

Values

Values are the things you feel are a priority, and, in a service, they may reflect a variety of people. By identifying the values of those using the service, you will be able to incorporate these into policies.

Culture

Policies should provide guidelines and be flexible to accommodate the different ways people want their education and care setting to operate. A policy that does not reflect the culture of its users will be difficult to implement.

Goals and objectives

Goals and objectives give policies some depth and allow them to be progressive and to look outside restrictions into the benefits. This type of policy will be a vehicle for improvement and best-practice development.

Context

Every policy should reflect the context of your specific service. A policy developed for any other service may serve as a foundation, but without your input and that of your stakeholders, the policy will be uninspiring and may be difficult for users to implement within your service.

Environment

There are two aspects to environment. First, the environment in which the policy is to be implemented must match the information in the policy. Second, it is wise to include care for the environment as a practice that links with the policy to assist your service to become more sustainable.

Legislation

Many policies must reflect current legislation, administration and ethics. These must be adhered to for best practice and to ensure your service is compliant.

Sponsorship

How a service is managed may influence the development of its policy. For example, if a service is sponsored by a specific organisation, it will be influenced by the global policies of that organisation. Its policies are seen as part of the mandates the service is working under and, as such, any service-based policies will be influenced by the sponsoring organisation's policy.

Identifying the scope of the policy

To enable people to understand the policy, its scope should be clearly described. The scope is a summary of the information that highlights those who might be affected by the policy and its procedures.

The policy scope should help you to identify the stakeholders and provide some guidance toward how to consider them and consult with them.

Identifying the policy's content

Your research and consultation will have identified the information you must include in the policy. Your draft should include as many of the structure headings as possible.

Whether you are amending an existing policy or creating a new policy, pay particular attention to the wording you use to ensure the facts are current, names and dates are relevant, and the instructions are clear and easy to understand.

Note that a policy's content must include the policy statement as well as a range of other information to help educators and others implement the policy.

When reviewing your draft policy, check the following:

▶ Can you add information in any way?

▶ Is all legislation aligned and included?

▶ Does the draft policy reflect the context, values, philosophy and procedures of the service?

▶ Who needs to be involved in the policy and does the scope include them?

Writing the policy

The draft policy you develop must be representative of your service, meet stakeholders' needs and be clearly written and easy to implement. A well-written policy should be seen as a valuable resource.

Develop a draft policy that is close to how you want it to be, yet open to feedback and improvement. Prior to completing your draft, check that it is:

▶ written in appropriate language that everyone can understand

▶ factual, accurate and that it includes current information

▶ concise, including all information needed in as few words as possible

▶ clearly structured and that it includes headings to cover all information

▶ formatted for ease of reading

▶ consistent in presentation and content.

Example

Draft policy showing scope and content

The following is an example of a draft policy, showing the scope and content. The policy reflects the service's culture, values and objectives through its description of the water play options they provide and their approach to safety.

2.5 Water safety policy (Draft)

Rationale

To ensure that children are safe when interacting with water.

Scope

The policy applies to all educators, volunteers, students and families. It covers the use of water during any experience or activity.

Definitions

Water play may mean the use of wading pools, water troughs, water features and water-tapped containers.

Purpose

To ensure that all children remain safe when accessing water.

Policy statement

Sunshine Children's Centre will ensure that all water-based learning environments are actively supervised and containers are emptied when not in use.

Relevant legislation

▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulation 168 (2) (a)(iii))

▶ National Quality Standard (Standard 2.2)

▶ *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.)

Procedures and implementation

Water troughs and water features are only to be filled or turned on when play begins, either indoors or outdoors, and when active supervision can occur.

At all times, children playing with water (water play trough) must be closely supervised.

Never leave a child unattended at a water feature. A staff member must supervise this area at all times when a child is in attendance. A cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) guide must be displayed in each play room.

All wading pools/water features/water troughs must be emptied immediately after use (when all children come indoors from outdoors and when playrooms/ outdoors are not in use).

To prevent the collection of water in containers, they need to be stored upright/ inverted.

A staff member must check the grounds after rain or watering, and empty any water that has collected in holes or containers.

Water containers/troughs are to be placed in an open area for supervision. Water troughs are not to be placed in blind areas of the outdoor and indoor environments.

Resources

▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulation 168 (2) (a)(iii))

▶ National Quality Standard (Standard 2.2)

Evaluation

Created: 03.12.17

To be reviewed: 03.12.18

Practice task 6

There are particular service areas you must consider when writing a draft policy. These areas demonstrate the service's culture, values and objectives. List these **nine** service areas.

2C Articulating policy requirements

Policies are not effective if the people using them find them complicated, confusing or difficult to relate to. The way you present information to others needs to be in a format and style that facilitates understanding, and allows them to apply the policy effectively. Ensuring that most policies found in your service link to legislation, policy and procedure compliance is vital. You may need to prepare support material to assist people to understand and implement policies adequately.

Implications of policy requirements

When policies that reflect legislation are not followed, it is considered to be a breach of compliance. In education and care services this is a situation that must be avoided due to the various ways compliance connects with duty of care.

Processes of change are often difficult. If policies are complicated, unclear, overly long or lack detail, you may find staff do not understand them and therefore may not implement the required actions. This can make the change process more frustrating than it should be. It can also put staff in danger of committing breaches.

Sometimes you must provide additional supporting information.

Supporting information

When policies require strict compliance or clear understanding, you may need to provide supporting information to ensure all staff understand their practices and responsibilities.

The most common supporting information would be the legislation or standards that you are referring to in your draft policy.

Never assume that everyone knows all the information you refer to, or that they know how to find this information. In addition, you may find that the stakeholders need training or information sessions, examples and/or demonstrations so that they can fully appreciate the purpose of the draft policy and provide adequate feedback on how it should be improved.

Example

Supporting information

A service's Child Safe Environment Policy includes the following statement:

'Any staff member who has reasonable suspicion that a child is being, or has been, abused in some form, or a child has abused another child, must immediately report this to a Senior Manager and record all information on the Confidential Incident Report Form, which details the incident and the outcome.'

To ensure that all stakeholders understand what these expectations are, the policy includes definitions of terms. As supporting information, the policy also includes the contact details of each department and a link to the Confidential Incident Report Form.

Practice task 7

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

The following statement is included in the draft Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy:

'In the case of infectious diseases, the period of exclusion will be in accordance with the "Recommended minimum periods of exclusion from school, pre-school and child care centres for cases of and contact with infectious diseases" (*Staying healthy in child care,* 4th edition, National Health and Medical Research Council), or at the discretion of the director and staff, doctor's certificate notwithstanding.'

What resource should be provided to enable stakeholders to view the relevant information and understand the statement fully?

2D Developing plans for policy resourcing, implementation and review

As part of policy development, you need to consider how the policy will be implemented and how it is to be reviewed. Once you have developed a draft, it is then time to plan toward implementation and putting the policy into practice.

Implementation planning

Implementation planning is about setting out how you are going to put the policy into place. It includes details about:

▶ which stakeholders you want to communicate with

▶ how you want to communicate with stakeholders

▶ when you plan to communicate with stakeholders

▶ what tools and support information you need

▶ your time lines

▶ who the decision-makers are

▶ challenges and how you plan to face them.

Implementation resources

The resources you need during implementation may include the following.

Time

For example, when the policy will be implemented and how long the implementation process should last for.

Budget

For example, what expenses will be required for promoting the policy?

Personnel

For example, who will be involved with the implementation and what will their role be?

Equipment and materials

For example, paper, pens, whiteboards, textbooks, sample policies, computers, printers and email access.

Implementation considerations

Implementation considerations include the end goal, benefits, outcomes and a schedule. These considerations are detailed below.

End goal

What you want to achieve by implementing this policy.

Benefits

The improvements that will be seen between the current situation and the end goal.

Outcomes

The measurable outcomes at each stage of the process.

Implementation schedule

The time lines, activities and milestones of the implementation process.

Implementation processes

An implementation process will include a timetable of when each action will occur. By creating a timetable, you will be sure to include all processes and plans, and your resources will be prepared. People will be able to see when each stage will occur, and you will be able to manage your actions in order to create the final policy within a period of time, ensuring it is available in a timely manner for its implementation.

Example

Implementation schedule

Here is an example of one service's policy implementation schedule.

Policy implementation schedule	
Collect information	2.2.18 to 15.2.18
Consultation	16.2.18
Start policy draft	17.2.18
Complete draft	24.2.18
Develop materials and tools	25.2.18 to 1.3.18
Test policy	2.3.18 to 9.3.18
Finalise policy	10.3.18 to 15.3.18
Propose	17.3.18
Implement	31.3.18
Review	31.3.19

Practice task 8

Which **four** resources might you need when planning an implementation process?

Summary

▶ Policy formats must be clear and easy to follow. The format should be consistent across all your policies, as should the headings or structure you choose.

▶ When writing any form of informational document, it is suggested that you write a draft copy to enable you to put together all the information you have.

▶ Policies should be influenced by and reflect the legislation they are based on, and the service itself.

▶ The policy scope should help you to identify the stakeholders, and provide some guidance toward how to consider them and consult with them.

▶ Whether you are amending an existing policy or creating a new policy, pay particular attention to the wording you use to ensure the facts are current, names and dates are relevant, and the instructions are clear and easy to understand.

▶ The way you present information to others needs to be in a format and style that facilitates understanding, and allows them to apply the policy effectively.

▶ When policies that reflect legislation are not followed, a breach of compliance is occurring.

▶ Never assume that everyone knows all the information you refer to, or that they know how to find this information.

▶ The resources you need during implementation include time, budget, personnel, equipment and materials.

Learning checkpoint 2
Drafting policies

Part A

1. Would it be appropriate for all education and care services to use the same policies and procedures? Why or why not?

2. Which policy heading describes who the policy applies to and who will be required to adhere to it?

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> ### Case study
>
> Aubrey is drafting a policy relating to child-safe environments. She drafts this statement:
>
> 'In relation to a child-safe environment, staff are responsible for ensuring there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children.'

1. Is this statement clear and articulate, explaining what needs to happen? Explain your answer.

2. What supporting information might Aubrey provide to clarify her expectations?

3. What process could Aubrey use to ensure that the implementation of the policy is completed within the allocated time frame, and that all aspects of the policy development process are completed?

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Developing and implementing consultation mechanisms for draft policies

3B Identifying policy implementation issues with stakeholders

3C Modifying draft policies

3D Giving sufficient notice to those affected by policy changes

Testing draft policies

Once a draft policy is completed, it is time to test it by gaining further feedback from stakeholders. This process will allow you to put together plans for improvement before writing the final draft. To ensure you have completed thorough preparation, it is wise to plan your processes and document what happens. This plan will assist you to review the outcomes.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

3A Developing and implementing consultation mechanisms for draft policies

Effective consultation at the draft stage of policy development is crucial so that all those involved in the implementation of the policy have the opportunity to identify and resolve any issues. Stakeholders will already be familiar with the background of the policy and be aware of its intention.

Planned consultation helps to ensure a policy:

▶ reflects the actions of those implementing the policy on a daily basis

▶ includes diverse ideas

▶ reflects a team approach

▶ is understood by all stakeholders

▶ demonstrates the unique nature of the service

▶ is based on adequate legislation and/or guidelines.

Consultation plans

The objective of the consultation is to test and review the draft policy so that any issues can be addressed and the final version of the policy meets everyone's approval.

The people responsible for implementing a policy and/or carrying out the procedure should be identified as the most important group to be involved. Those who may be affected by the policy also need to be part of the process. In some cases, those who may be able to offer special skills or expertise may take on a role. A structured consultation process begins with a comprehensive consultation plan that states who needs to be consulted, the areas that must be reviewed, the questions to ask and the communication strategies to use. Your service may have a particular consultation plan they use in all policy development processes.

The following information highlights the main sections that may be included in a consultation plan.

The policy name

▶ The title and/or number of the policy being tested or reviewed

Manager

▶ Who is managing the consultation process

Start date

▶ The date you plan to commence the consultation

End date

▶ The date you plan to complete the consultation

Background

▶ Why the consultation is taking place

▶ What the issues are

▶ What needs to be resolved

▶ What the outcome should be

▶ Why the consultation is occurring

Stakeholders

▶ The stakeholder groups involved, including:

   – local stakeholders

   – state or territory stakeholders

   – national stakeholders

Strategies

▶ What kind of consultation is most suited, such as:

   – letters/mail-outs

   – meetings

   – website information

   – workshops

   – surveys

   – discussion groups

   – displays

Information and resources

▶ Information materials to be prepared

▶ Experts involved

▶ Legislation provided for viewing

▶ Space

▶ People

Documentation

▶ How the consultation process will be documented

▶ How the information will be used to reach decisions

Selecting strategies

You will need to decide on the most appropriate strategy for consulting with each stakeholder, keeping in mind who the stakeholder is, their availability and the type of information they can provide. Refer to the consultation plan and select the most appropriate method or strategy. The following information describes when it is best to use each strategy.

Meetings, forums and briefings

Use this strategy:

▶ when you have a large number of people to address

▶ to provide information, encourage involvement, identify concerns and obtain input.

Committees and specialist groups

Use this strategy:

▶ when you are working with specific people who are interested; for example, specialists or those committed to completing the task

▶ to provide information, maintain awareness, identify concerns, develop objectives, test ideas, build relationships and obtain input into decision-making.

Workshops

Use this strategy:

▶ for seeking immediate feedback, ideas and suggestions

▶ to provide information, share decision-making, test ideas, identify concerns and issues, and achieve consensus.

Letters, leaflets and surveys

Use this strategy:

▶ when you need to provide or gain information from a range of people

▶ when you need to build involvement.

Displays

Use this strategy:

▶ to allow information to be conveyed in an engaging way to a number of people at the same time

▶ to provide information, and encourage involvement and participation.

Newsletters

Use this strategy to provide information, and encourage involvement and participation.

Preparing questions

Be well prepared for consultation and have a list of questions you need to ask each specific group of people. These questions may be asked face to face, may be part of a written or verbal survey or may be discussion points at a meeting.

Questions that need to be answered through consultation:	
▶ Is the new policy solving the problem it is designed to address?	▶ Is the policy relevant to the service and each stakeholder?
▶ Does the new policy meet the needs of all stakeholders?	▶ How does the policy affect children, families or other stakeholders?
▶ Is the policy fair and equitable?	▶ Have groups of people been forgotten or left out?
▶ What is most successful?	▶ What is least successful?
▶ Is the format easy to understand?	▶ Was everyone prepared well enough?
▶ What concerns do you have about the policy?	▶ Is there information that shows the policy is out of date?
▶ Have there been any legislation changes that need to be added to the policy?	

Providing support material

You need to provide stakeholders with any relevant documentation and other resources that will assist them to make a judgment about the policy. Different stakeholders may require different information. This may include:

▶ legislation

▶ the service's philosophy statement

▶ the budget available for implementation

▶ the existing policy (if relevant)

▶ a printed survey.

You may also need to provide paper and pens for them to jot down their comments and feedback; if using digital methods you might need to provide links, email addresses or site names.

Recording the consultation

Make sure you document all consultations, including dates, stakeholders, issues, recommendations and actions to be taken. These records allow you to review in a variety of ways, such as checking through information as well as matching, comparing and reviewing. Some stakeholders may have provided completed surveys and others may have proofread or read through your draft policy. When the stakeholder documents their comments on the draft, it is very easy to see their areas of concern or exactly where their constructive criticism is provided.

When it is time to modify the draft policy again, you will have these records as a reminder of the process and what you need to do next.

Example

Developing a consultation plan

Ryker prepares the following consultation plan as he wants to review the nutrition and food policy at the service where he works.

Heading	Details
Policy name	2.2 Nutrition and Food
Manager	Ryker
Start date	03.02.18
End date	03.04.18
Background	New seasonal menu to be developed that includes dietitian involvement. A number of children with dietary allergies and intolerances cannot attend the service. Menu needs to become more culturally inclusive, particularly representing the growing Vietnamese population.
Stakeholders	The stakeholder group involved includes: ▶ parents ▶ dietitian ▶ allergy specialist ▶ cook ▶ Vietnamese community representative ▶ staff.

Heading	Details
Strategies	The following strategies will be used to implement the policy: ▶ Meetings; for example, community meetings, committee meetings, meetings with specialists ▶ Online research ▶ Workshops ▶ Surveys ▶ Discussion group/subcommittee ▶ Displays
Information and resources to be provided	Information materials to be prepared include the following: ▶ Explanation of what we are trying to achieve ▶ Welcome to all stakeholders to become involved ▶ Collection method for identifying particular food requirements and/or preferences ▶ *Get Up & Grow* information Legislation provided for viewing: ▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations ▶ National Quality Standard Space: ▶ Meeting room ▶ Display board Experts involved: ▶ Dietitian ▶ Vietnamese community representative ▶ Allergy specialist ▶ Cook Additional stakeholders: ▶ Staff ▶ Parents
Documentation	The consultation process: ▶ Minutes taken of meetings and discussion groups ▶ Copies of surveys kept, reports from specialists, sample menus and recipes I will use the information to reach decisions, compile the information and present it as a whole, and develop a draft of the policy for perusal and testing.

Practice task 9

List **four** questions you might ask stakeholders to gain feedback on a draft policy.

3B Identifying policy implementation issues with stakeholders

Part of the consultation process involves discussing how the policy will be implemented.

Different stakeholders are likely to bring their own perspective to the discussion; for example, a director may be concerned with the budget allocated to the implementation, whereas a staff member may be wondering how they should communicate the new policy to children.

Identifying implementation issues

Some policies may be accepted immediately, such as a policy to compost kitchen waste for the children's garden. Other policies may cause concern and resistance, such as a policy that requires all staff to complete a lengthy form each time they remove an item from the store cupboard. Some further examples of issues that may arise during the implementation process are outlined in the following table.

Circumstance	Examples of implementation issues
There is a need for a new policy.	▶ People can't see the need for a change.
The new policy must be communicated to staff, parents and children.	▶ Staff may be concerned about the strategies they should use to let children know about the new policy. ▶ Some parents may need help to understand the information in a newsletter. ▶ Some key stakeholders may not have been involved in developing the policy, so there may be ownership difficulties.
Resources are required to implement the policy.	▶ There may be funding issues for new materials. ▶ New resources must be sustainable.
The policy must be monitored, reviewed and evaluated.	▶ Who will monitor and evaluate the policy? ▶ How can we ensure everyone has the opportunity to comment?
Time lines must be set for monitoring and evaluation.	▶ There may be a perception of insufficient time to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the new policy.

Circumstance	Examples of implementation issues
A budget must be allocated to implement the policy, including funds for promotion and equipment that needs to be purchased.	▶ There are few funds allocated to doing this properly, so how can we implement the new policy effectively?

Discussing implementation issues

Your discussions may identify a number of areas that need to be modified before the policy is finalised. For example, a director may wish to see the monitoring undertaken in a more structured way rather than simply asking people for feedback; for example, with specific personnel observing and reporting back at regular intervals over a two-month period.

Following the consultation, you may need to modify the policy to take into account people's comments and suggestions for improvement.

Stakeholders may express a number of feelings and beliefs about policies. For example, they may be concerned that their role will change or their position in the service will not be required. They may want things to stay as they are because they are comfortable that way and do not want to be taken outside of their comfort zone.

Other concerns that people may have include:
▶ worrying that their productivity or abilities will be lessened while they are adjusting to the new policy
▶ needing time to think about how the policy relates to them and how they will act before they are ready to implement the policy
▶ feeling they lack the skills required to implement the policy; they may not see how important their actions are to the service
▶ believing they can't cope with what is being asked of them; this may be a psychological issue related to their self-esteem or they may need professional development.

Example

Policy implementation issues

Lars wants to implement a new policy focused on cleaning schedules. He feels that not all staff are contributing fairly to the current procedures. When he consults on his draft procedure, many staff members become unhappy and tell him that the policy does not need to be reviewed. The staff are not happy following the suggestions of a roster that Lars has made and want to use a different strategy to resolve the issue.

Practice task 10

List **two** issues that might arise from stakeholders when attempting to implement a policy.

3C Modifying draft policies

Following final consultation, and before a policy is implemented, the policy needs to be modified to reflect the issues that have arisen from the draft. This is a time when all the records of consultation are useful for clarifying priorities and reminding you of the changes that are necessary.

Testing policies

Once the policy has been tested, you will hopefully have lots of information detailing what the stakeholders see as vital to the policy's success. It is time to reflect on this, and make notes about what needs to be done and how you will complete this. Testing allows you to answer the following questions:

▶ Have you done the right thing?

▶ Have you done it the right way?

▶ Could you improve and achieve more?

Identifying problems

When problems arise relating to the implementation of the policy, further consultation and testing may be required. You must continue with this cycle until these issues are resolved. Many of the problems you find within your draft policy will relate to issues with facts, presentation and format.

Common problems to rectify include:

▶ altering the format to meet the stakeholders' suggestions

▶ correcting spelling and grammar

▶ setting out the policy in a way that is more pleasing

▶ clarifying misunderstood sentences or phrases

▶ adding extra definitions

▶ including relevant legislation, guidelines or resource materials that were missing

▶ factual issues.

Modifying drafts

Your modified draft should include all the information required to pull together the policy, to resolve any problems in implementation and presentation, and to ensure the policy is ready to be assessed as a final draft. If you have not addressed all problems, another review may be required. This will slow down the process and ultimately delay the policy's implementation, but it is important to continue to work on the draft until all issues are resolved.

Example

Policy modifications

Isaak develops a policy that includes the following statement:

'Parents will give EBM to staff immediately upon arrival to place in the refrigerator in clearly labelled bottles.'

Some stakeholders were unclear about what 'EBM' meant, so Isaak included this in the definitions of the policy:

'EBM: Expressed breast milk'

Practice task 11

What are **three** common issues that may be found when reflecting on a draft policy?

3D Giving sufficient notice to those affected by policy changes

If you have prepared a timetable of your policy development process, you will be able to clearly identify for stakeholders the time frames required for each stage. Some policies will be suitable to implement immediately; for example, a review of a policy where the format has been altered rather than the content. Other policies may need extended preparation, such as a policy leading to an increase in fees or staff-to-child ratios.

The best way to deal with change is to involve all affected parties in the planning stage. You may not eliminate resistance, but you will definitely improve your outcome.

Implementation time frame

Implementation time frames can be set out, just as your policy development process was. Consider any problems you may face and plan realistic time frames for meeting these. You can ask stakeholders for feedback relating to how long they feel is adequate; this makes them feel involved and can reduce the potential for additional issues to arise.

When you notify someone of a change in policy, you need to provide them with time to ask questions, have these answered, consider how the change will be implemented, gain training or professional development, and sometimes to make decisions about whether they are able or willing to meet the new requirements.

Hopefully, a functional consultation process will provide most stakeholders with enough time to consider and prepare.

Notification and communication methods

As with consultation, you will need to rely on methods of communication that suit each stakeholder. You will use:

- meetings
- forums
- briefings
- committees and groups
- workshops
- letters
- leaflets
- displays
- newsletters.

In addition, individuals or groups of staff may require training and professional development.

Notifying people affected by the policy

From your stakeholder group, and using the feedback from consultation, you will have gained a clear picture of those who feel affected by the policy change.

Always keep in mind that change is difficult for most people, so remember to consider any person who feels influenced by the change, not just the people you think are involved. For example, the policy might only affect the time management of the cook; however, other staff may feel this also affects them – maybe they are concerned about whether meals will come at the usual time, or whether it will now be their responsibility to empty the dishwasher. Even though concerns may not seem logical or easily connected, some stakeholders will perceive any change to be influencing their work.

Example

Discussing policy implementation

Gerri is preparing to implement a policy that includes a change from disposable nappies to cloth nappies. She has completed a wide consultation and research process, and this change reflects the wishes of most parents and educators.

Gerri has identified that this change will take a little while to implement as the service has a number of disposable nappies still in stock, and the cloth nappy service and associated materials (for example, nappy waste bins and waterproof nappy covers) are still to be organised and funded.

During this interim period, Gerri contacts all parents by email or phone to alert them to the change. She offers parents the option to continue using disposable nappies, but explains that they must provide their own and need to be prepared for and understand this expectation.

Gerri also communicates with staff who, in some cases, have not used cloth nappies for a long time. They need to experiment with various folding techniques and develop rosters for completing the requirements that link to the policy.

Practice task 12

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Blake has prepared a new service sustainability policy. The policy states that the service will use handkerchiefs rather than tissues, and cloth hand towels rather than disposable paper towels. Blake is aware that all educators and parents will need to be notified about the change.

If Blake notified the staff and parents about the change by putting a notice on the front door of the service on Wednesday, and wanted the new policy to be in place by Thursday, would this be sufficient notice of the change? Why or why not?

Summary

▶ Effective consultation at the policy development draft stage is crucial so that all those involved in the implementation of the policy have the opportunity to identify and resolve any issues.

▶ A structured consultation process begins with a comprehensive consultation plan that states who needs to be consulted, the areas that must be reviewed, the questions to ask and the communication strategies to use.

▶ Be well prepared for consultation and have a list of questions you need to ask for each specific group of people.

▶ You need to provide stakeholders with any relevant documentation and other resources that will assist them to make a judgment about the policy.

▶ When a stakeholder documents their comments on the draft, it is very easy to see where they link their concerns or exactly where their constructive criticism is provided.

▶ Some policies may be accepted immediately; other policies may cause concern and resistance.

▶ When problems arise relating to the implementation of a policy, further consultation and testing may be required. You must continue with this cycle until these points are resolved.

▶ Some policies will be suitable to implement immediately; other policies may need extended preparation.

Learning checkpoint 3
Testing draft policies

Part A

1. List the headings you should use when developing a consultation plan.

2. What are **three** common modifications that might be made to a draft policy?

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> **Case study**
>
> Sinclair, the second in charge at an education and care service, has developed a draft policy on playground safety. He has included a plan for redeveloping the outdoor play space over the next month using recycled materials. Sinclair feels that it is safest if he employs a landscape gardener and a registered builder. He wants to implement the policy without further consultation as he thinks he should get the whole yard changed at once while enrolment numbers are low. He feels that when the yard is finished, more families will want to enrol.

1. List and explain **two** implementation issues you can identify from the case study.

2. If Sinclair decided to follow an appropriate policy development process, and his plans were approved, what **two** methods might he use to notify stakeholders of the change?

Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

Developing policy proposals

When a policy proposal has been prepared, it is then submitted to decision-makers. It explains the need to improve current practice by developing more effective policies, or to meet changes in legislation or best practice. Some organisations' decision-makers expect a policy proposal to be submitted prior to any consultation or review, so check this with your supervisor.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

4A Preparing policy materials for stakeholders

In most situations, your decision-makers will have been part of the consultation process or be aware that it took place. In other organisations, the decisions-makers will have a final say based on a presentation they are provided with once the policy is complete.

The materials you provide will assist the decision-makers to fully understand the policy, so they can make informed choices. If decision-makers discover that vital details were missing after their decision has been made, this could be seen as an attempt on your part to conceal details and you may be disciplined.

Presenting the policy

The most obvious material to present to decision-makers is your actual policy. This should be provided in the final stage that you have worked toward, and should include all formatting and completed changes.

Supporting information

When preparing a policy proposal, refer back to your reference materials and identify which of these resources were key to understanding the policy document. You may need to prepare other materials to aid understanding and implementation of the policy depending on the decision-makers' knowledge of your service. Consider the following:

▶ If the policy includes details of other services and specialist agencies, make sure you have a separate list of correct names and contact phone numbers for easy reference.

▶ Prepare a list of relevant websites and hyperlinks that are correct and functioning.

▶ Make sure a copy of the legislation and regulations that apply to a particular policy is available, particularly the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Clear reference to relevant legislation of any kind should be within the policy document.

Areas of change

Your materials should include supporting details of any change that is occurring. Examples of this are provided in the following information.

Guidelines

You need to prepare procedures or guidelines for putting the policy into practice. For example, a policy stating that all visitors must sign a book on entering the service should be accompanied by a procedure that lists the steps educators are to take, such as approaching the visitor and asking them to sign the book, explaining why this is necessary, making sure the signature is clear and dated, and ensuring the visitor signs out upon leaving the premises.

Resources

You may need to prepare posters, equipment, space and materials to carry out the policy. For example, to implement a new aspect of a sustainability policy, you may need to purchase handkerchiefs and cloth towels and wash these.

Training

You may need to prepare training information; for example, how the training will be carried out, the names of the trainers, and the date, time and location of the training, as well as the training outcomes.

Key point summary

To provide an overview of your policy, you might pull your materials together using a key point summary. This is a brief summary of your whole proposal. It reflects the content of your proposal and all your ideas. The aim of the key point summary is to give enough information in short, clear terms for the decision-makers to be able to agree or disagree with the policy.

Some guidelines for writing the summary:

▶ Keep the summary brief.

▶ Define abbreviations and acronyms the first time they are used.

▶ Use general language rather specialist language, unless you are certain the decision-makers are clear about this.

▶ State what led you to the policy review or development, what you have found from your policy development process and what the results of the new policy will be.

Example

Preparing policy materials

Anneke prepares a sustainability policy following the service's established policy format. The changes relate to the use of environmentally safe cleaning products. Her policy document includes a policy number, the title of the policy, rationale, scope, definitions, purpose, policy statement, links to legislation, guidelines, resources and sources, links to other policies and version and review details.

She also prepares copies of some relevant policy materials, including:

▶ details of how to contact the local Green Team

▶ NQS Element 3.2.3: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible

▶ posters highlighting the various products and their cleaning values

▶ natural products to use for demonstration

▶ a poster inviting staff to attend training organised through Fresh Green Clean (http://aspirelr.link/fresh-green-clean).

Practice task 13

Why is it necessary to provide all policy support materials to stakeholders?

4B Presenting policy proposals to decision-makers

A policy proposal helps decision-makers in your service to understand:

▶ what is being proposed

▶ the rationale behind the proposal

▶ how it is linked to the service's mission, vision, philosophy and business plan

▶ the impact the new or amended policy will have on the service's environment

▶ the time, human, financial and equipment resources needed to implement the policy.

A decision can be made based on this information. For example, the decision-makers may decide it is appropriate to go ahead, or they may suggest further consultation, a different direction or possibly even dismiss the policy entirely.

You may need an approval form to be completed prior to implementation. Make sure you obtain the correct signatures. For example, you may require approval from the committee chairperson, management, the service director and/or another party, such as a regulatory body or a building inspector.

Policy proposals

While a policy proposal is often a formal written document, slideshow presentations are popular support aids for presenting proposals verbally. When presenting verbally, ensure you prepare the presentation to engage the audience with visual information, speak clearly and confidently, and provide supporting material as hand-outs. Be prepared to answer any questions that may be asked.

Key areas of a policy proposal

1 **Policy**
Name, title, number of the policy

2 **Summary**
Brief description of what the policy is about

3 **Consultation**
Who should be or who was involved and how

4 **Scope**
Who the policy will affect

5 **Link to the service**
How the mission, vision, philosophy, business or organisation/corporate plan is linked to or reflected in the policy

Background, purpose and overview

6

▶ Whether this is a new or reviewed policy

▶ Why the policy was developed or reviewed, including improvement to current practice and/or morale, issue or compliance

▶ What information has led you to this decision; this may include readings, conference information and experience

▶ Any legislation the policy addresses

▶ How the policy will improve the service

Impact

7

▶ How the service will be affected

▶ What resources will be needed; for example, human, financial, physical, operational and technological

▶ Changes to the behaviour or culture of the service

▶ Any compliance or regulatory implications such as approvals of people or bodies outside of the service

▶ Any training that will be required prior to or following full implementation

8 **Timing**

When you propose this policy should commence

9 **Responsible people**

Who is responsible for this implementation

10 **Application**

What applications apply to this proposal and who needs to be contacted to approve any applications

Example

Policy proposal

Here is an example of a completed policy proposal.

Policy proposal

Policy	1.1.2 Educational Program
Summary	The service would like to incorporate a project approach into their curriculum.
Consultation	Educators, parents, professional support coordinators (PSCs)
Scope	Educators, children, parents
Link to the service	The service's mission, vision and philosophy will be revised to reflect the policy and pedagogy.

Background, purpose and overview	This is a revised policy, altered due to educator development under the educational leader, and through professional development training 'Keeping children challenged'. All educators wish to implement aspects of the project approach into the planning and feel it is important for this to be reflected in the educational program policy. This policy links to the NQS Element 1.1.2.
Impact	Programming time may be longer in the beginning as educators spend time with the educational leader, and the project approach develops into our own style. Displays will be increased and shared with families, promoting the new focus and its value to the children.
Timing	To be commenced in the new year, immediately following the Christmas break.
Responsible people	Educational leader to support all educators
Application	Management committee

Practice task 14

What is the aim of a policy proposal?

4C Seeking and gaining formal approval

Your organisation will have its own guidelines for gaining formal approval when implementing a new or revised policy. If approval is required, this should be documented within a policy development or approval policy itself.

If your service does not have an approval process, you may still wish to present a proposal to the management body or owner to demonstrate your willingness to work with them and keep them involved in the processes.

Approval processes

Policies should not be presented for approval until all those involved in its development agree that it is ready.

Your organisation will process policy approvals in its own way; some services approve after reading through the materials provided, while others make their way through an extensive formal process.

An approved policy may need minor adjustment. The policy will usually be passed on the agreement that things, such as spelling issues, clarity in how a sentence is presented, a slight format alteration or the need for a new definition, will be amended.

If the decision-makers identify a larger issue, the policy may be rejected and guidelines for reconsideration should be provided.

Larger issues that could delay policy approval might include:

▶ not following an organisational expectation in format or structure

▶ not enough consultation taking place

▶ a vital issue being ignored

▶ time lines not fitting the purpose

▶ the budget not supporting the recommendations

▶ the decision-makers not agreeing with the values of the policy.

Example

Approval process

The approval process at Happyfield Child Care is as follows:

▶ The director completes the policy development process.

▶ The director provides the final policy and any materials to the owners group via email.

▶ The owners group makes a decision.

▶ The director follows on from the decision made.

Practice task 15

What are **two** issues that may cause a policy to be rejected and guidelines for reconsideration to be provided?

.

.

.

.

Summary

▶ In most situations, your decision-makers will have been part of the consultation process. The decisions-makers will have a final say based on a presentation they are provided with once the policy is complete.

▶ When preparing a policy proposal, refer back to your reference materials and identify which of these resources were key to understanding the policy document.

▶ Your materials should include supporting details of any change that is occurring.

▶ The aim of the key point summary is to give enough information in short, clear terms for the decision-makers to be able to agree or disagree with the policy.

▶ While a policy proposal is often a formal written document, slideshow presentations are popular support aids for presenting proposals verbally.

▶ Your organisation will have its own guidelines for gaining formal approval when implementing a new or revised policy.

▶ Policies should not be presented for approval until all those involved in the development agree that it is ready.

▶ Your organisation will process policy approvals in its own way; some services approve after a read-through of the materials provided, while others make their way through an extensive formal process.

Learning checkpoint 4
Developing policy proposals

Part A

What are **five** things a policy proposal helps decision-makers understand?

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> ### Case study
>
> Mandee works in a large organisation with many departments. All policy approvals undergo the same processes despite the department they relate to. The process for policy approval at Mandee's service is for her to send the final draft of the policy to the policy administrator with a final approval form. The final approval form includes space for a key point summary. The policy administrator approves the policy and then posts it in the online policy library. Mandee will then arrange training for staff, if needed.

1. If Mandee was in a hurry to get her policy approved, should she have sent the final draft of the policy with a letter explaining her wish to move quickly to the general manager of the organisation, due to this person having a higher authority? Why or why not?

2. What guidelines would Mandee need to follow when writing her key point summary?

.

.

.

3. If Mandee's policy included information about the Education and Care Services National Regulations, why should she provide the regulations with her proposal?

.

.

.

Topic 5

In this topic you will learn about:

Implementing and reviewing policies

Once a policy has been approved, it is implemented within the service and monitored to ensure it is understood and is being followed correctly. Regular reviews will identify improvements or amendments that need to be made to reflect changed circumstances.

An important aspect of policy development and implementation is to promote the policy to key stakeholders and seek their feedback.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓ Partnerships	
High expectations and equity	
Respect for diversity	
✓ Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice	
Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
Learning through play	Learning through play
Intentional teaching	Intentionality
Learning environments	Environments
Cultural competence	Cultural competence
Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes	
Children have a strong sense of identity	
Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Children are confident and involved learners	
Children are effective communicators	

5A Developing a policy implementation plan

An implementation plan provides the steps you should follow to put a policy into practice. It supports the policy by identifying the procedures to follow, the personnel affected by the policy, the people responsible for specific tasks, the additional resources needed and time frames.

Implementation plans

Implementation plans are generally prepared in consultation with the development committee and specific stakeholders. This is done to ensure procedures are worded clearly so they are easily understood, and to ensure time lines for implementation are reasonable. Having a structured plan to follow means the implementation process should flow smoothly.

The following information sets out the main parts of an implementation plan.

New or amended policy

▶ What the policy is for and the impact of the policy on other policies

Procedures to follow

▶ Steps to implement the policy (these must be logical, clear, unambiguous and easy to follow)

Personnel affected by the policy

▶ The stakeholders (these will depend on the policy)

Resources needed

▶ The resources needed to put the policy into practice, including:
  – technology
  – equipment to be purchased
  – budget allocated
  – related materials to support the policy implementation

Time frame

▶ When the policy will be put into place
▶ How long the implementation phase will last

Potential issues

▶ List the potential barriers or issues
▶ Plans to overcome potential barriers or issues

Implementation strategies

▶ The methods you will use to disseminate the information

Sign off

Where policies need to be accepted by stakeholders, you may wish to develop a sign-off procedure. This is where staff sign that they are familiar with the policy and agree to participate in the implementation plan.

Example

Policy implementation plan

Here is an example of a policy implementation plan.

New or amended policy	Excursion policy
Procedures to follow	Steps to introduce an excursion policy include the following: ▶ Develop forms for an excursion risk assessment, excursion permissions and an excursion evaluation. ▶ Train staff on how to use the forms. ▶ Purchase required items. ▶ Develop a reusable sign for notifying visitors that children are on an excursion. ▶ Educate parents on: – why we go on excursions – how children are kept safe – how we will share the excursion information with them – what will happen if their child does not attend – what is expected during excursions.
Personnel affected by the policy	Families, children, staff
Resources needed	**Technology:** Mobile phone **Equipment:** Name badges, folders for carrying required information, portable first-aid kit, esky for food and drinks, set of cups and plates **Budget:** Materials funded by the service, excursion costs by parents (to be kept as low as possible)
Time frame	An excursion is planned for February. The policy should be in place prior to this, and this excursion will test the policy.
Potential issues	Some families may not agree to an excursion; these children will stay within the service during the excursion. Children who are not attending the excursion will be offered special activities in place of the excursion that will support their involvement and learning.
Implementation strategies	These will include notices and website information explaining the policy and the importance of excursions.

Practice task 16

What is one potential issue that could occur if implementing a revised fee policy where the daily fee was raised?

5B Promotion and dissemination of policy information

Part of a policy developer's role is to ensure that all those involved in the policy are aware of its intent and the action that needs to be taken to implement the policy.

The manner in which you present the information may depend on the policy, the size of the service, the personnel involved, how urgent it is to implement the policy and accepted service protocols. This should be planned and documented in the implementation plan. The aim of disseminating the policy is to ensure that everyone understands and is comfortable with the new policy, and that they know their role and responsibilities.

Promoting policies for acceptance

Promotion includes influencing, informing and persuading others about the policy change that will occur. This can be a step that makes or breaks policy implementation.

During the consultation period, and again when disseminating information about the policy, you may have received feedback from people who expressed concerns about the policy. Many of these concerns may have been from personal viewpoints. For example, concerns may be related to people worrying that job responsibilities may change, that they do not have the skills to implement the policy or they may have trouble accepting change. Your promotion needs to take these perspectives into account.

Promotion strategies

To successfully promote new policies and ensure they are implemented effectively, you need to plan well to involve all stakeholders, prepare the material you will need and select the most appropriate strategy to communicate your information.

There are many strategies you may use to promote a policy. Ensure that the method you choose is suited to the key stakeholders, the structure of your organisation and the limitations and philosophy of the service. Information on limitations for promoting policies should be clearly identified in any policy development.

Limitations may occur due to a range of issues. Common limitations relate to staffing numbers and routine requirements, the skills and knowledge of casual educators, the funds available to the service, and people's specific needs, such as those with allergies, challenges and/or strong values.

The following information provides some ideas for promotion strategies.

Dissemination forums

Dissemination forums and strategies may include:

▶ arranging a staff or team meeting

▶ sending an email

▶ sending newsletters to parents

▶ preparing posters for noticeboards

▶ providing copies of the new policy as a handout.

Dissemination of information

When preparing to disseminate policy information, make sure you take into account the abilities of the personnel receiving it. This may mean that you:

▶ explain any words or terms likely to confuse people

▶ prepare a list of any acronyms that may be used

▶ prepare graphics, symbols or pictures to accompany the policy; this is especially important when disseminating work health and safety (WHS) policies

▶ describe what people can do if their culture's traditions are at odds with the policy; for example, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people may not give permission for their own children, and may need an Elder to take this responsibility.

Dissemination of information

When disseminating any information, keep in mind the following guidelines for effective promotion.

Guidelines for effective policy promotion

Explain

Explain how the policy fits into the service as a whole and aligns with other policies.

Provide

Provide information that shows the need for the policy.

Focus

Focus on particular issues that affect the stakeholders you are speaking with.

Listen

Listen and respect feelings of anger, fear and resistance, and try to find common ground.

Generate

Generate a feeling of enthusiasm and excitement about the outcomes.

Take time

Take change one step at a time rather than expecting it to happen immediately.

Dissemination methods

Discussions, demonstrations and displays are three effective methods for dissemination of information. More details about these methods are provided in the following information.

Discussions

You may hold meetings with individuals, groups and/or networks.

Demonstrations

Show how the policy:

▶ impacts on work roles or practices

▶ can be broken down and understood in parts and then as a whole

▶ differs from the previous version.

Displays

Present information in:

- ▶ notices displayed on noticeboards
- ▶ posters
- ▶ handbooks
- ▶ newsletters.

Example

Policy promotion

Prudence is promoting her service's governance and management policy. She uses discussions, demonstrations and displays in the following ways. She:

- ▶ organises a 'meet the management' evening
- ▶ displays the organisational structure on the noticeboard and includes it in newsletters and handbooks
- ▶ arranges for educators to meet the owners of the service
- ▶ adds the qualifications and experience of management to the service's promotion materials.

Practice task 17

What are **four** things you need to do to take into account the abilities of all personnel when disseminating policy information?

5C Implementing an evaluation plan

Part of your policy development process should include regular and continuing evaluation. This is to ensure that the policies continue to reflect the service's philosophy, practices and objectives, and link with current legislation and industry best practice.

Evaluation processes

When evaluating a policy, you are looking to see if:

▶ the policy is compliant with legislation

▶ the policy continues to reflect the service's philosophy and goals

▶ best practice is reflected

▶ there are any weak areas or inconsistencies.

All evaluations must involve as many stakeholders as possible, including colleagues, individuals, families, other service organisations, funding bodies, community groups and government agencies. Personnel from different groups will provide feedback from their own perspectives, giving you a wide range of ideas and suggestions.

In some cases, a policy may need to be amended, not because of new legislation or changed practices, but because the evaluation has revealed that:

▶ problems have occurred as a result of a poorly worded policy

▶ people have different ideas about what the policy means

▶ the policy is not being followed

▶ a policy was developed on the basis of personal opinions, wishes or biases, or an uninformed basis, rather than on behalf of all stakeholders and with accurate and documented information.

Evaluation plans

Use a checklist of items that need to be addressed so that you know what to look for and what questions to ask when conducting the evaluation. Document all feedback and make sure the comments are backed up with evidence that justifies the comments made.

The evaluation may result in the need to develop a new policy, extend a current policy, amend a policy and/or revise current practice. An evaluation plan should list the strategies you wish to use to review the policy.

Strategies for review include conducting:

▶ surveys

▶ face-to-face interviews

▶ staff meetings

▶ brainstorming sessions

▶ committee and/or specialist stakeholder meetings.

Example

Carrying out an evaluation

Venice has noticed that the nappy-change procedure the educators use does not match the policy. She decides to evaluate the policy and find out whether the policy is an issue, or if the problem lies with the practices of educators. She uses the following evaluation checklist.

Policy evaluation

Date of review: 12 March 2018

Checklist questions	Y	N	Comments
Does the policy match what is occurring in the service?		✓	Educators are handling food and changing nappies in the same day. The policy suggests that a roster identifies one educator per day to carry out food duties and one for nappy-change duties to prevent cross-infection.
Does the policy meet organisational requirements?		✓	We wish to reduce cross-infection, but sometimes educators are not available when needed.
Does the policy demonstrate current information?		✓	Bacteria can be spread from urine and faeces to food. Following the food or nappy-change day roster ensures that if an educator fails to wash their hands adequately, they are less likely to pass on infection.
Does the policy reflect the values and beliefs of stakeholders?	✓		Educators and parents participated in the development of the policy three months ago.
Does the policy assist the service to achieve its objectives?	✓		It reduces cross-infection, but it does not always support the primary care relationships that have been developed.
Does the policy include reference to information that backs up and/or supports the policy?		✓	This was not added. Research was completed at the time, but sources of information were not added to the policy document.
Are any issues or difficulties identified? Describe these.	✓		Casual educators were not aware of the requirements and need to be informed.

Practice task 18

List **eight** questions you should include in a policy evaluation checklist.

5D Reviewing policies

The review process for a policy must follow organisational policies and procedures. This may include setting a timetable for review, forming a policy review committee and/or preparing a set of criteria to evaluate the policy against.

The timing of a policy review depends on the service and the type of policy. For example, you may be able to group policies that require updating based on legislation or current practice reviews. Other policies may need an annual review, while those that are relatively stable and unaffected by general operation and legislation may only require a review every two years.

Make sure you are familiar with your service's policy review procedures.

Contributing effectively to policy development

To contribute effectively to the development of policies, practices and structures within your service, you will be expected to report concerns about administrative issues to your supervisor. For example, you may need to report concerns about job responsibilities to your supervisor and provide them with information, ideas and suggestions. You will also be expected to participate in staff meetings or working groups, if required.

Watch this video to learn more about contributing effectively to the development of policies.

v0071

Reviewing processes

Evaluation mechanisms need to be an integral part of the policy so that everyone can see when the policy will be reviewed to ensure its validity and effectiveness. Identify and document who will be involved, the role they will have and the processes to be followed, which may include interviews, observation or feedback.

Consider the issues that impact on the policy and may influence when a review takes place.

Create a tracking document for all policies so you can clearly see the review dates and be prepared to evaluate and review the currency and validity of all policies.

The following information is an example of a policy and procedure review process.

Policy and procedure review process

▶ A policy review committee will be formed to oversee the review process.

▶ Current policies must be reviewed at least on an annual basis to ensure they reflect legislation, service goals and industry practice; review dates must be listed on each policy.

▶ Current policies should be reviewed when there are changes to legislation or work practices.

▶ All relevant stakeholders must be consulted via appropriate methods, such as meetings, email or phone.

▶ A new policy will be created if a current policy is inadequate or if new legislation has been introduced.

▶ Current policies are to be amended if they are inconsistent with current terminology, legislation or practice.

▶ The organisation's template must be used to prepare new or amended policies.

▶ All documentation involving research and consultation must be kept for future reference.

Example

Policy review schedule

Candy has organised her policies in a tracking document showing when each should be reviewed.

Policy	Last review	Due for review
Sun protection	15.10.17	15.10.18
Water safety	26.6.17	26.6.18
First aid and emergency procedures	17.12.17	17.12.18
Incident, injury, trauma and illness, including infectious diseases and medical conditions	26.4.17	26.4.18
Dietary requirements, nutrition, food and beverages	15.5.17	15.5.18
Anti-discrimination	25.9.17	25.9.18
Children with special needs	26.6.17	26.6.18
Excursions	26.6.17	26.6.19
Orientation and enrolment	1.10.17	1.10.19
Child-safe environment	20.11.17	20.11.18

Policy	Last review	Due for review
Delivery and collection of children	4.6.17	4.6.18
Staffing code of conduct	26.3.17	26.3.18
Dealing with complaints	28.5.17	28.5.19
Responsible person	26.3.17	26.3.19
Volunteers and students	26.8.17	26.8.18
Payment of fees	15.4.17	15.4.18
Enrolment and orientation	2.4.17	2.4.18
Governance	21.8.17	21.8.18
Acceptance and refusal of authorisations	15.8.17	15.8.19
Interactions with children	13.5.17	13.5.19

Practice task 19

Why is it important to regularly review policies?

5E Obtaining and responding to stakeholder feedback

Policies help define a service's philosophy and demonstrate its commitment to quality service based on legislation and best practice.

An ongoing responsibility for policy makers is to promote the service's policies to key stakeholders. There are two reasons for doing this: promoting the policies so they are readily accepted by all stakeholders, and promoting the policies as a marketing tool.

Promoting policies for marketing purposes

It is important for a service to market itself as being a provider of high-quality education and care for children. One strategy you can use is to promote policies so that key stakeholders can see the value the service places on various aspects of the education and care environment.

The service's policies can be promoted in:

▶ newsletter articles

▶ letters to parents

▶ posters displayed in the service

▶ the service's website

▶ the organisation's philosophy statement.

Using feedback

Whenever a strategy is used to promote a policy, it is useful to prepare a feedback process so that you can record how stakeholders have received the information and whether there are still concerns or misunderstandings.

When you receive feedback after a marketing activity, you need to know what to do with the information after you have collated and analysed it; for example:

▶ how issues should be documented and logged

▶ who the issues should be addressed to

▶ when an immediate reaction must occur

▶ when the feedback can wait until the policy is next up for review.

In some cases, you may find that a concern is not directly related to the policy, but is due to a lack of effective implementation or a misunderstanding.

Preparing a report on feedback

For any situation where feedback is gained, it is vital to share the results with the people you gained feedback from. Doing so allows them to see that you took notice of their comments and that you valued their input. It also shows how you used the information provided. This type of communication builds relationships.

Report-writing techniques

There is a range of methods you can use to prepare a report based on the feedback you gain from marketing a policy. To make sure all stakeholders can gain from the report, you need to make it as simple as possible, and relevant to their interests.

Some strategies you might include are written summaries and explanations, tables, graphs and charts.

Follow these tips to make your report useful and clear.

Report purpose

Be clear about the purpose of the report and stick to the topic.

Target the reader

Think about who will be reading the report and target your communication and information toward these people; parents and staff will most likely appreciate a clear and simple report, while board members may prefer a more complex, detailed report.

Logical flow

Set out the report in a logical way, flowing your information from one point to the next.

Visual appeal

Make the report visually appealing by spacing the text and adding relevant pictures, tables, graphs or charts to break up any text.

Summary

Include a brief summary at the end.

Review

Review and revise the report once completed.

Proofread

Get another person to proofread the report. This is important as correct spelling and grammar will stand out and demonstrate your professional approach.

Example

Survey feedback data

Ciara used a chart to show how stakeholders participated in the feedback survey.

Stakeholder participation

- Community members
- Parents
- Other staff
- Educators
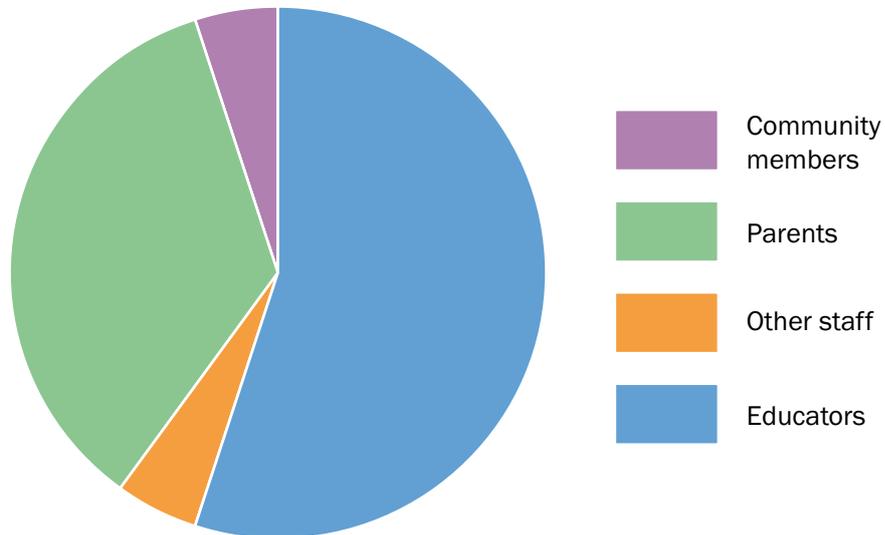
Practice task 20

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Prudence is writing a report relating to the feedback she has gained from stakeholders about a student policy. She involved 10 stakeholders and all stakeholders responded to her survey, which was asking for feedback on how appropriate the policy was. The results were as follows:

▶ Five educators agreed that the policy was clear and appropriate.

▶ One educator felt the policy expected too much from them and that they would prefer to exclude students from the program as they were too much work.

▶ Two stakeholders were students employed in the service, who replied that they felt supported by the policy.

▶ Two stakeholders were students from a local training organisation, who replied that they felt the service was providing an enormous amount of support to them through the policy and that this encouraged them and demonstrated a high-quality service practice.

Use a table, graph or chart to show the outcome of the survey conducted by Prudence.
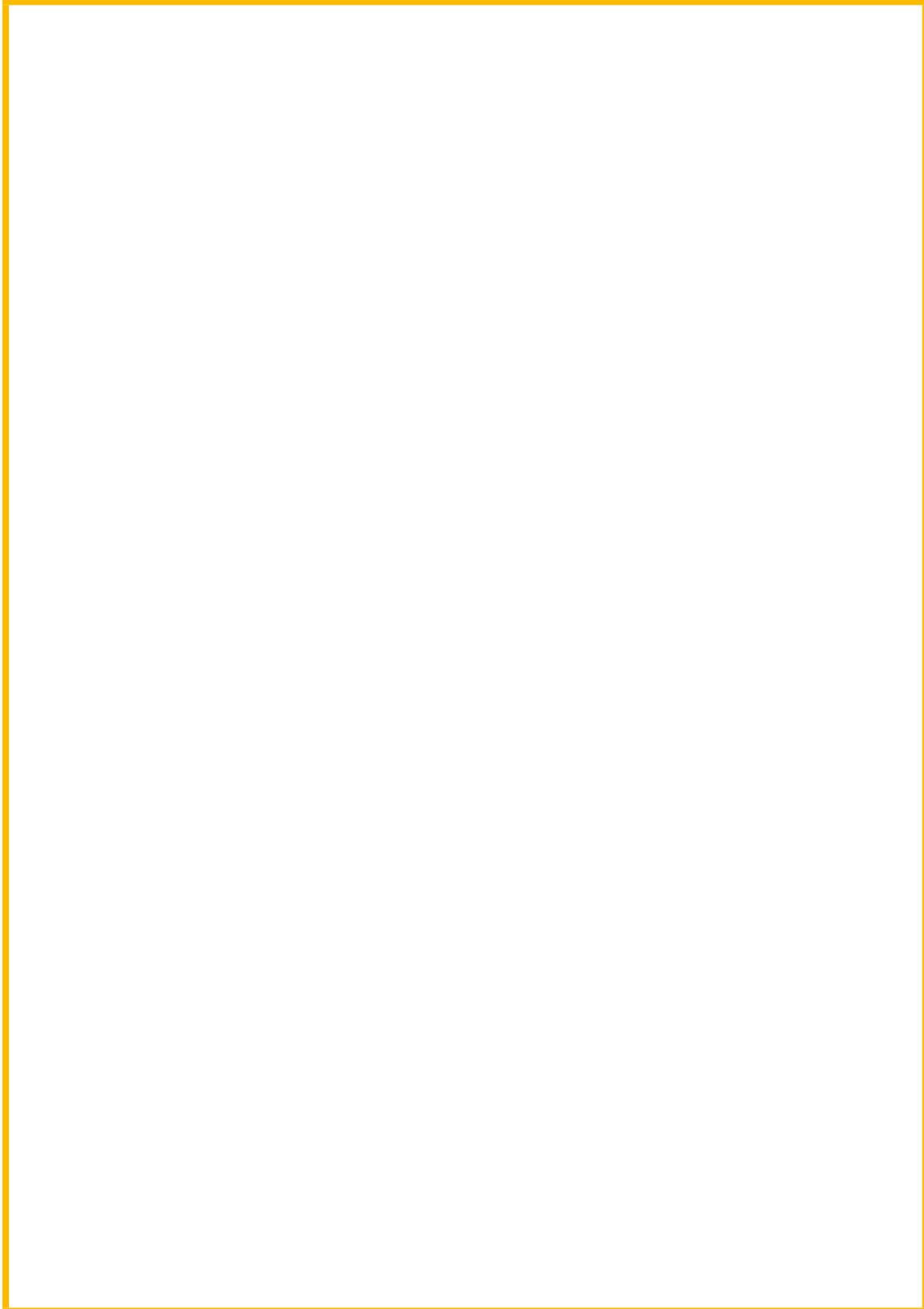
Summary

- Once a policy has been approved, it is implemented within the service and monitored to ensure it is understood and being followed correctly.

- Regular reviews will identify improvements or amendments that need to be made to reflect changed circumstances.

- Having a structured plan to follow means the implementation process should flow smoothly.

- Part of a policy developer's role is to ensure that all those involved in the policy are aware of its intent and the action that needs to be taken to implement the policy.

- To successfully promote the policies and ensure they are implemented effectively, you need to plan well to involve all stakeholders, prepare the material you will need and select the most appropriate strategy to communicate your information.

- When evaluating a policy, you are looking to see if the policy is compliant with legislation, if the policy continues to reflect the service's philosophy and goals, if best practice is reflected and if there are any weak areas or inconsistencies.

- An evaluation plan should list the strategies you wish to use to review the policy.

- The timing of a policy review depends on the service and the type of policy.

- An ongoing responsibility for policy makers is to promote the service's policies to key stakeholders.

- For any situation where feedback is gained, it is vital to share the results to allow them to see that you took notice, valued their input and used the information provided.

Learning checkpoint 5
Implementing and reviewing policies

Part A

1. List **two** strategies that can be used to gather feedback during a policy evaluation.

2. List **seven** report-writing tips that help you to develop clear useful reports.

3. What is a tracking document?

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Marly has reviewed the policy titled 'Interacting with Children'. Regulations require this policy to be in place. The policy has been approved and is now being put into place following discussion with decision-makers, who felt the policy reflected the direction they would like to see the service move in. One of the strategies of the policy is for the educators to consider a child's resilience when looking at their interaction techniques. This has not been discussed or implemented in the procedures before.

1. When Marly is writing her implementation plan, what potential issues might she encounter?

2. If Marly wanted to promote the policy to educators, what methods would work well for disseminating information?

3. If educators told Marly that they didn't know what the word 'resilience' meant, should Marly explain it to them, or should she alter the policy to add a definition of the word 'resilience'? Explain your answer.