

CHCSAC002

Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care



Learner guide

ECSAC002

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play and leisure experiences
in school age care**

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Aspire Version 1.1

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CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care



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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care* from Version 1.2 of the Community Services Training Package. It is designed to **complement**, not replace, the learning and assessment strategies your trainer or training organisation has put in place.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this learner guide relates to this unit of competency is included as Appendix 1 in this guide.

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 assessment activities you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	Explanation
Learning content	Read each chapter 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 and case studies	Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice/assessment tasks. Case studies 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 action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	Where QR codes appear, learners 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 .
Chapter summary	Key learning points are provided at the end of each chapter.
Assessment activities	There is an assessment activity at the end of each chapter. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• check your progress• apply the skills you have learnt• gather evidence to present in an evidence portfolio (see information later in this section)• demonstrate your competency.



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Feature of the learner guide	Explanation
Foundation skills	Information regarding foundation skills is provided in Appendix 2. As you complete each chapter (and the relevant assessment activity, if you are required to do so), record evidence of how you have applied foundation skills in the table at the end of this learner guide. Remember to keep copies of documents that demonstrate your application of foundation skills.

Assessment

The assessment conditions for this unit of competency are:

- Skills must be demonstrated in a regulated education and care service.
- In addition, simulations and scenarios must be used where the full range of contexts and situations cannot be provided in the workplace or may occur only rarely. These are situations relating to emergency or unplanned procedures where assessment in these circumstances would be unsafe or is impractical.
- Simulated assessment environments must simulate the real-life working environment where these skills and knowledge would be performed, with all the relevant equipment and resources of that working environment.
- Assessment must ensure use of:
 - National Quality Framework
 - the relevant approved learning framework under the National Quality Framework.

Your trainer/assessor is responsible for ensuring the learning and assessment material you complete is suitable, and also for making any reasonable adjustments. They may provide you with additional or alternative assessment activities to those presented in this learner guide.

Your trainer may also ask you to compile an evidence portfolio as part of your training program. Under guidance from your trainer, gather relevant evidence (for example, an ongoing learning journal, workplace forms and documents) to demonstrate your competence. Your portfolio will also include evidence relating to how you have developed foundation skills. Information regarding foundation skills is included as Appendix 2 in this learner guide.

Overview

The National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) puts in place compulsory, nationwide standards to maintain quality across a range of education and care services for children, including long day care, family day care, preschools and school age care. It incorporates licensing, regulations and quality assurance into a single system operating Australia-wide. Its aim is to enable services to use a unified system to work toward goals of best practice and quality. The NQF is implemented by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). You can find out more about the NQF by visiting ACECQA's website at: www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework. The resources available from this website are also available in any registered early childhood education and care, and school age care service in Australia.

The National Quality Standard

A key aspect of the NQF is the National Quality Standard (NQS), which aims to ensure high-quality, consistent care across Australia. This standard seeks to improve services by setting the standards for children's development and safety, and providing families with information so they can make informed choices about services.

The NQS includes *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (MTOPI), which provides guidance to school age care educators in implementing quality, responsive programs with a focus on individual strengths, interests and needs.

The NQS consists of seven quality areas, each containing standards and elements, against which children's education and care services are assessed and rated.

The seven quality areas covered by the NQS are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment

4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia

This learner guide supports MTOP and is linked directly to the beliefs and values it represents. At the commencement of each chapter, there is a table identifying which of the MTOP principles, practices and outcomes are most closely represented within it.

MTOP is based on the view that children’s lives involve aspects of belonging, being and becoming:

- Belonging is based on human existence, the questions about who we are and where we belong, identities, relationships and the central core of worth that allows children to learn and enjoy healthy development.
- Being is the art of childhood, all the exploring and building that not only supports the years to come, but also the things happening now.
- Becoming is a result of learning about the values and beliefs upheld by society, intrinsic motivation and attributes. It considers what is required to become an effective member of society.

MTOP comprises three elements – Principles, Practice and Outcomes:

- Principles reflect contemporary theories and research that influence how we implement programs for children. These principles guide our practice.
- Practice is a reflection of your principles. The things you believe about children, their families and how people learn and develop are all exhibited through the practices you implement in your daily program.
- Outcomes have been designed to capture the learning and development that you observe when working with children aged 5 to 12 years. Each child progresses at their own pace to achieve each outcome during their learning and development. The five outcomes are:
 - Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity.
 - Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
 - Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
 - Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners.
 - Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

Chapter 1

Identifying play and leisure interests of children in school age care

Activities and programs provide opportunities for children to expand their learning, socialise and pursue interests. Activity and program plans need to reflect the service philosophy and be based on collective knowledge and understanding of the children who attend the service.

Child-focused practice allows children to have input into activity and program choices based on their ages, needs, abilities, preferences and energy levels. School age care educators should observe and listen to children, and ask children appropriate questions so they can plan activities and programs accordingly. Responsive activities and programs should also be flexible and adaptable.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 1A Collecting information about children in school age care
- 1B Observing and evaluating children's wellbeing, development and learning
- 1C Using information collected to address the needs of children in school age care
- 1D Identifying and reviewing a range of possible experiences and programs suitable to the school age care context
- 1E Selecting activities or programs based on children's expressed needs, organisation requirements and resource availability
- 1F Clarifying individual children's support and guidance needs

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
✓	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play
	Intentionality
	Environments
	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity and transitions
✓	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

Collecting information about children in school age care

There are many ways to find out about the activities and programs that are best suited to children who attend school age care programs. Relevant information can be collected using a variety of methods, including regularly talking to the children about a range of activities, experiences and program planning issues, including:

- the types of activities they enjoy
- the quality and variety of activities and experiences
- the level of interest children have in the activities and experiences
- programming factors, such as the timing of activities and the order and length of activities
- new ideas for experiences that have not been considered.



Talk to children regularly about their school age care experiences.

Acknowledging children's ideas

Acknowledge children's contributions with positive feedback, and allow them time and space to talk to you freely. Ask them both general and specific questions about their interests and experiences. For example, 'Did you have a good day today?', 'Did you enjoy that new board game?' or 'What was your least favourite thing we did today?'

Many children need to be encouraged to communicate openly and honestly. To assist them, show them you are genuinely interested in what they have to say. Effective approaches for communicating with children are described here.

Take a position close to the child speaking

Children often talk openly when the perceived difference in power and size are minimised. To make a child feel comfortable, sit at their level (for example, in a similar sized chair next to them at a table, or on the floor). Reducing the distance between yourself and the child can encourage the child to speak about problems that may be difficult for them to discuss.

Focus attention on the child speaking

When a child is speaking to you, maintain eye contact (if culturally appropriate) to show the child you are interested and listening to them. For example, when a child is talking to you, try not to glance at your watch or interrupt the discussion to talk to other staff.

In situations where other children or adults are demanding your attention, say something like, 'It's a busy time of day right now, but I'm really interested in talking to you about this. Could we sit down together later on when it's quieter, and talk about it then?' Ensure you keep to your word by returning later to the child to continue the discussion. If the information the child is sharing is sensitive or relates to issues such as bullying and abuse or it is a secret relating to their health or safety, you may need to listen to the child immediately.

Ignore distractions

Ignoring distractions can be a challenge. At a busy school age care service, there are often children and staff playing and working around you, and numerous demands are placed on your time. It is sometimes difficult to concentrate, but paying close attention to a child who is speaking can encourage a far better quality of communication. Do this by finding a place to talk that is as free from distractions as possible.

Listen and use the other senses to pay attention

Watching the child's body language may tell you more about what the child is thinking and feeling than what they are saying. At times, you may sense something is wrong, even when this is not evident in the child's actions. Pay attention to your own instincts and follow up on any concerns you have about a child's level of interest or feelings about activities or programs.

Demonstrate interest in the topic

Children do not always follow the same communication cues as adults. A child may not see that you are actively open to their ideas and opinions unless you use clear body language that shows you want to know more. Active listening involves showing the child through your words and actions that you care about what they are saying.

When talking with children:

- make eye contact
- lean forward slightly to show you are interested
- smile and nod when appropriate, such as when the child pauses to think.

Try not to overuse gestures like nodding or laughing. Over time, they lose their meaning and impact if your response is the same no matter what the child is saying.

Check understanding

Check that you understand by restating what the child has expressed using their words. For example, 'You're saying that you would like to do more dance activities because you think dancing is fun. Is that right?' Ask further questions where required to ensure you have understood what the child is saying and to clarify any areas that cause confusion.

Summarising what has been said towards the end of the conversation confirms to the child that you fully understand the discussion.

Suspend your own opinions and emotions

Showing strong reactions to something a child has told you can quickly shut down their eagerness to continue talking. For example, a child may feel they have upset you if you show signs of sadness during a discussion about other children teasing them during certain activities; or they may retreat into themselves if you show signs of anger when a child tells you about another child bullying them, fearing that you will cause an uncomfortable situation for them.

Listen to children's comments

You may notice that children talk to you or to each other about their feelings; for example, by saying, 'I got splinters on my legs when I climbed that ladder' or 'This is boring'.

Remember that children's ideas may not be communicated directly. You may need to consider how each child's words and body language are connected to their experiences.

Respond to questions

Children who are reluctant or unable to talk to you openly may react positively to sensitive questioning. When asking questions, be guided by the child's conversation and try to reflect the child's thoughts. Use open questions that do not lead the child in a specific direction; for example, 'What are your favourite subjects?' or 'Who do you most enjoy playing with?'

Once a child has indicated a concern, ask further questions that encourage a more specific response, such as, ‘Why do you think you always feel tired at the before school program? Do you think it would be better to relax in the mornings than to play games?’

Conduct group discussions

Conducting group discussions with children about school age care programs is a useful way to obtain feedback on new ideas and interests. Encourage discussion by putting a suggestion to children and listening to their responses. For example, at the end of the session ask the children gathered on the mat, ‘We were thinking about arranging a day at the park or the zoo. How does everyone feel about those ideas?’

Genuinely consider requests

Children and parents may make general or specific suggestions about changes or new ideas. For example, a child may come forward with a request to alter a program, access new toys, books or drawing materials, or allow extra time for certain activities. Provide opportunities for children to share these ideas by setting up a daily/weekly feedback sheet. Take note of these requests and either let a supervisor know the request has been made or make a written record of the request yourself according to your organisation’s procedures.

Other methods of gathering information

While children’s input about a service is extremely important, you can also develop a wider picture of activity and program using the methods described here.

Meet with parents or carers

Children may talk more openly and frequently to parents about their experiences and preferences, and this in turn can be communicated to you. In addition, parents are likely to observe indications in their behaviour of how children feel about the program, such as noticing when a child is reluctant to go to the program or if they come home excited and chatty on certain program days. Parent meetings can be held in groups on a regular basis, or individually when the parents or carers of a particular child have indicated a problem or have something to discuss.

Consult with your supervisor and other staff members

Always look to your supervisor and other key educators for support in gathering information about children in your care. You can do this either formally through meetings you hold, or informally as you converse with colleagues.

Analyse surveys, questionnaires and other forms of written feedback

You may interview a group of children using a survey with set questions about what they enjoy most at your service, and then compare the responses to see if a pattern emerges. Questions on a survey should be specific and appropriate for the children's age. For example, you may ask a group of 8-year-olds, 'Do you think there are enough activities to choose from?' or 'What other types of activities would you like to see?' Informal surveying can also be conducted using a show of hands; for example, you may ask a group of children, 'Who thinks we should do that activity again?' and make a note of their response.

Use evaluations to determine how children aged 5 years and over feel about certain programs or activities. Children do not necessarily need to be able to read to complete an evaluation if there is an adult at hand to help read the questions and guide them. You may even decide to ask for pictorial responses, supporting children by providing materials they can draw answers with.

Graffiti sheets can also be used to gather information. Place a question on a large sheet of paper or on a whiteboard so the children can add their responses, resulting in a brainstorm of sorts.

It is very important that the questions and the format of the evaluation suit the age and developmental stage of the children. When designing evaluations, make sure you ask specific questions, particularly for younger children. Always use words and phrases that are appropriate to the children's age, and be on hand to provide assistance.

Encourage written and verbal feedback, complaints and suggestions

Encourage older children, parents or carers to place ideas, recommendations or proposals for improvement in suggestion boxes. This allows children and parents to provide ideas or criticism anonymously, which can result in them being more open and honest about what they do and do not like.

The following case study shows how a service uses a range of communication methods to consult with children.

Case study

Hui has just commenced at a service. He is 8 years old and has recently arrived in Australia from China. He speaks very little English. The educators are concerned about Hui's level of participation in games and other activities as he spends a great deal of time on his own, staring into space or absently watching the other children play games. His language difficulties are compounding the problem because Hui often does not understand the rules, and many of the games played require verbal interaction. The educators are keen to provide a variety of options, but Hui seems uninterested in everything except playing tennis on an interactive computer game.

After two or three weeks, the educators decide there must be another way to find out about Hui's interests so he can interact with the other children. They arrange for a telephone interpreter to speak to Hui's mother when she picks him up one evening. Almost immediately, Hui's mother tells the interpreter that he is passionate about badminton and that he played the game competitively at a very high level for his age group back in China. She feels that he is missing his sport since the family's move to Australia, and she is disappointed that badminton is not a game played frequently here.

The next day, the educators put up a simple badminton net from the storeroom cupboard, and give the children racquets and shuttlecocks. Hui is transformed – he spends the rest of the afternoon interacting with the other children, showing them how to play and even learning a few words of English, such as 'net' and 'good'.

Practice task 1

Read the scenario, then complete the task that follows.

Scenario

Luke is very quiet and shy. During free time outside, he seems to prefer to sit and watch the other children play. When you encourage him to join in, he tells you he doesn't want to play those games.

Role-play an interaction between an educator and Luke, using methods for acknowledging children's ideas, to encourage him to talk to you about the activities he enjoys.

1B

Observing and evaluating children's wellbeing, development and learning

Observing children participating in games and activities is an ongoing practice that tells you a great deal about whether you need to make changes or improvements to the program. Observations can verify the strengths of programs and activities and also alert you to issues or concerns.

Observing children

You can gather information about children by observing them. For example, you may observe children in the following behavioural contexts:

- Demonstrating an interest in a certain activity over others
- Showing that learning and development has occurred over time in a certain activity
- Demonstrating enjoyment; for example, such as smiling, laughing and interacting with others
- Demonstrating disinterest through lack of participation, complaining or being easily distracted
- Interacting socially; for example, a shy child not feeling confident to join in
- Demonstrating abilities or strengths related to the child's age and stage of development; for example, fine and gross motor skills, achievements and milestones reached

Do not interrupt play or activities while you are observing, and don't make it obvious that you are doing so. If you change the way you behave or make it obvious that you are observing what is happening, the children's behaviour may change.

There are times, however, when observations can be recorded in obvious ways; for example, when recording a phase in a project, celebrating some learning or an achievement. Children will be excited to know you are recording this information and you can use it to demonstrate what is happening in the service and how educators and children are participating in and enjoying the program.

Issues that may arise

Children can quickly lose interest in a new activity and walk away. Some activities may result in children becoming overly tired or overstimulated, and you may notice changes in their behaviour to indicate this, such as irritability or hyperactivity.

Observing children during activities may bring issues to your attention. The following table outlines a series of observations that may indicate strengths in or issues with the activity or program.

Observation	Strength/issue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced interest shortly after an activity has begun Complaining that they cannot do the activity Lack of engagement in or enthusiasm for an activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities may be too difficult for the child.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking bored, complaining, wandering aimlessly, arguing or fighting Overlooking toys and books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may be bored or lack stimulation because activities are too repetitive, too long or not challenging enough. There may also be cultural or language difficulties at play.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arriving looking alert and enthusiastic Racing to an activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children are entertained and enjoy the activity. Comparing behaviours at different times of the day can show you the relative level of interest in each activity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irritability Refusing to join in Hyperactivity and repetitive behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may be tired or overstimulated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention-seeking behaviours and creating frequent diversions and distractions for other children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children may have difficulty focusing on or understanding their tasks, and need additional support and guidance.

Recording observations

Significant observations should be recorded so your service can demonstrate that activities and programs are based on children's interests and feedback. These records can also be used as formal evidence of children's participation and enjoyment at activity and program planning meetings. The focus should not always be on concerns or negative issues; activity and program strengths should also be noted. It is important to remember, however, that records of observations are confidential and should only be used in appropriate situations.

Methods and tools designed to help undertake and record observations include:

- learning stories
- diaries, journals, photo-journals and communication books
- records written in children's files
- checklists
- photos and videos of children participating
- samples of children's work, such as artwork or craft items, that show a level of interest.

Use a variety of methods to record your observations. For example, take photographs of children at various stages of an activity to support your written record of what you noticed about children's participation – this is called a learning story. The children may be able to add to your records of observation by writing what they feel or think about their activities or by taking photos themselves. They may even develop their own individual learning stories or collect portfolios of work they have completed.

The following case study shows how an educator observes children to identify activity strengths and issues.

Case study

Melanie works in a school age care service that delivers a variety of activities to children aged 5 to 12. Two new children, a brother and a sister who both appear to be shy, have recently commenced at the centre. Melanie would like to know more about their individual skills and interests so she can take this information to a planning meeting the following week to help design activities that suit the new children's needs. Melanie has asked them some questions and has spoken to their parents about their interests. She has learnt that they both compete in gymnastics programs.

During outside play, she notices that both children stay together, throwing a ball back and forth between them. They are very fast and agile, and their ball skills are well developed. When they are inside, the children keep to themselves, reading books alone or quietly doing their homework. Melanie records this information in the children's file notes. She feels that an organised game of netball could be a good way to encourage the siblings to interact with other children to enable them to begin to make new friends.

Practice task 2

1. How and when are children observed in your service?
2. How is their wellbeing, development and learning documented?
3. How is this information used to inform activity and program planning?

1C

Using information collected to address the needs of children in school age care

Child-focused approaches to planning use the information you collect about individual children. Planning can take place formally or informally. Informal planning takes feedback from children into account when making changes to activities hours, days or weeks ahead of time; for example, you may discuss with children what they would like to do in the following session. Formal planning is a regular process of designing a timetable for upcoming sessions.

Activity and program planning

You can bring information gathered about children to planning meetings in the form of photos, written records, summaries of survey and questionnaire results, and verbal communication about what you observe.

Planning meetings are used to consider the information collected and design a timetable for upcoming sessions. This approach improves the quality of activities and programs. Even though activities and programs must include some built-in flexibility, having a timetable helps you organise resources and prepare for sessions ahead of time. It also ensures you meet a range of children's needs.

Planning helps to develop activities and programs that:

- encourage children to further explore their own interests
- provide interesting choices for children
- are spontaneous, challenging and stimulating
- help children to manage homework, if applicable
- meet children's requirements for exercise and activity
- include adequate leisure and rest periods so children do not become overtired
- meet the cultural needs of all children.

Identifying particular support needs of children

All children are different and each has their own unique set of needs. In a school age care setting, these needs are known as support needs. As an educator, one of your goals is to meet these support needs by recognising and applying different strategies and experiences.

Having information about the needs of children at different ages and abilities helps you understand and plan for the needs of individuals and groups of children that you support. To meet the particular support needs of children, activities and programs should:

- encourage all children to participate
- provide a nurturing, supportive environment that encourages open communication

- provide comfortable, hygienic, safe and secure physical environments that cater specifically for 5- to 12-year-olds
- include effective procedures for dealing with incidents and emergencies
- actively foster positive self-esteem.

Activity and program needs

Once you have collected information about the children participating in an activity or program, you can use this to establish activity and program needs. The following table provides examples of methods you can use to match the information collected about specific support needs with the activity and program needs of children attending your service.

Specific support needs	Matching activity and program needs
To have needs heard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple questionnaires and feedback surveys • Group discussions about children's needs and preferences • Opportunities to talk to staff individually, such as during quiet times • Asking questions and engaging in conversation with children frequently
To learn communication skills that enable the child to overcome shyness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group games that encourage the child to talk in a non-threatening environment, such as simple card games and singing games
To overcome being teased or bullied by peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have behaviour support strategies in place for children who bully or create conflict • Hold bullying education programs for all children • Link the child with more inclusive groups of children, such as setting up play opportunities • Hold circle time or discussion groups that encourage problem-sharing
Physical aids to assist a child with a disability to participate in activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have play equipment that suits the child's abilities • Offer adapted eating utensils • Use computers with voice recognition software
To feel accepted by peers who are from a different cultural background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include experiences and activities that 'borrow' aspects of the child's culture, such as traditional toys and games • Offer learning activities that familiarise children with diverse cultures, such as showing films and books relating to the child's background to all children

Activities and programs should be designed to integrate specific support needs and enhance:

- celebration and inclusion of cultural differences
- learning that meets developmental needs or physical, emotional and intellectual growth
- children's social skills and life skills
- opportunities for recreation and leisure
- homework and study experiences.

Including cultural differences

Children from different cultures are often exposed to different interests. They may also have different expectations placed on them by family members with respect to the types of activities they participate in. Cultural differences can influence children's preferences for certain foods, toys, games and levels of physical activity.

Children from different cultural backgrounds can benefit from having aspects of their own cultures incorporated into the activities and programs. Educators can learn about different cultures, paying particular attention to those of the children who attend the service, and the individual practices and beliefs the children are familiar with. Activities and programs can then be designed using this information. For example, activities that use traditional toys and games from Aboriginal cultures can be planned. This is always valuable; however, when one or more children at the service have an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, it can also promote acceptance. Words or images from the child's native language or cultural background can be included in activities, and religious festivities can be celebrated.

Culture-based activities can help make a connection between the child's home life and school life. It can also develop self-esteem when a child's peers take part in and enjoy traditions that belong to their own culture.

Meeting developmental needs

Many areas of children's development can be encouraged by programs and activities that are designed to meet the needs of individual children. These include:

- physical abilities
- language and literacy
- communication skills
- creativity
- problem-solving and thinking skills.

Resources such as books, computers, sports equipment and play equipment can help children learn, develop and grow in a range of areas. Understanding children's individual skills and interests can help you to plan activities that appeal to children and challenge and excite them.

Physical activity can increase development of fine and gross motor skills. Intellectual development can be advanced through activities such as reading, talking, sharing ideas and interacting with others.

Play contributes to every area of children's development. A fun, stimulating play environment encourages healthy physical and emotional growth and development. Play also helps children to learn and increases brain development. Provide a range of play activities that encourage developmental growth, according to the needs you have determined in individual children, including opportunities for:

- solitary play, which allows children time and space to be alone and follow their own interests
- group activities, which encourage social interaction and introduce children to new learning topics
- structured play, which encourages participation in planned activities
- unstructured play, which encourages children to choose what they would like to do.

Including children's social skills and life skills

Your observations and conversations with children and families can help you determine the level at which programs should include teaching social skills and rules of behaviour. It is important to create experiences that allow children to make choices and have some control over their environment. This helps them to develop decision-making skills and confidence in their own abilities.

It is not expected that children will behave perfectly while attending school age care. However, children do need to develop the ability to obey rules and maintain social responsibilities, which include:

- learning to share
- showing kindness and concern for others
- listening carefully to staff for their own safety and wellbeing
- following basic limits and guidelines.

Children also need to develop life skills that can help them to be independent. Some of the life skills that are important, especially for the youngest groups of children, include toileting, general hygiene and using eating utensils.

Offering opportunities for recreation and leisure

Your observations will assist you to gain an idea of where children's preferences for recreational or leisure activities lie. For example, you may hire a piece of equipment for a week rather than purchasing it, to see if children are interested in it. Observations can often be used in conjunction with other forms of consultation, such as discussion and questioning.

Providing for homework and study experiences

Completing homework should be seen as a key aspect of children's participation in school age care programs. This is particularly the case for older children, whose academic demands increase as they move through school.

Some schools, parents or educators may view homework as a tool toward helping the child develop lifelong study and learning habits. Others may believe the child should be encouraged to use their out of school time for more varied pursuits, or that children will soon enough use time for homework without having it enforced in primary school.

Your stance on homework should reflect the child's and family's needs. Children who are expected to complete homework by their school but are at your service until late, need to be provided with homework time, whereas other children only in your care for short periods may need less or no focus on this.

The information you gather about children can help you plan homework time and study experiences that meet individual needs. These needs may include:

- encouragement to complete homework tasks without distraction; for example, by setting aside time for homework when the program is quieter or when there are fewer children in the service
- extra prompting; for example, sounding out the first letters of a word during reading practice (you could plan one-on-one interactions with an educator to meet this need)
- computer time for children who need to use the internet for research
- homework groups for children to collaborate on projects if they work better in a group setting.

Observing the homework and study experiences of children at your service can help you establish patterns of behaviour and levels of participation. These observations may have implications for your future activity and program planning.

Practice task 3

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

Case study

Caitlin is an educator who is having trouble conducting successful homework sessions due to some behavioural patterns of certain participants. Indy, who is 8 years old, refuses to sit down at homework time. Caitlin observes the following:

- Indy shows this behaviour on a regular basis.
- Indy's behaviour distracts other children trying to complete homework.
- When Indy has been on an active school excursion before arriving at the program, he is able to sit down and concentrate.
- When homework time is changed to take place after outdoor play, the behaviour does not occur.

Ongoing observations help Caitlin to determine that Indy's needs for active play may not be adequately met. As a result, her planning will now take into consideration the opportunities provided for active play before homework time. In the future, she will take the children outside to play ball and running games before going back inside to have a snack and complete their homework.

1. Briefly explain how the case study highlights the importance of understanding a child's individual activity and program needs.
2. What might have happened if Caitlin had not attempted to observe patterns in Indy's behaviour?
3. Why is it so important that active play is planned and timed appropriately?

1D

Identifying and reviewing a range of possible experiences and programs suitable to the school age care context

‘Thinking outside the square’ is often a very successful way to make improvements to school age care services. Ideas can often be led by the children’s own interests. Always remember to take into consideration how age-appropriate the activities and programs you identify are.

Age-appropriate activities and programs

Children aged between 4 and 6 who have just begun school usually have very different ideas about what is fun and interesting to 12-year-olds. Some activities and programs work across age ranges, but you need to consider how both younger and older children may feel about and participate in the activity or program and include alternatives that suit all ages.

For example, you may use a ‘topic of the week’ as a way to present new and stimulating material to children. This can help you to adjust activities for different ages. A theme about Japanese culture could lead to younger children creating simple origami, while older children create manga-style drawings.

Some activities, such as a round robin table tennis game, can be broken into age groups for the enjoyment and safety of all children. You can also plan rosters for children to take responsibility for age-appropriate chores, such as packing up toys or sweeping floors. Some children may participate in the planning process and take responsibility for setting up, developing activities, supporting supervision and packing away.

The time of day and the length of the school age program can influence the activities you choose, as can constraints such as available funds, children’s energy levels and their other responsibilities, such as homework.

Before school hours

In before school hours care, time is often limited so activities need to be kept simple and short. If a complex activity is begun and cannot be finished in time, children may become frustrated and reluctant to leave unless you have options for finishing the work later or the next day.

At this time of the day, many children need to prepare themselves for a long day at school, so quiet and peaceful activities are popular. The focus of morning sessions is often ensuring that children receive a healthy breakfast for a good start to the day. Before-school routines are important for children who are learning to manage their time, so adhere to routines or schedules wherever possible during morning sessions to help children make the transition from care to school without unnecessary stress.

Note that some children may enjoy time for active play prior to leaving for school. These children may concentrate better at school and feel refreshed if they have undertaken physical exercise.

After school hours

Children, especially younger ones, who have been at school all day are often tired and require time to relax and wind down. Having a program full of exciting activities can overstimulate and tire children further, which can lead to behavioural problems.

Much of children's time at school is spent focusing on their intellectual development. For this reason, school age care programs often focus on encouraging the development of social and life skills. Formal learning needs to be less of a focus if children are to feel relaxed and comfortable after a full day in the classroom.

Children also need opportunities to pursue their own interests, such as playing with others or withdrawing to relax quietly. Child-focused programs allow for a child who does not want to participate in an activity to choose an alternative one.

School holiday or vacation care programs

School holiday or vacation care programs provide an excellent opportunity for children to experience a range of pursuits that may otherwise not be available to them. School holiday programs can include a mix of active and quiet games and activities, as well as offer interesting and fun excursions and incursions; for example, where a petting zoo or guest speaker visits the program.

Children need to see projects through to the end, so it is important to plan activities that can be completed in the time available. For example, it would be better to plan a complex craft project earlier in a school holiday program than on the last day, so the children have the option of completing it another day.

Technology-based activities and programs

Using computers and other technology confidently is an increasingly important skill for children of all ages. Remember that some technology-based activities can discourage social interaction and these should not be used for long periods.

Constructive ways to use technology in children's activities include:

- using handheld game platforms that interact with others
- taking photos and videos of the environment
- using advanced computer software, such as animation software, to enable children to make short films using clay and other props
- using storytelling software to help children make their own illustrated storybooks
- using karaoke software.

Indoor activities and programs

Many games and activities can be done indoors and there are many internet resources and publications that can provide ideas for new and creative ways to keep children interested and involved indoors. Some ideas include:

- art and craft activities using a range of drawing media and materials (for example, mosaics, clay work, painting and bead-making)
- group games such as ‘duck, duck, goose’ for younger children and ‘musical statues’ and ‘celebrity heads’ for older children
- board games
- catching and throwing games using beanbags
- discussion groups
- reading and book groups
- drama, music and dance activities
- theme days; for example, dressing in football team colours.

Reading children a book that introduces new places or imaginative settings can lead to related activities to include in the program. Some children are fascinated by stories from history and presenting materials to children about real life events can be more interesting than fiction.

Interest in a particular book can be enhanced by including the book’s theme in the activity or program using decorations, worksheets, games and activities based on its characters and settings.

Traditions and customs from other cultures can also be represented in the service’s activities, such as recognising Ramadan or Chinese New Year with stories and objects that children from those cultures bring from home.

Outdoor activities and programs

Being able to run and play safely and freely is one of the greatest joys of being a child. A child’s idea of a good outdoor game is not restricted by rules, procedures or rigid ways of thinking. For example, an old tyre on the playground is not just a tyre; for children, it could be any number of things, such as a seat for everyone to sit on together, the border for a fairy garden, a trampoline to bounce on or a circular road for toy trucks.

Children have the gift of almost unlimited imagination, and services can benefit enormously by tapping into their creativity. Suitable outdoor activities include:

- playing on swings and climbing structures
- using skipping ropes and playing elastics games
- feeding birds
- having nature hunts
- holding a variety of races such as sack races or two-legged races.

Excursions and incursions

Excursions allow children to leave the school grounds and explore different parts of their community or city. Excursions are particularly important for children who often attend school age care, to ensure they experience a wide variety of settings. Excursions do not need to be expensive or to distant places to be effective. Examples of excursions include:

- swimming at the local pool
- ice-skating or rollerskating
- visiting a museum
- attending a play or concert
- visiting a local park for a picnic.

The nature of excursions may mean that children cannot be provided choices or flexibility if they do not wish to participate. Invite collaboration from children in advance so the most attractive options are offered, and to reduce reluctance or lack of interest.

Some local businesses may also provide mobile entertainment or educational incursion experiences, which means they visit your location and present to the children. Like excursions, these can be aligned with the specific interests of children and themes that are currently being enjoyed. For example, children who show an interest in putting on plays may benefit from a visiting theatre company or participating in a drama workshop.

The following case study shows how an educator identifies and reviews a range of age-appropriate activities and programs.

Case study

Josie is an educator currently working for a school holiday program. Josie has noticed some of the older children talking enthusiastically together about a new blockbuster movie, which tells the story of an ancient curse. She asks them if they would be interested in hearing about a real life ancient curse, and the children are intrigued. Josie reads a story about the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb in ancient Egypt, and the children listen intently, fascinated by the idea that King Tutankhamen was a real person. They tell her that they would like to hear more about this period of history. The following day, Josie shows the older children a short film that opens up a mysterious world of ancient treasures, secrets and long-gone customs.

In an open discussion after the film, one child suggests that a visit to the museum to see a real mummy would be very interesting. Josie agrees and tells them that she will arrange an excursion for children in grades 4 to 6 for the following month.

Practice task 4

Use the internet or ask children of a certain age range about popular books, movies, television shows or video games that currently hold their interest. How could you use this information to encourage children to come up with new ideas for activities that have not previously been used by your service?

PC 1.5

1E

Selecting activities or programs based on children's expressed needs, organisation requirements and resource availability

After identifying possible activities or programs, you then need to explore these choices and make decisions about what to plan. Activity and program planning should primarily be based on:

- children's preferences or expressed needs
- organisational requirements
- resource availability.

Children's preferences or expressed needs

Children should be encouraged to have a say in how activities and programs are planned. Older children should be given more formal opportunities to make decisions about what they want to do; for example, by holding daily group discussions about their choices of activity for the following day or week.

Build a certain amount of flexibility into activities and programs so children's choices can sometimes override timetables. For example, you may have intended children to play outdoors for an hour before starting some artwork later that afternoon. However, if some children tell you they would prefer to continue their chasing game outside than commence the artwork, the children could be split into two groups and provided with a choice of indoor or outdoor activity, if staff numbers allow.

Other needs expressed by children should be factored into programming decisions; for example:

- rest and relaxation
- adequate breaks for food and drinks
- having their cultures recognised and respected, such as by celebrating religious festivals
- feeling included in social interactions with other children, particularly when planned activities involve large groups and may intimidate some shyer children.

Organisational requirements

School age care services must demonstrate adherence to policies and procedures for protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and educators. Policies include reference to legislation and in the case of excursions, Regulation 100 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations states that a risk assessment must be conducted before an excursion takes place. The risk assessment you

complete may mean excluding certain activities and equipment that do not meet safety standards. For example, going to the beach could pose a series of risks, including deep water, rips and high levels of sun exposure, which are not acceptable for a service, even with a high level of supervision.

When identifying options for excursions, procedures must be strictly adhered to. These include:

- whether the excursion suits the age groups of the children involved
- applicable restrictions and recommendations for travel arrangements
- whether educators and volunteers can adequately supervise
- the costs involved
- alternative arrangements that could be made in the case of rain or other contingencies.

Many programs and activities may be restricted by the differences in and unpredictability of children's behaviour, particularly between different age groups. For example, an activity where children cook pancakes on Shrove Tuesday may need to be adapted because it is too dangerous for young children to be around hot cooking surfaces.

Excursions can be complicated by children who frequently run out of sight of workers. Behaviour can also be a factor if activities require children to remain calm; for example, an animal farm visit requires children to be gentle. The levels of supervision required and available need to be considered before deciding on any activity.

Availability of resources

The feasibility of an activity or program is usually based on cost and time. Financial considerations are very real constraints for many school age care services. For example, the service's budget will determine the number and types of excursions children can attend, and the types of technology, games and play equipment available.

The continued maintenance of equipment can be expensive, which means that broken equipment may be unavailable for periods of time or may not be fixed or replaced at all.

Again, try to 'think outside the square' in regards to any resources. Unless the funding for the service is adequate, constraints may mean you have to make use of what is available in an imaginative way. For example, old and unusable sporting equipment may have arts and craft uses.

The following table outlines some questions you can ask before selecting activities or programs.

Issue	Questions to ask
Benefits and disadvantages of the option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the best things about this choice? What is not so good about it? • Is it likely to be too cold or too hot to play games outdoors? • Have children enjoyed similar experiences in the past?
Costs and availability of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this choice limited by cost or equipment? • How can we obtain the required resources? • Can we ask families to pay for the activity?
Time and other constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there adequate time to finish the activity, or will it need to be completed on another day? • Does this mean that some children will not see the activity through to completion? • Would this activity be more suited to a full day program, such as school holiday or vacation care?
Space available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is space limited? For example, is there a large enough grassed area to allow a game of football to take place safely?
Cultural differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can all children participate in this activity, regardless of the language they speak? • Is this activity affected by religious or cultural dress codes, such as the need to keep headwear on?
Age appropriateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can everyone join in, regardless of their age? • Will anyone be left out because of different abilities? • Is the activity too basic or boring for older children? • Will younger children feel frustrated or unable to compete equally? • Could children be split into age groups and the activity adjusted for each group?
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a safe option? • How likely is it that someone may be injured? • Is there adequate supervision available to make this option safe? • Is equipment safe and appropriate for children of this age group? • Are there any medical or physical conditions that could pose additional risks for some children?

The following case study shows how an educator helps select appropriate activities based on children's expressed needs, organisation requirements and available resources.

Case study

Julia decides to plan a party for the last day of the school holiday program. She encourages children to sit down in a group and suggest options for the party. Together, they decide on a dress-up party with a book theme. Some of the younger children make suggestions that include hiring ponies and a jumping castle, but Julia explains that this would be very expensive. When a suggestion is made that everyone could bring cakes and sandwiches to the party, Julia reminds them that some children have food allergies. 'Could we make some cakes together the day before?' they ask Julia.

After discussing the pros and cons of each suggestion, including regulations that do not allow children to enter the kitchen, they decide that the children will help to mix the ingredients for cakes and slices, and that Julia will bake them in time to be iced and decorated by the children on the morning of the party.

Practice task 5

What legal requirements or policies at your service may prevent you from agreeing to children's activity and program suggestions?

1F

Clarifying individual children's support and guidance needs

There may be times when you have concerns about the suitability of a proposed activity for an individual child. For example, a child may have learning or communication difficulties, a language barrier or a physical disability that makes participation challenging. It is important to collaborate with the child and their parents, as well as your supervisor, to design programs that meet individual and group needs.

Some activities may be appropriate if additional support measures are put in place for the child. Other children, such as those with behavioural problems or those who are very shy, may simply need extra guidance to focus on and complete tasks with other children.

Identifying differences in support and guidance needs

The following individual support and guidance needs may affect a child's interest and participation in potential new activities:

- Delays in learning, speech or comprehension, such as difficulty understanding instructions or rules of a game
- Giftedness or unusual abilities and talents that can be supported
- A child's usual temperament, personality and behaviours
- A child's cultural background and the language and cultural traditions that are regularly practised at home
- Disability or delays in developing physical ability
- Aids and equipment that help a child with a disability to move around or communicate with others
- A child's individual preferences and interests
- A medical condition

Support and guidance for children with disabilities

If a child who has a disability attends the program, educators usually seek assistance from the child's family to ensure any specialised aids and equipment are provided and used appropriately to help the child participate.

Designing activities and programs that are inclusive can also be enhanced by consulting the child. This can help you to determine how they prefer to participate. For example, a child who uses a wheelchair may claim to feel more included in the group when children sit in a circle of chairs rather than on the floor.

A child should never be expected to sit out of an activity because of their disability. Adapt games to allow all children to participate and ask the children for ideas on how to do this. If the game does not allow everyone to take part equally, choose another activity.

Support and guidance for children with medical conditions

A range of medical conditions can also influence activity and program planning. These include epilepsy, allergies, diabetes and asthma. Speaking to the affected child's parents can help you determine the limitations of activities and adaptations that can be made to activities before they are integrated into programs. You may come across issues such as:

- a child who cannot participate in interactive computer games because this visual stimulation can trigger seizures
- a child with asthma who cannot participate in excursions that involve contact with certain types of plants or animals.

Cultural support and guidance

When considering culturally diverse activities for your programs, consult with your supervisor and relevant families and children. Activity and program planning should not exclude any single child or group of children because of their beliefs or religious restrictions, such as a sausage sizzle that excludes children who do not eat meat. Where activities may appear exclusive, include opportunities that do not highlight differences. For example, vegetarian food options can be offered to all children, not just those who do not eat meat.

Children who do not speak English at home may require additional assistance to understand English. You may find it useful to speak to the child one-on-one, and use gestures and pictures rather than relying on verbal instructions given to a group. Using a board with simple pictures of common objects or places can be helpful while a child is learning to use English and can help them to participate in activities.

The following case study shows how an educator acquires knowledge regarding one child's specific needs.

Case study

Fatima takes care to design games and activities that are inclusive for Lucia, who uses a wheelchair. She regularly consults with Lucia to determine how she would prefer to participate. Lucia tells Fatima that she feels more included in group discussions and story-times when the other children sit in a semi-circle of chairs rather than on the floor.

Practice task 6

Ask a parent at your service about the individual needs of their child. How old is the child? What are the child's specific support needs? How do these needs differ from the group's more general needs?

Chapter summary

1. Children should always be at the centre of activity and program planning.
2. Children should have input into activities based on their ages, needs, abilities, preferences and energy levels.
3. Responsive programs depend on educators observing and listening to children, asking appropriate questions and planning activities accordingly.
4. You can understand what children like and dislike about the service and what they think would improve it when you consult with them regularly.
5. Observing children participating in games and activities should be an ongoing practice, as it can tell you a great deal about any changes or improvements to your programs that may be required.
6. Record significant observations so your organisation can demonstrate that programs are planned based on what you observe about children during play and leisure.
7. Planning meetings are used to consider the information collected about all children at the service and to design timetables for upcoming sessions.
8. Even though programs must include some built-in flexibility, having a timetable helps you to organise resources and prepare for sessions ahead of time.
9. Constraints on resources such as time, available funds, energy levels and children's other responsibilities, such as homework, can affect the types of activities you plan.
10. Some activities work across age ranges, but you may need to consider how both younger and older children feel about and participate in the activity, and include alternatives that suit all ages.
11. Program planning should be based primarily on three main factors: children's preferences, organisational requirements and the feasibility of each activity based on cost and time.

Assessment activity 1

Identifying play and leisure interests of children in school age care

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 1 in *CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	1	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6
B	1	1.4, 1.5

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in identifying play and leisure interests of children in school age care.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/assessor/training organisation.

Part A

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

Case study

Janet has recently had some feedback from other staff at her service suggesting that the children are becoming bored with the routine of the afternoon sessions. The children do their homework, listen to a story, play outside for 15 minutes and then have some time to play board games. The staff are concerned that the program may be contributing to the irritable behaviours that some of the children exhibit.

1. List three methods of collecting information from the children about their feelings towards the afternoon routine.

2. Briefly describe how you could use one of these methods to determine the interests of the children.

Part B

Design a series of activities for one outside school hours care afternoon session or a full-day school holiday program. Include activities that would be suitable for children aged 5 to 12. Provide a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities. Address as many of the following needs as possible and explain how each need is met by the activities you have designed.

- Cultural
- Developmental
- Homework assistance
- Life and social skills
- Recreational
- Indoor use
- Outdoor use
- Technology

For one of the activities, explain any cost or organisational requirements that need to be considered. Also describe how your activities would be adjusted if one 7-year-old child in the group has a learning disability and requires additional assistance to read and write.

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Chapter 2

Preparing play and leisure experiences

All school age care services must show evidence of planning. In most cases, this is a written plan that reflects and builds on the information collected about the children who attend the service.

An activity or program plan looks at what will be provided for children attending the service days, weeks or even months ahead. It usually includes details about what preparations educators need to make to run the activities. The plan must support the development of life skills, such as social and communication skills, self-esteem and confidence. It should also include activities considered for their safety and contribution to meeting children's needs.

Benefits of planning activities and programs include the following:

- Plans can be read in advance; this provides educators, parents and children the opportunity to make comments or submit feedback about upcoming activities.
- Plans promote new and interesting ideas.
- Planning ensures that activities and programs cover a wide range of needs.
- Planning allows time for educators to gather the required resources and obtain necessary permissions from parents or carers.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 2A Planning experiences in consultation with children, parents and other stakeholders ensuring requirements and needs are met
- 2B Determining operational arrangements for experiences and assessing feasibility within budgets and time frames
- 2C Developing flexible implementation plans to suit a variety of contexts and to respond to contingencies
- 2D Including evaluation strategies in the planning process

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
✓	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play
	Intentionality
	Environments
✓	Cultural competence
	Continuity and transitions
✓	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

Planning experiences in consultation with children, parents and other stakeholders ensuring requirements and needs are met

School age care programs should allow children and parents to have input into how services are run. It is important that educators acknowledge ideas originating from children attending the service and make attempts to use their comments, suggestions and feedback in positive, practical ways.

Consulting children and parents

Seek original and creative ideas for activities and programs by consulting with children and their parents or carers. You can encourage them to consider new ideas and interests by:

- giving children opportunities to consult with each other; for example, by running brainstorming sessions or listening to children talk together about their interests
- talking regularly to children and parents about activities they would like to see included in the program
- providing opportunities for parents to provide formal feedback through methods such as surveys, suggestion boxes and feedback forms
- talking to other school age care service operators about ideas they have used
- using books or the internet to find new program ideas
- reading marketing flyers, parenting publications and children's directories to gather ideas for excursions.

If you respond to suggestions with interest and enthusiasm, children and their families are more likely to feel motivated to continue making them. You do not have to like or agree with every idea or piece of feedback, but make sure you thank the child or parent for their contribution and assure them it will be taken seriously. For example, you may say, 'I'm sorry you find that activity boring, Jack. Do you think there's anything we can do to make it more interesting? Perhaps we can talk to the other children too and see whether everyone feels the same way.'

Involving children in planning

You can encourage problem-solving and decision-making skills by involving children in planning day-to-day activities, and by:

- asking children to share their ideas about the service and programs
- encouraging children to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of options available to them, such as which game they should play or whether an activity is safe

- considering the limitations of each option, such as the resources and equipment available
- solving simple problems, such as how you can divide children into groups to play certain games.

Older children may benefit from helping you plan an entire activity or excursion. Such an opportunity can assist children to learn how to make decisions based on information and limitations. It also helps them develop other skills that will be important to them as they grow, such as:

- working in a team
- understanding the reasons behind laws and restrictions
- considering safety
- managing and organising small projects, which can prepare children for secondary school.

Present a list of choices to children and ask them to consider the benefits and disadvantages of each. For example, ask the group a question such as, 'We were thinking of arranging either a game of basketball or a game of tennis next week. What do you all think of those ideas?'

Acting on suggestions puts children's interests and preferences at the centre of the service, providing a 'client-centred approach', which is a key principle of community services. This approach may include:

- using all or a part of the child's suggestion, even if it is in a different form than suggested
- speaking to appropriate educators about making positive changes in line with the suggestion
- documenting the suggestion in the child's records, so it may be considered in the future
- letting the child know that their idea is valuable, but that it may not be possible or practical at the moment.

As a group, ask children to list the tasks that need to be completed for a suggested activity to happen. You can demonstrate delegating tasks by asking individual children to be responsible for certain parts of the activity.

Thinking in advance about contingencies or problems that could occur is another way to help children develop strong planning skills; for example, ask children, 'What will we do if it rains? Can the activity still go ahead?'

Collaborating with children about safety

Children should be aware that you are responsible for their safety and you can use the legal requirements of your role to explain why you sometimes have to say no. You may tell children that you also have many limits and guidelines you must follow and that some of these are to ensure they remain safe. Children should also understand the restrictions placed on you by educator numbers.

Older children may be interested in components of the NQF, including the regulations and the standards that lead your service policies. This links well with their interest in being independent and shows them that independence is still limited by requirements for safety and involves responsibility for others as well as yourself.

Consulting with other stakeholders

In a school age care setting, you can also consult with various stakeholders to improve and keep programs fresh, enjoyable and interesting. The following table provides some examples of how consultation with others can contribute to planning.

Stakeholders	Reason for consultation
School principal and teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discuss potential activities that may extend classroom learning • To determine resources that can be shared between two services, such as sharing computers, a kitchen or a library between a school and the attached service
Management, including council representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To analyse risks and consider strategies for reducing risks to children during activities • To seek funding, resources and equipment suitable for running activities • To determine policies and procedures that apply to programming tasks
Government departments and industry websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To confirm standards and legislation that guide planning • To access additional places for children • To access funding for families, activities or projects • To keep up to date with good practice
Local communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather information about cultural traditions • To discover opportunities for excursions and participation in the community, such as aged care facilities, cultural centres and environment programs • To identify how to structure the program to meet the needs of target groups or potential user groups
Activities consultants, owners and employees of excursion venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish ideas for new activities • To complete risk assessment as required by Regulation 100 prior to attending an excursion
Allied health professionals and disability liaison officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather information about aids and equipment that can help children with disabilities participate in activities

The following case study shows how an educator plans activities in consultation with children.

Case study

Several children at a school age care service suggest an outing to the beach. Leanne, the educator, talks to the children about the risks that could be involved in this activity. She explains that the children would need very close supervision and assistance because of their varied swimming abilities and the danger of the surf.

Leanne suggests that swimming in a shallow pool at the local sports centre may be a safer option because the location is enclosed and supervised by lifeguards. The children agree that this is a good alternative and the excursion is planned for two weeks' time.

Practice task 7

1. Choose an excursion venue that is local to your service. Use the internet to research if needed.
2. Provide information about the venue using their website or by calling them.
3. Use your service excursion policy and information you have gathered to outline the process you would undertake to plan a visit to the venue with the children who use your service. Include at what stage you would undertake a risk assessment as required by the Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulation 100).
4. Include examples of the people you would consult to arrange this excursion. What questions would you ask each person in the planning stages of the excursion?

Meeting children's developmental needs

Many school age care services provide templates or frameworks for developing plans. Templates ensure that activities and programs address each of the developmental needs of children and often have additional sections that ask you to include cultural activities and activities requested by the children.

A child's developmental stage is measured by the milestones or level of ability that a child has reached. Although age is often an indicator of developmental stage, this is not always the case. Developmental needs are common to children at each stage and are considered broad requirements for children to reach their maximum potential and growth.

The following table provides some general information about milestones in children's development to help you plan activities and programs to meet developmental needs.

Age	Skill or ability
4–5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can dress and undress themselves with help • Can go to the toilet on their own • Can jump over small objects • Likes to paint and draw • Can thread beads onto a string • Can identify letters and may be able to write some of them • Can hop • Can count to 20 • Understands routine • May not always like to take turns
5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can skip • Can dress and undress themselves • Understands and can copy simple shapes • Can walk backwards and on a balance beam • Can do somersaults • Participates in group play • Uses scissors to cut along a line • Starts to like particular people as best friends • Starts to colour within lines • May know the alphabet • Asks lots of questions • Generally follows instructions • Likes puzzles • Starts to read • Likes things to go their way • Understands when someone says they have been bad or good
6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows left from right and number of fingers • Seeks praise and encouragement • Has trouble accepting criticism • Enjoys responsibilities and privileges
7–9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can learn to rollerskate, ride a bike and jump a rope • Enjoys games and can play team sports, including simple competitive games • Forms close friendships and may like to have a small friendship group; friendships can be on-again/off-again • Enjoys helping • Can solve arguments with peers • May spend a lot of time ‘dobbing’ or ‘telling tales’ • Likes to participate in making rules • Likes to learn new things • Can be argumentative

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Age	Skill or ability
9–12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs peer recognition and approval • Wants to fit in and will risk adult disapproval to get peer group acceptance • Can be cruel or insensitive • Will stand up for friends • Starts to seek independence and wants adults to accept that they can make their own decisions • May become confused about their sexual identity and desires and their relationships with boys and girls

The developmental needs commonly referred to in planning include:

- fine and gross motor skills (muscular movement in small or fine actions, such as picking up objects, and large or gross actions, such as running or jumping)
- language and literacy
- communication and social skills
- creativity
- problem-solving and thinking skills.



One of the benefits of planning activities and programs is that it promotes new and interesting ideas and activities.

The following table provides examples of how you can integrate developmental needs into activity and program plans.

Developmental areas	Examples of integrating developmental areas into plans
Fine and gross motor skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom to run and play in safe but unstructured experiences • Opportunities for structured exercise • Organised games such as basketball or soccer

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Developmental areas	Examples of integrating developmental areas into plans
Language and literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet sessions that allow children to complete homework • Homework groups that allow children to collaborate on projects • Computer games related to learning areas • Opportunities to undertake research using books and the internet • Learning games or tutoring for those not doing homework • Story time, when children relax and listen to a staff member reading a book or chapter of a book • Reading time, when children undertake quiet reading • Reading and discussing selected newspaper articles
Communication and social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports and games that require communication and teamwork • Collaborative craft projects, such as a mural • Participation in the local community by visiting facilities such as libraries and parks, museums, the zoo and historical sites (especially during school holidays) • Opportunities for older children to take on responsibilities and leadership roles and make decisions, such as leading a reading group • Holding a concert for families or at an aged care home
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstructured time that allows the children to follow their own interests • Scrapbooking • Art and craft activities such as painting • Photography • Making animal costumes • Creating instruments using household objects, such as rice in a jar • Working together to create a mural
Problem-solving and thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chess, board games and computer games • Simple science experiments such as growing seeds in cotton wool • Publishing a newsletter

Meeting children's other common needs

Aside from the developmental areas already mentioned, other needs must also be addressed in activity and program plans, including those described here.

Rest and relaxation needs

A school age care service's plan must take into account that children are already attending school. This means that while you must address all areas of development in programs, your plan must also incorporate the children's needs for recreation and social interaction, rather than just formal learning.

Cultural needs

To support children's acceptance of others and promote diversity, it is important to incorporate a range of cultural traditions, games and activities. This is particularly relevant when children from different cultures attend your service. Show differences between people regularly and weave cultural features into activities, rather than simply highlighting these differences every now and then. Some examples include:

- theme days or weeks focusing on particular cultures or games from different cultural backgrounds
- song and dance activities based on different cultures
- cooking experiences and foods from other cultures
- excursions to places that focus on specific cultures, such as galleries, cultural heritage centres and museums.

Nutritional needs

School age care programs have schedules for meal and snack times. Food preparation should be based on the National Health and Medical Research Council's Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013). These guidelines include providing children with plenty of:

- vegetables of different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- fruit
- grain foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat
- water.

The following should be limited in the diets of children:

- foods high in saturated fats
- foods and drinks containing added salt
- foods and drinks containing added sugars.

Provide water at all times and consider additional snacks for children who attend for long periods of time. This is required as part of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (Regulation 78).

Choice

Children need to have options throughout their time in the program. This may occur through flexible routines and through the flexible use of spaces and educators. It is important for children to always have active and passive options, while also being able to engage in solitary or group play. When you plan timetables with these options, you are catering for the immediate needs of the individuals in the group, you also ward off issues relating to behaviour.

There is no common routine that suits all children, so allow for alternatives. You can do this by using the following strategies:

- Offer indoor or outdoor play simultaneously, if possible.
- Use communication devices (walkie talkies, for example) to communicate between educators in different rooms, parts of the play space or yard. This allows you to contact other educators if numbers of children change. If children move between play areas, it also enables you to contact others if issues or emergencies arise.
- Ensure that themes do not overtake all activities. A theme can be successful without being overwhelming. Not all children will be interested in thematic activity, so provide options.
- If you must all stay within the same area, offer active and passive options. If you have planned an active game, offer some drawing in a quiet spot to the side for those who do not want to participate. If you planned a quiet art experience, ensure there is space in the room for children to be involved in more active pursuits such as movement to music, developing a puppet show, choreographing a dance or playing a game such as 'Twister' or 'Simon says'.

Meeting organisational requirements

The main focus of planning activities and programs for school age care services is usually risk analysis. A risk analysis examines all the potential problems or risks that threaten the safety and wellbeing of children, staff or other stakeholders. Risk analysis can involve discussions with other stakeholders, who may include excursion venue staff, parents, managers, teachers and children.

For example, if you want to plan an excursion to the local park, you must complete a risk analysis to determine any potential risks. Once these risks are identified, you and your supervisor can decide:

- whether each risk can be eliminated or minimised
- whether each risk is an acceptable or unacceptable risk to take after control measures are in place
- what policies and procedures must be included to manage the risk.

One risk to consider before the visit to the local park is the possibility of injury while crossing a busy road. A risk analysis would include determining whether this risk could be eliminated or minimised and the following strategies could be put forward:

- Older children could each be asked to hold the hand of a younger child.
- The group could walk a little further and cross the road at a footbridge
- Traffic lights or pedestrian crossings may be identified for use.
- Another park may be located.

If using the strategies means this risk is now considered a low risk, it may be an acceptable one to take. Further consultation will include considering relevant organisation policies and procedures. In this case, policies may dictate the minimum number of staff who must be present to supervise the children during the excursion.

The following table specifies ways to minimise risks that may present during planned activities and programs.

Activity	Strategies to minimise risk
Computer game play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place covers over electrical sockets. • Ensure safe electrical loads on powerboards. • Ensure safe placement of electrical cords that could cause trip hazards. • Have enough space around computers for freedom of movement. • Place computers at a safe height for children to see screens. • Restrict time frames for computer use to avoid prolonged staring at the screen.
Outdoor games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use locking mechanisms on fences and ensure gates are kept in working order. • Inform children of out of bounds areas. • Ensure staff use close supervision in the necessary areas. • Enact sun safe practices.
Meal breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children are seated at meal times. • Restrict children from entering kitchen areas. • Put processes in place to prevent children with food allergies coming into contact with these foods, including banning of certain foods, such as nuts.
Indoor play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove and lock away dangerous substances such as cleaning fluids. • Test and clean smoke alarms regularly, and place them according to regulations. • Ensure staff and children have the required fire safety awareness, including knowledge of behaviour that may contribute to fire injury and/or fatality.

Adherence to organisational policies

Organisational policies have a strong influence on planning, as they must be adhered to and taken into consideration when determining activities and programs. Many of the expectations represented in service policies and procedures are a reflection of the National Quality Framework (NQF), particularly the points in the following table.

NQF aspect	Expectation	Reference
Education and Care Services National Regulations	An educational program must contribute toward the outcomes of the relevant learning framework, in this case, <i>My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia</i> (MTOF).	Regulation 73
	Documentation of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of an educational program must include details of each child's wellbeing, development and learning.	Regulation 74
	Information about the educational program is to be kept available. The program must be displayed on the premises and be accessible to parents and children.	Regulation 75
	Information about the educational program must be given to the parents if requested. Parents may request information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the content and operation of the program and how it relates to their child • about their child's participation in the program • that has been collected about their child's wellbeing, development and learning. 	Regulation 76

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NQF aspect	Expectation	Reference
National Quality Standard (NQS)	An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development.	Quality area 1: Educational program and practice Standard 1.1 Elements (1.1.1 to 1.1.6)
	Educators and coordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child	Quality area 1: Educational program and practice Standard 1.2 Elements (1.2.1 to 1.2.3)
<i>My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia</i>	School age care educators believe in each child's capacity to succeed, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities. They recognise and respond to barriers and work to help children develop a positive self-identity, sense of purpose and positive view of personal future.	Principle: High expectations and equity
	Educators continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge; this includes attempting to understand each child and thinking about ways they can respond to their needs and strengths.	Principle: Ongoing learning and reflective practice
	Educators take a holistic approach to their view of children, understanding that their needs are diverse and interconnected.	Practice: Holistic approaches
	Educators are responsive to children's strengths, abilities and interests. They listen to their ideas and encourage them to participate in developing the program.	Practice: Collaboration with children
	The school age care environment should be welcoming and reflect every child, through the use of activities and displays that relate to the children's interests and needs, as well as celebrating their achievements.	Practice: Environments

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NQF aspect	Expectation	Reference
	Educators should demonstrate an ability to understand, communicate with and interact with people from different cultures and to share their diverse and accepting view of the world.	Practice: Cultural competence
	Routines, traditions and practices of the service should be developed to reflect the children's needs and support any change that takes place. Children should feel a sense of belonging.	Practice: Continuity and transitions
	Educators must gather information about children and evaluate this to form responsive programs. The cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children's wellbeing, development and learning allows for a responsive program developed in partnership with other relevant stakeholders.	Practice: Evaluation for wellbeing and learning

Along with a reflection on these NQF aspects, policy considerations include the following:

- Documentation must be provided and kept as evidence of planning for children's individual needs, including individual children's file notes and activity timetables.
- The required number of staff to supervise children during everyday programs and excursions.
- The number of children who can participate in certain types of activities at a time.
- Activities are restricted to certain age groups, such as activities using advanced or high-risk equipment; for example, hot glue guns, shears for cutting wool (pompom making, for example).
- Requirements relating to travel, such as permission forms that must be signed by parents.
- Restrictions regarding the times and places that activities can be undertaken, such as remaining indoors during the hottest part of the day.

The following example shows an activity and timetable plan for an after-school session.

Example

3.30–4.00 pm	4.00–4.30 pm	4.30–5.00 pm	5.00–5.30 pm	5.30–6.00 pm	6.00 pm
Welcome and chat about the day Fruit and milk snack	Outdoor play Children can play basketball or use other available play equipment	Homework and reading time	Olympic Games activity Children make prize trophies from cardboard and tin foil	Quiet time Children can read in the reading corner, watch television or play on the computers	Pick-up time Children are ready to be collected

Practice task 8

- Provide a timetable and a list of activities from your service and explain how it includes planning for the following:
 - Rest and relaxation
 - Cultural needs
 - Nutritional needs
 - Fine and gross motor skills
 - Language and literacy
 - Communication and social skills
 - Creativity
 - Problem-solving and thinking skills
- Explain how your service meets the following NQF requirements:
 - Education and Care Services National Regulation 75
 - NQS Element 1.1.4
 - My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*
 - Practice: Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
- Identify a policy within your service that reflects the NQF aspects identified in question 2. Explain how it links to each of these.

2B

Determining operational arrangements for experiences and assessing feasibility within budgets and time frames

Planning activities can be a time-consuming process. This is especially the case when introducing new activities and programs into a school age care service or considering excursion options. It is vital to understand the requirements and limitations that each option presents.

School age care services usually have a set of requirements for planning activities and programs. These requirements can change, however, particularly when planning excursions and activities that involve higher risks. Organisational requirements are set out in policies, procedures and instructions from supervisors or managers.

Operational arrangements

Identify issues that can affect the operation of the school age care program. To help you meet your program goals, consider the following information.

Contingency plans

Contingency planning involves thinking about problems that could arise and planning for alternatives in case an activity needs to be changed or cancelled. Good contingency plans help you move between activities seamlessly, even when unexpected situations arise. Contingency plans may be included for situations such as:

- changes in the weather
- variations in the number and ages of children participating
- staff shortages or absences
- resource shortages.

Existing activity or program plans

In many cases, you will need to plan new activities around existing plans and schedules. This may limit the timing and length of any activities you want to add to the existing plan.

Examples of limitations include:

- times set aside for meal breaks and rest periods
- time allocated for completing homework and reading practice
- staff rosters
- activities that can only be held on certain days or times, such as incursions from visiting educators or entertainers.

Only slot activities into plans when you are sure there is enough time available and when children are most likely to be receptive to them. For example, it may be unreasonable to expect children to sit still to listen to a story when they have just completed a long day at school. Instead, this activity may be more appropriate after a play time, or when children are waiting to be collected and are ready to rest.

Health and safety

Children need to play and explore in a stimulating environment, but this needs to be balanced with activities and environments that are safe.

Meal breaks should be interspersed through programs at regular intervals; however, there may be times when you write changes to food and drink times into program plans; for example, if it is particularly hot, if children are participating in physical activities or if they are attending an excursion.

When planning activities that take place outdoors, such as games, sports, free play or excursions, you must take the time of day and the availability of shade into account. For example, planning two games that take place side by side may increase choice or cater for different ages and abilities. However, if these activities are planned in summer for the hottest part of the day, there may not be enough shade, meaning one group of children could be exposed to unsafe levels of direct sunlight.

When planning excursions, you must be aware that leaving the service grounds can expose children to a greater number of variables. For example, the presence of animals can put children at risk of bites or other injuries. Potential allergens in the environment, including pollens and grasses that can lead to asthma and other reactions in some children, may be increased when children visit parks and other grassy areas. Children may be injured while travelling or crossing roads or they may wander away from the group. Unfamiliar environments can increase the number of potential risks for children on excursions.

When planning excursions, consider the availability and safety of toilet facilities and whether staff need to accompany children into toilet blocks. There are also requirements to cater for children with food allergies when planning meals on excursions.

Number and age groups of children

Some activities are more easily run with smaller groups of children. It is important to remember that additional supervision may be required when children are separated in different areas of the centre. Other activities are better suited to larger groups, where supervision is concentrated in one area only.

Plan activities and programs with the abilities of children from different age groups in mind. It is important not to set children up for failure by expecting them to complete activities that are too challenging. This can sometimes happen when staff expect younger children to compete against older children in games or sports.

It can be appropriate to divide children into groups based on age group and ability. In this way, children from older age groups can still be challenged while activities and programs remain interesting and achievable for younger children. Another strategy for dividing children is to 'buddy' them. A younger and older child together may form a team that participates with other teams buddied the same way. This is especially useful when siblings wish to participate together. It also offers the younger child the opportunity to take on a greater challenge, and the older or more skilled child to share their talents and take responsibility for supporting someone else.

Staff-child ratios

Children must have adequate supervision at all times according to your organisation's staffing policy, as supervision is one of the most important safety concerns. The National Quality Framework provides national ratios for educators to children in all children's services settings. It is important to familiarise yourself with these ratios when planning activities and programs. You can find these ratios for each state and territory in Chapter 7 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Plan around roster variations. Some planned activities and programs may need to be moved to alternative days or times if adequate numbers of staff cannot be assured.

Increasing supervision during excursions should also be factored into the activity and program planning.

Budget limitations

Children's services are accountable for their financial viability just as businesses or retail operations are. Although school age care services can attract funding that subsidises the cost of programs, you are very likely to be working within budget restrictions when developing activity plans.

Where possible, use sustainable work practices, such as limiting waste and using recycled materials, to help reduce not only the financial costs of programs, but also your service's environmental impact.

Your service is likely to provide budgets for staff, equipment, materials, excursions and incursions. Some sessions, such as school holiday or vacation care programs, require parents to supplement the cost of activities and excursions above the fees already payable. For example, parents may be required to meet the costs of an excursion's entrance fees and meals.

Ideas for activities and outings may be limited not only by organisational budgets, but also by whether it is reasonable to ask families to pay additional fees. Final estimates of fees for excursions should consider:

- required equipment and resources
- additional staff to meet minimum supervision requirements

- deposits payable for group bookings
- food and drink
- transport to and from venues.

Assessing the feasibility of options

Assessing an activity's feasibility establishes whether the idea is realistic and achievable within the limitations of the service. You can study the feasibility of activity and program ideas by considering issues such as cost, time and the value of the activity or program to children.

Cost

Your service will have established processes to help you plan activities and programs within cost constraints. Budgeting tools include templates that allow you to add up the potential costs of activities or excursions, then make comparisons against the amount available in the budget to run the activity. A budget may be for a week, a month or longer, so it is important to remember that money needs to last that entire period.

Time

The time it takes educators to plan activities is absorbed into the costs of running your service. Complex activities that require additional time for planning and collecting resources can affect the time that educators have to contribute to other areas of the service.

When planning activities and programs, take into account the preparation time that must be allowed for it to run smoothly. For example, excursions will require time for:

- undertaking a risk assessment
- making bookings and transport arrangements
- obtaining permissions
- preparing children for the event or activity
- planning meals
- collecting equipment and resources.

Value of activities

A feasibility study also takes into account the potential or actual value of the activity, weighed against its cost and time. For example, a large museum may be holding an exhibit that has a great deal of relevance to a theme or subject the children are studying at school. If there is a lot of interest from children and the

school community in attending the exhibit in the school holiday program, then the excursion may be considered worth the additional costs and educator time. Conversely, if only a few children express interest in the visit, you may not consider the cost of resources and planning time worthwhile.

Sustainability

Feasibility studies should also consider the sustainability of the planned activity or program. When considering sustainability you identify whether the plans you make affect people, the environment or the budget of your service. For example, if you were to plan an excursion that required you to spend a large proportion of your budget, this may not be sustainable. It may be detrimental to the day-to-day program as it reduces your capacity to provide stimulating activities for children, and you won't have a budget for additional educators if required.

Some choices you make influence sustainability within the environment. For example, you may wish to develop an activity that uses a large amount of paper, which depletes your resources, not only affecting the budget but also having an environmental impact. To resolve this, have the children share the activity or use recycled paper. Depending on your evaluation of the sustainability of the activity, you may even feel an alternative activity is more appropriate.

Finally, sustainability must be considered in relation to the people in your service, particularly the educators. As an example, you may be organising tasks for educators and always place these people in the same areas, with the same responsibilities. This may be a decision that is sustainable as the educators agree to this and it matches their skills. However, many educators need variety, different stimulation and alternative responsibilities to enable them to work at their best. Children also benefit from seeing different educators working in different areas. At times when children are able to choose from activities, you may also notice that one educator is always supervising many children while others only a few. This situation must also be balanced to ensure the busy educator does not burn out.

The following case study shows how an educator is involved in determining operational arrangements.

Case study

Allan is arranging an excursion to the museum for 20 children during the school holiday program. Final estimates for the excursion are broken down into the following amounts:

Additional educators to meet minimum supervision requirements at casual rate	\$200
Group booking fee	\$120
Food and drink	\$250
Transport to and from museum using hired coach	\$500

	\$1070

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Allan has a budget of \$700. To ensure the program's budget remains sustainable he must reduce the cost of the excursion or find an alternative option. He decides that the transport costs are the only area where the excursion expenses can be cut down. After speaking to his supervisor, he decides that the excursion can only go ahead if his organisation's policies and procedures allow him or a volunteer to drive a hired minibus to the museum. He puts the potential solution to his manager, who asks Allan to obtain a special bus licence first. The excursion is delayed until this can occur.

Practice task 9

1. What efforts towards environmental sustainability does your organisation make?
2. Does your organisation try to use local businesses to provide goods and services? Explain.
3. What benefits do these two measures provide to your service, the local community and the children who use the service?
4. Identify one way that your service has recently considered budgetary and time frame requirements when planning and/or implementing an activity or program.
5. Where in the Education and Care Services National Regulations does it guide you to consider sustainable practices?

2C

Developing flexible implementation plans to suit a variety of contexts and to respond to contingencies

School age care program plans need to be flexible and adaptable to changing needs, because the general environment of the service is often varied.

Flexible implementation plans

One of the most important reasons for spending time planning and developing programs is the need to consider problems that may arise and affect the planned activity. Planning for all potential contingencies is not possible, but you can plan a range of alternative activities and instructions to follow if needed.

Activities and programs do not necessarily need to be cancelled or changed completely if problems occur; allowing flexibility in plans can help you to adapt activities when required.

Flexible implementation plans need to take into account:

- contingencies for changes in weather conditions
- possible variations in numbers and ages of children participating
- possible staff absences
- budget and resource limitations
- possible changes in group dynamics.

Contingencies for changes in weather conditions

Children often look forward to outdoor games and excursions; however, the success of these activities can depend on weather conditions. It is sensible to prepare an alternative game that can replace the planned outdoor activity if it rains or is excessively hot. Try to replace planned outdoor activities with indoor activities that still involve movement or physical exercise.

Variation to numbers and ages of children participating

One difficulty of planning in a school age care setting is possible changes in numbers of children attending. You may be unsure of which particular children are attending, and your plans may not suit the ages of children who arrive for the session. You need to anticipate this and plan accordingly.

Plan and collect resources to cater for a larger number of children than you expect to participate. Most excess supplies can be stored for future use and you will not be left short of materials if more children attend. If you have a larger group of children than expected, you may need to break the children up into two or more groups to participate in activities, providing there is adequate supervision available. When you must divide children, allow them as much freedom to choose

as possible. They may then group with friends, siblings, interests, age ranges or gender. These self-chosen groupings increases the level of participation and enthusiasm, and reduces the number of children who are unhappy about their activity or partnerships, which in turn reduces behaviour issues.

It is also a good idea to devise alternatives for planned activities in case they do not suit the age groups of the children who attend.

Staff absences

Some activities require a higher level of supervision than others. It is unfortunate when excursions or highly anticipated activities have to be cancelled due to lack of staff, but your priority at all times must be the safety of the children. Some activities may continue if you have arranged 'on call' volunteers ahead of time. Your service has its own requirements for replacing staff, and you must adhere to these.

Children are surprisingly resilient, even in the face of disappointment, especially if you or they come up with creative and exciting alternatives. A cooking activity may be replaced by ordering in pizzas. Picnics can be just as fun in a secluded corner of the playground as in a park, and a trip to the pool can be replaced by a day of water play using a 'slip and slide' or hoses and buckets of water on a grassy area, when local water restrictions allow.

Budget and resource limitations

Activity resources you must consider include equipment, materials, time and space. A program plan may include activities that fluctuate in cost and the resources required, such as expensive craft materials, or the need for additional staff. It is usually possible to come up with an acceptable alternative that meets the needs of the plan, while remaining feasible.

Recycling scrap paper and asking children to bring alternative materials from home, such as old plates to create mosaics, are environmentally friendly and cost-effective alternatives.

Some parents may be unable or unwilling to pay high costs for school holiday activities. A day at the movies can become expensive when you factor in ticket prices, food and transport; however, a movie day at the service with popcorn can still be special if you provide unexpected extras, such as hired bean bags. A horse riding activity could be replaced by a less expensive option such as rollerskating at the local rink.

Considerations for transport to and from excursions should take into account the long-term costs to the environment as well as financial costs to the service. Some options to reduce an activity's impact on the environment include:

- asking parents to take their children directly to a venue
- supervising a 'walking bus', where the children walk in formation and act as though they are a school bus with a 'driver' at the front and a supervisor at the rear

- arranging an incursion of visiting performers
- choosing a venue closer to the service.

A cricket game is a wonderful idea for a group of active children who have been following cricket on television. However, the risk of injury or a lack of space can limit the feasibility of this activity. Alternatives may include using soft balls and bats, rather than traditional cricket equipment.

The following is an example of a flexible implementation plan.

Example					
3.30–4.00 pm	4.00–4.30 pm	4.30–5.00 pm	5.00–5.30 pm	5.30–6.00 pm	6.00 pm
Fruit and milk snack	Outdoor play including a basketball game and use of play equipment	Homework and reading aloud	Olympic Games activity – children make prize trophies from cardboard and tin foil	Quiet time – children can read in the reading corner, watch television or play on the computers	Pick-up time Children are ready to be collected
Alternative options	Indoor games of musical statues if raining	If children do not have homework, this can be replaced with board games	If craft materials not available, drawing or painting of Olympic Games sports	If children prefer, they may watch a short video	

Contingency preparation

One method for managing contingencies is to have a box prepared for such occasions, which holds some type of activity materials the children do not often get to use. Some ideas for the box include a:

- range of puppets
- new board game
- range of materials for children to use in craft such as felt, glue, bobbly eyes and wool
- selection of sensory items to play games of guessing the scent or touch
- new cook book and some basic ingredients
- science or technology kit
- set of builders' tools; for example, a hammer, nails, wood offcuts, bottle tops, icy pole sticks

- builder kit such as for building a bird house
- challenge activity such as mazes, or solid mind challenging games
- set of conundrums or logic quizzes
- large jigsaw puzzle
- treasure hunt.

Practice task 10

1. What backup or contingency activities are ready to use in your service if an activity must be cancelled at late notice? Ask a supervisor or manager if you are unsure.
2. Describe what you might say to a child who suggests an excursion to a football game, which would not be possible due to inadequate staff levels.
3. If you arranged an Easter treasure hunt for children aged 5 to 12 years, how would you alter the activity if you noticed that the children over 7 years were finding all the treasures and the children under 7 years were not finding any?

2D Including evaluation strategies in the planning process

Once you have decided that an activity or program idea is feasible and appropriate, it is time to set goals and make plans to put it into place. Having an activity or program run smoothly does not occur by accident; the more detail you can include in your activity plan, the more likely it will be a success. When you plan appropriately you will be building in a range of evaluation processes. You will find more information about evaluation strategies in Chapter 4.

Evaluation as part of an implementation strategy

The steps you take to make the activity happen are known as implementation strategies. The process of reviewing the success of an activity after it is run, including anything that went wrong and what you could have done better, is known as evaluation. Having a clear idea of what is involved in arranging a particular activity or program helps you determine the advantages and disadvantages of each option. It also helps you make decisions about which activities are simpler to achieve and which are likely to be too complex and difficult.

When you implement plans following preparation that is thorough, you give the activity the best chance of succeeding. Thorough planning and preparation can reduce the chance of problems occurring on the day of the activity or program and the activity being evaluated inaccurately as a failure. Many educators collect resources at least a week ahead of schedule to ensure that all items are available. This preparation stage should be outlined in the implementation steps for the activity and program plan.

Some common tasks associated with implementing an activity with evaluation in mind include:

- completing adequate research prior to implementation
- writing clear and measurable objectives
- sourcing and collecting equipment and resources
- familiarising educators with the activity.

Identifying research needs

Some activities and programs require more research to be done during the planning and implementation process. Research may include:

- asking teachers and other experts about the best way to organise a complex activity or teach a new skill to children
- checking whether additional permissions are required from management before the activity goes ahead
- asking excursion venue staff how to best prepare children for a visit to the venue

- finding background information about history, culture or nature prior to visiting a particular venue
- determining whether children with special needs can access aids or equipment that could improve their levels of participation.

Writing objectives

Including a clear list of objectives in a plan shows what you hope to achieve, it also provides you with criteria for evaluating the activity. Whether your objective is for children to have fun, learn a new skill, consolidate an ability or relax, the outcome should be recorded using a specific approach.

Well-written objectives should be SMART:

- Specific – give clear and precise details of what you hope to achieve, rather than vague goals
- Measurable – the objectives should be measurable in some way so you can decide whether or not they are met after the activity is completed
- Achievable – the objectives should not be beyond the reach of the educators and children in the program
- Realistic – the time frame and other factors should not make the objective too difficult to achieve
- Time frame – a time should be set for the activity to end, by which time you hope to have achieved the objective.

A set of objectives relating to a papier-mâché activity could be recorded as follows:

- By the end of the first session, the children will identify the animal they wish to create, demonstrate the ability to independently cut and glue strips of paper onto a balloon using scissors and a glue brush.
- By the end of the second session, the children will have created and decorated an animal to their satisfaction.
- When asked for feedback, the children will respond positively.

Recording objectives at this early stage of the planning process helps you be clear about what you want to achieve. It can also help you evaluate the success of the activity after it has run, because your objectives set outcomes that can be measured during the review process.

Listing resources

The next step involves making a list of the resources and equipment that are required to undertake the activity or program, and deciding how to source these items.

The following example is a list of resources and equipment required for a papier-mâché activity.

Example

Activity: Papier-mâché animals Number of children participating: 12 Date for resources to be collected by: 24 June	
Equipment required	How it will be sourced?
24 balloons	These need to be purchased from the supermarket.
Newspapers Egg cartons (to create animal ears and feet)	Parents will be asked to bring in old newspapers and egg cartons in the weeks leading up to the activity. A request will be placed in the newsletter.
Glue (two large pots) Glitter (three vials) Non-toxic paints in seven colours (one tube of each colour)	These need to be ordered from the art supplier.
Brushes	We can use the existing brushes.
Cartoons and photos of animals to give children ideas	These need to be sourced from the internet or our craft library.

Making action plans

Action plans bring together all the considerations leading up to this point, including steps to ensure safety, adhere to policies, collect equipment and meet any other operational requirements. Writing a list of clear actions and including directions for those who are responsible for each is a vital part of planning.

The following example shows an action plan for the papier-mâché activity.

Action	Person responsible	Date to be completed
Check the policy about appropriate non-toxic glues for use.	Leader of the activity	9 June
Insert an item in the school newspaper requesting newspapers and egg cartons.	Director	10 June
Post the activity on the school calendar.	School administration assistant	10 June
Collect animal pictures from library.	Leader of the activity	23 June

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Action	Person responsible	Date to be completed
Purchase balloons and craft supplies.	Leader of the activity	24 June
Set up tables and craft supplies.	Children, under supervision of all educators involved	Day of activity – session 1 and session 2
Develop and distribute feedback surveys to the children.	Leader of the activity	End of session 2
Collate the survey responses and analyse the success of activity.	Leader of the activity	Before next planning meeting (28 June)

The steps involved in implementing the activity should be clearly outlined. At this point, you should also identify the person responsible for each stage of the preparation and implementation process. A plan should be written using clear and specific language, and include the following details:

- The exact nature of the activity or program and what is expected of the children.
- The objectives of the activity or program.
- What needs to be done to prepare for the activity or program.
- Staffing arrangements.

Consider the following activity ideas. One is vague and broadly defined, and the other gives a clear definition of the activity:

1. The children will take part in a papier-mâché activity.
2. The children will each create a papier-mâché animal of their choice using balloons, glue and recycled newspaper donated by families. Creations will be left to dry, then painted and decorated with glitter the following week.

Writing a series of implementation steps is an easier task using the second example, as this idea sets clear parameters for what is expected of each child and how the project will come about. Even though the description is brief, it is clear that the activity will take place over two separate sessions and that the children are expected to create their own papier-mâché object within a set of restraints, including a theme and the materials they will use.

Final steps prior to implementation

There may be a few final actions to take just before an activity is due to run. Depending on the activity or program, these final steps may involve:

- making a final check of equipment and materials
- having a 'run through' of the activity yourself, so you understand what the task involves and can be prepared for contingencies

- completing a risk assessment or hazard identification checklist as a final safety check
- setting up the resources or equipment for the children.

For excursions, additional preparation in the days leading up to the activity may include:

- requesting or sourcing additional staff and volunteers
- distributing and collecting permission forms according to organisational policy
- preparing information sheets or leaflets to distribute to families so they understand what children must bring with them and any additional requirements
- making phone calls to venue organisers and bus companies to confirm bookings and provide final attendance numbers
- updating emergency contact details and medical needs information for each child
- collecting first aid supplies, including prescribed medications.

Providing children with relevant information

Provide children with clear, age-appropriate instructions about what is expected of them before the activity begins to allow them to proceed with the activity and also give you useful feedback once it has concluded.

Children can become anxious if they do not clearly understand games or procedures. Understanding the rules of a game or the order that events will run in can help children to participate more enthusiastically, so make them clear at the beginning and reiterate them throughout the activity, as necessary.

Posters can remind children of rules that apply for certain activities, such as not taking handheld video game devices outside. Written instructions can help older children follow a series of steps involved in a craft activity.

The following table describes the types of information you may provide to children and examples of how you could convey each.

Type of information	Example
An overview of what the activity involves, including time restrictions that apply	'We are going to play outside until it's time for your snack. You can play on the equipment or out on the grass. If you would like to play with the basketballs or hula hoops, you may collect them from the storeroom before we leave. We won't have time for a real game of basketball, though.'

continued ...

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Type of information	Example
An explanation of what you are asking children to do during the activity, using specific language	'You can draw a picture of your choice using crayons or pencils; however, if you need an idea, maybe you can draw one of the animals we saw at the zoo last week.'
An explanation of rules that apply to the activity (this may include general rules as well)	'You must sit down while you're working on your mosaic. Remember, sit down while you work with scissors.'
An explanation of the rules of games, or demonstration of how to use equipment	'How many people have never played this card game before? I'll teach you the rules before we begin.'
An outline of policies and procedures that apply to excursions	'The prep children must each hold hands with one of the grade 6 children when we get off the bus. Stay with your grade 6 buddy until we are inside the museum.'

Evaluation strategies

Including evaluation strategies in the planning process helps you plan for the period following the activity or program, when it is necessary to determine its outcome. You could develop a checklist for educators to fill in after they observe the children taking part in the activity or program; a survey for children to complete; or a list of questions to ask children or parents once the activity or program is finished.

To give you the best measurement of an activity's success, base your questions on the objectives that you set for the activity or program. Consider the following questions for evaluating the papier-mâché activity:

- Did the educators help you make the animal, or could you cut and glue the paper by yourself?
- Did you have enough time to complete your animal in the way you wanted to?
- Did you enjoy the activity?
- What would you rate the activity out of 10, if 10 means it was the best activity you could imagine?



It is important to give children clear instructions about each activity in your program.

Practice task 11

1. Choose an activity or program that is regularly delivered to the children at your service.
2. Write the objectives for the activity using the following headings:
 - a) Specific
 - b) Measurable
 - c) Achievable
 - d) Realistic
 - e) Time-framed
3. For each objective, write a question to evaluate the success of the activity or program.
4. Design a brief action plan showing the steps required to prepare for the activity or program.

Chapter summary

1. A good starting point for laying the foundations of your plan is to consider developmental areas.
2. Activity and program plans are ideally made available for parents and children to read in advance.
3. Plan activities and programs with the abilities of children of different age groups in mind.
4. Act on children's suggestions to cater to their interests and preferences and provide a client-centred approach, which is a key principle of all community services.
5. Operational arrangements include considering factors that help you meet your program goals within the limitations of policies, available educators and existing programs.
6. Contingency planning involves thinking about problems that could arise and planning alternatives in case an activity or program needs to be changed or cancelled.
7. Supervision is one of the most vital safety concerns to factor into program planning.
8. The feasibility of activities can be studied by considering factors such as cost, time frames and the value of each activity to the children.
9. Recording objectives at an early stage of the planning process helps you understand exactly what you want to achieve; in addition, objectives can be used to evaluate the planned activities.
10. Evaluation strategies should be planned prior to implementing the activity. When activities are planned well, the evaluation they receive will be based on the value of the activity rather than lack of planning and preparation.
11. Sustainability must be considered when planning and implementing programs.

Assessment activity 2 Preparing play and leisure experiences

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 2 in *CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
A	2	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
B	2	2.1, 2.2, 2.3

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in preparing play and leisure experiences.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/assessor/training organisation.

Part A

Read the scenario, then complete the tasks that follow.

Scenario

Some of the children at your service show an interest in potting lavender plants in time for spring, to complement a new greenhouse built as part of the school gardening program. The activity will take place in three weeks. There are seven children ranging in age from 8 to 11 who attend the service on this day. The children will be supported to care for their plants in the weeks that follow. You supervise another educator who will be present during the activity.

1. List at least three objectives for this activity.
2. Using your objectives, develop four questions that can be used to evaluate the success of the activity.
3. Describe any research that may be required for this activity.
4. Make a list of the resources you will require and explain how they will be sourced.
5. Create an action plan outlining what actions are required, who is responsible for the action and the expected time frame.

Part B

Provide short answers to the following questions.

1. Why should activity plans be written and distributed in advance for parents and children to see?
2. List five developmental needs. For each one, provide an example of an activity that helps you to meet that need.
3. List three types of food that should only be provided in small quantities to children in outside school hours care.
4. What benefits might there be in allowing a small group of 11-year-old children to plan an upcoming activity?
5. Who might you consult when planning an activity based on a cultural or religious festival?
6. Provide two examples of existing arrangements that you may need to consider when organising a sports activity in an after-school program.
7. Outline two factors to consider in a feasibility study for an excursion to the zoo.
8. How does your organisation support you to adhere to best practice, industry standards and legislation?

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Chapter 3

Implementing a school age care experience and/or program

Previous sections of this learner guide focused on developing plans based on children's needs. Implementing activities and programs is easier if you consider requirements and contingencies well ahead of time. Good planning ensures activities are safe and enjoyable for both you and the children in your care.

Once you agree to and refine these plans, it is time to put them into action. The implementation stage requires you to maintain a high level of awareness regarding children's safety and wellbeing while they take part in activities. You must also be alert and adaptable to changes in group dynamics and unexpected problems as they arise.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 3A Setting up environments for leisure and play according to children's interests and needs
- 3B Adapting activities and programs to the changing needs of the group and dynamics, and responding to and managing implementation problems

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
✓	Collaboration with children
✓	Learning through play
	Intentionality
✓	Environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity and transitions
	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

Setting up environments for leisure and play according to children's interests and needs

PC 3.1

Variety is important for sparking and maintaining children's interest in activities, and for challenging them in different ways. School age care programs provide opportunities for children outside the structure of school, to relax and select activities they enjoy. Activities may include:

- active games that use mental or physical skills, such as playing sport, going for a walk, playing make-believe games with friends and dancing
- passive activities that are quiet and restful, such as watching a movie, listening to you read a story, listening to music and watching others play
- solitary activities, such as reading, completing a puzzle, painting or doing craft
- social activities, such as celebrations, cultural activities, board games and talking with friends.

Developmental needs

As discussed in section 2A, children's abilities change quite dramatically as they move through their primary years. Adjusting the complexity level of activities according to children's ages and developmental stages is important as children need to feel challenged; however, setting tasks with standards that are too high or low can either set the child up for failure or become boring and repetitive.

Reading and intellectual development

Most children begin to learn to read during their first year of school. By grade 1, they are usually familiar with most common printed words of one or two syllables and can often sound out more-complex words with prompting.

Children in the early years of school are reading simple picture books out loud to an adult or practising word lists. Once they can read an entire list fluently, teachers provide a new list of words to learn. You can provide books and games that use simple words and sentence structures to assist children to practise their reading skills. Include games that match words to pictures and memory games using simple words rather than pictures. Younger children usually need more-detailed levels of instruction and frequent reminders about the behaviour that is expected of them. They can be more easily distracted from indoor activities and sometimes need additional motivation to stay on task. This can include spending individual time with a child and asking questions about what they are doing. Sessions that involve complex thinking skills or high levels of concentration, such as completing homework or reading practice, are best kept to shorter session times.

In the middle- to upper-primary years, children are likely to be independent readers with their own developed interests in the types of books they enjoy. Provide a range of reading materials across interests and reading styles, including picture books, comics that are suitable for children (and that do not contain violence), young fiction novels, special interest 'how to' books and puzzle books. Children in this age group can become engrossed in activities such as reading or craft work and may be reluctant to move on to other activities.

School age care activities and programs should allow children to continue with an activity they enjoy, as long as you feel they are not being disadvantaged or isolated over time by pursuing only individual interests.

Social development

While young children usually require more structure in activities and games, by the middle- to upper-primary levels children often become proactive in making suggestions and decisions. It is important to provide children with opportunities to contribute ideas and make suggestions about the types of games that are played.

By age 10 or 11, children may be less enthusiastic about playing group games with younger children. They may seek out children their own age and spend increasingly more time talking in small groups or pursuing competitive games. Children in this age group often seek acceptance from other children and can be reluctant to take part in activities that seem 'babyish' or unpopular.

Motor skills

At age 5 or 6 years, children still require guidance and support to complete tasks that involve fine motor skills. Older children begin to recognise their own particular talents, such as ball skills or artistic ability, and may be interested in improving these skills further. Younger children require a higher level of supervision than older children, as they are more at risk of falling or sustaining injuries from using scissors and other equipment.

Individual interests

Pursuing areas of individual talent or interest increases a child's self-esteem and skills. Even within a particular activity children may show stronger abilities in one area of the task than others. For example, some children enjoy playing a game of basketball. Others may be less interested in playing sport, but enjoy taking part in another capacity, such as a child who is interested in numbers choosing to be the scorekeeper.

While you may encourage children to participate, never force a child to take part in an activity they do not enjoy. Individual interests need to be considered wherever possible, allowing flexibility and offering alternative activities that suit the child's stated interests. Try to include the child's interests in other more active or social games in a way that motivates them to join in with others, rather than spending long periods of time alone.

The following is an example of a school holiday program timetable with a cultural diversity theme, including a range of activities to suit different interests. Notice how there are options for children who do not want to be involved in the theme, and also active and passive options at most times.

9.00–10.00 am	10.00–10.30 am	10.30–11.30 am	11.30 am – 12.30 pm	12.30–1.00 pm
Welcome and group discussion 'How many languages does our group speak?'	Morning tea with foods from different cultures	Craft Children have the choice of making origami animals or paper flags from different countries	Story time Children listen to a story about Aboriginal culture	Shared multi-cultural lunch
		Outdoor games Blob tag and tunnel ball Free play on playground		

1.00–2.00 pm	2.00–3.00 pm	3.00–3.30 pm	3.30–4.30 pm
Outdoor play, including boules and petanque	Children write a short play about a different culture and perform their plays for the rest of the group	Afternoon tea	Free time, including reading, using computers or playing board games
Indoor play Construction sets Puzzles	Outdoor play Different types of football – AFL, soccer, rugby, etc.		

Practice task 12

Read the following information, then develop a one-day activity plan that suits the preferences and developmental needs of all four children.

1. Zainab is 7 years old and speaks some English, but has difficulty understanding complex sentences. She wears a traditional Muslim headscarf, is extremely shy and seems fearful of the educators. Her mother has told you that she collects miniature horse figurines and that she loves to play on the climbing equipment.
2. Jonathan is 12 years old and has a great deal of energy. He seems bored by the indoor activities, calling them 'baby stuff'. He wants to play ball games all day.
3. Tran is 10 years old and is interested in buildings and construction. He wants to be an architect when he grows up.
4. Sophia is 8 years old and loves drawing, art and craft. She is easily distracted from quiet activities, and always wants to be doing something with her hands.

3B**Adapting activities and programs to the changing needs of the group and dynamics, and responding to and managing implementation problems**

Children, like adults, often prefer to be around those with whom they have interests and personal characteristics in common. They can also become irritated or upset by the behaviour of other children. For example, quieter children may resent being told what to do by children who are natural organisers; and boisterous, active children may become bored by children who are more interested in quiet pursuits. Some children may attempt to upset those who are different from them by excluding them or using other bullying behaviours. Some children simply seem to work and play better when they are in the company of children with particular personality traits.

Group dynamics

Be alert for signs of difficulties and changes in levels of individual participation that may be related to group dynamics, behaviour problems or personality clashes.

Teachers and parents can often provide information about children's friendship groups. It is common for some children to want to stay close to a particular child or group of friends, as this can help them feel safe and secure. You should not discourage children from staying close to others whose company they enjoy.

At times, it may be necessary to rearrange games or activities to take these factors into account. A child who is disruptive may be responding to encouragement from peers. If so, you may change the game to one that requires smaller groups of children and rearrange the groupings to minimise disruption. If you observe some children becoming restless or bored, you may stop the activity and commence outside play to allow those children to expend some energy.

The following is an example of a flexible implementation plan.

Example

3.30–4.00 pm	4.00–4.30 pm	4.30–5.00 pm	5.00–5.30 pm	5.30–6.00 pm	6.00 pm
Fruit and milk snack	Outdoor play including a basketball game and use of play equipment	Homework and reading aloud	Olympic Games activity – children make prize trophies from cardboard and tin foil	Quiet time – children can read in the reading corner, watch television or play on the computers	Pick-up time Children are ready to be collected

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3.30–4.00 pm	4.00–4.30 pm	4.30–5.00 pm	5.00–5.30 pm	5.30–6.00 pm	6.00 pm
Alternative options	Indoor games of musical statues	Board games	Drawing or painting		

No matter how well plans are thought out and implemented, unexpected problems can still occur in any school age care setting. Some problems are serious and pose risks to the safety or wellbeing of children and staff. You may not always have specific instructions for how to react appropriately to specific problems; however, your response should be guided by:

- the level of urgency, risk or danger
- your organisation's policies and procedures
- the National Quality Standard
- principles of diversity and inclusion, such as those outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- your training, experience and any limitations on your job role.

Illness or injury

It is important to familiarise yourself with your organisation's policies before an activity or program begins. This includes knowing how to react to problems, such as reporting injuries to parents and managers and applying first aid when required.

If you feel that a situation has become critical, your first reaction should be to call an ambulance. Most organisations require you to take the following steps if any incident or accident involving a child occurs:

- Assess the child's injuries quickly and telephone for an ambulance on 000 if you feel the situation is serious or critical. Carefully explain the nature of the illness or injury.
- Apply emergency first aid as required, according to your training and the organisation's policies or as you are instructed by emergency services personnel.
- Contact your supervisor.
- Contact the child's parents to notify them of the incident.
- Write an incident report outlining the circumstances of the incident, the child's injuries and your response.
- Monitor the child's condition throughout the session.
- Complete a note in the injury register for minor injuries.

In non-urgent situations, provide the sick child with a quiet and comfortable place to rest in an area that is well-supervised but away from the rest of the group until the child can be collected from the service.

Lost children

Close supervision during all programs should significantly reduce the risk of children wandering away from the service or an excursion venue. In the event that a child becomes lost or is missing from the group, your responsibilities for locating the child should also consider the safety and supervision of other children in your care. It is important that you:

- immediately notify venue staff, along with other staff and volunteers, describing the child (including their clothing) and the last place the child was seen
- direct others to search for the child, or conduct a search yourself if you can leave other children with a suitably qualified educator
- contact your supervisor to alert them to the situation and seek further direction
- call the police if the child is not located within the time specified in your organisation's policies
- alert the child's parents or emergency contacts and inform them that the child is missing
- notify all relevant people once the child is located.

Participation problems

You may be notified that a child cannot participate in planned activities; for example, due to:

- allergies to certain materials or foods provided in the program
- a physical disability that prevents the child from taking part in sports or games
- cultural beliefs; for instance, considering bathers for swimming activities too revealing, or the activity clashing with religious celebrations and activities.

Principles of inclusion require you to consider these differences when planning programs and that activities are adapted to meet the needs of all children wherever possible.

Behavioural problems

Behaviour that upset other children or has the potential to cause emotional or physical harm is most appropriately dealt with early, before it escalates. Behaviours of concern include verbal abuse, bullying, hitting, refusing to obey instructions and deliberately excluding other children.

Behaviour management strategies

Positive behaviour guidance strategies are the most effective methods for addressing behavioural problems. These include:

- using diversion or redirection to change the child's focus
- clearly stating the limits and guidelines of the service and your expectations for the child's behaviour
- praising positive behaviour when it occurs.

Other behaviour management strategies include using natural or logical consequences.

Natural consequences

In some situations, it is appropriate to allow the natural consequences of the child's behaviour to take their course. The natural consequences of screaming and crying when the child does not get their own way may be that other children do not want to play with them. The child then learns that the behaviour leads to negative outcomes, and they may be motivated to change. Natural consequences should be allowed to take place only in situations that do not pose a risk of injury or result in ridicule or social isolation of the child.

Logical consequences

Logical consequences must be used with care by educators. They generally involve providing a child with a warning about the consequences that will follow unless a behaviour improves. Logical consequences are designed to relate directly to the specific behaviour. For example, the logical consequence of refusing to wear a hat outdoors may be not being allowed to go outside.

Children should never be subjected to physical punishment of any kind. Punishment that involves ridicule, isolation or personal criticism should never be administered. If you are unsure about how to manage a behavioural problem that becomes serious or ongoing, seek the assistance of a supervisor. School teachers are a great source of information about managing the ongoing negative behaviour of individual children.

The following table outlines some of the problems associated with behaviours of concern and lists some possible solutions.

Problem	Possible resolution
Limited attention spans	<p>Spending too long on one activity or not allowing children to release pent-up energy can be problematic. Look out for the early signs of restlessness or agitation in children. If possible, take a break from the activity or change tack for a moment. You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule an outside play break • ask children to get up from what they are doing and jog on the spot • play a short game that involves physical activity. <p>It is much more effective to interrupt an activity before poor behaviour begins than to wait until it escalates.</p>
Certain behaviours are consistently repeated at specific times of the day	<p>With permission from a supervisor, you could change the times of certain activities. For example, if children find it difficult to concentrate after lunch, schedule quieter, inside games and activities during the morning, and allow for physical activities and outside games during the afternoon. Allow for trial and error to see what works best for the children in your care.</p>
Children seem bored or distracted	<p>Children need to have activities set according to their interests and preferences. Changing the type of activity or the style of interaction can allow some children to feel more engaged in what they are doing. Ask the children what they like to do or observe them during favoured activities and then build new activities based on your findings.</p>
Children are distracted by noise	<p>For some children, a noisy environment with too much going on can lead to a reduced ability to focus on the task at hand. Where possible, minimise noise from sources like radios and outside traffic. Separate children who are undertaking activities that require different levels of interaction; for example, keep a reading corner at the opposite end of the space from the general discussion or activities area.</p>

The following case study shows an educator responding to and managing implementation problems related to behaviour.

Case study

Lucia's parents have asked that she complete her homework at the service due to the lengthy period she stays after school; however, Lucia is very disruptive around other children at the service during this time. At this time of day, a familiar pattern occurs. She begins to tease the children sitting on either side of her until one of them reacts. An argument then begins, often resulting in Lucia calling the other child names. The other child becomes upset and they call the educator, Pippa, as they have been instructed to do. Pippa temporarily stops the activity and asks Lucia to apologise.

Pippa has decided that this pattern of behaviour needs to be changed. Looking closely at the repeated incidents leads her to the conclusion that Lucia is demonstrating disruptive behaviour because she is bored by homework time at the centre. Teasing other children is a deliberate attempt to disrupt the homework activity and provide a diversion from her boredom. Together, Pippa and her co-workers plan and implement the following strategies to reduce Lucia's behaviour of concern.

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Strategy	How it is implemented
Preventing the behaviour from occurring	As soon as homework time begins, Pippa asks Lucia to sit at the end of the table, with two empty spaces between her and the other children.
Using logical consequences	Pippa explains to Lucia that the sooner she completes her homework, the sooner she can go outside to play. This strategy not only motivates Lucia to keep working, but also motivates the other children to ignore her distractions.
Extinguishing the behaviour	The educators discuss ways to prevent the behaviour from causing an appropriate distraction for Lucia. Pippa agrees to sit nearby and assists Lucia to complete her homework, helping her focus on the task she is working on. As soon as any teasing begins, rather than waiting for other children to report the behaviour and allowing a distraction, Pippa is already in a position to assist.
Modifying the program	Pippa decides that Lucia's homework time should be interrupted halfway through with a five-minute stint of physical activity, including stretches, jogging on the spot or a 'Simon says' game.

By using these strategies and encouraging and praising Lucia when she demonstrates appropriate behaviour, Pippa sees that Lucia is soon able to get through several homework sessions without distracting the other children.

Practice task 13

Role-play an interaction between an educator and a 6-year-old child called Pam who has snatched a piece of equipment roughly from another child, making them fall to the ground. This behaviour has been repeated by Pam on several occasions. Use positive communication that encourages Pam to understand why her behaviour is not acceptable and consider possible positive options to address the behaviour.

Chapter summary

1. Most activities and programs require preparation before they can take place.
2. Being well prepared can reduce the chance of problems occurring on the day of the activity.
3. Children should be given clear, age-appropriate instructions about what is expected of them before the activity or program begins.
4. Safety must be your priority at all times. Ensure the required level of supervision is maintained at all times.
5. Variety is important for sparking and maintaining children's interest in activities.
6. One of the most important reasons for spending time planning and developing programs is that plans can be a powerful way to address problems that could arise.
7. It is important to familiarise yourself with your organisation's policies and procedures before an activity or program begins, including how you are expected to react to serious problems and report injuries to parents and managers.

Assessment activity 3

Implementing a school age care experience and/or program

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 3 in *CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
Whole activity	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in implementing a school age care experience and/or program.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Identify an activity or excursion that has been planned for your outside school hours care service and write a report to address the following.

1. An industry standard that relates to the activity and how you would ensure the activity complies with that standard.
2. How the activity can be made age-appropriate for both lower- and upper-primary school children.
3. How you would respond if the activity was affected by a lack of resources or inadequate staff levels.
4. How you would respond if children became irritated with each other during the activity.
5. A risk relating to the activity and how you would control the risk.

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Chapter 4

Evaluating activities and programs in school age care

Evaluation completes the continuous improvement process. It involves gathering information about the quality and success of activities and programs after they are delivered, and is designed to:

- refine activities and programs
- help the service to better meet children's needs and preferences
- ensure that all children benefit from the service in as many ways as possible.

While children's feedback about a service is extremely important, you can also develop a better picture of children's preferences and needs when you collect other forms of information from stakeholders, in both formal and informal ways.

In this chapter you will learn about:

- 4A Defining criteria to judge the effectiveness of an activity or program
- 4B Using appropriate evaluation strategies for revision and development
- 4C Preparing feedback reports on activity or program outcomes

The following table maps this chapter to the National Quality Standard and *My time, our place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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: Leadership and service management
My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care	
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
✓	Holistic approaches
	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play
	Intentionality
	Environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity and transitions
✓	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

Defining criteria to judge the effectiveness of an activity or program

When considering the activities undertaken by a school age care service, evaluation criteria are required to help you identify whether the activities meet the needs of the children who attend. Criteria are statements or measures against which you can judge the effectiveness of programs. In school age care, common criteria include the:

- ability to address developmental needs
- inclusion of all children from different cultural backgrounds
- level of participation of children and level of enjoyment
- use of adequate safety measures
- ability to be completed in the time frame provided
- provision of adequate instructions
- use of environmentally friendly materials.

Criteria can also be posed as questions; for example, you can apply the criterion 'Appropriateness of reading materials for the children's ages' to an activity that has just been completed by asking:

- Were the children challenged by the materials?
- Did they complain that the materials were too difficult to read?
- Were the materials designed for the age groups of the children attending the service?

Defining criteria

One of the most effective ways to establish evaluation criteria is to revisit the objectives written during the planning stages of an activity or program.

Section 2D discussed how to write objectives as part of the planning process. Consider again the following objectives, written in the planning stages of the papier-mâché activity in that section:

- By the end of the first session, the children will demonstrate the ability to independently tear and glue strips of paper onto a balloon, using scissors and a glue brush.
- By the end of the second session, the children will create and decorate an animal to their satisfaction.
- When asked for feedback, the children will respond positively.

Questions arising from these objectives may include:

- Did the task present any physical difficulties for children of particular age levels?
- Did all children finish the task in the specified time?
- Did the children say that they enjoyed the activity?

By using open questions you gain even more information, rather than just a yes or no response. Here are the previous questions written in an open manner:

- What physical difficulties were present for children of particular age levels?
- What time issues were identified?
- What was the children's response to the activity?

Consulting with others to evaluate programs

Ensure children have the opportunity to reflect on an activity after it has finished. Asking the children involved about it and making observations during the activity can establish whether criteria have been met.

Consulting with your supervisor can assist you to recognise how programs meet developmental needs in accordance with the children's ages and developmental stages. Your supervisor can also give you feedback about your performance during activities, such as whether you provided clear instructions to the children.

Depending on the type of activity you are reviewing, there may be other stakeholders who can help you to establish whether it met your criteria. Stakeholders who can help provide a broader perspective include parents, other program educators who assisted with the activity and excursion venue staff.

The following example of a program safety evaluation illustrates how you can identify criteria and the evaluation questions that may evolve from these.

Example

Area of evaluation	Criteria	Evaluation questions
Outdoor play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of children • Maintenance of outdoor play equipment • Security of boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were staff-child ratios maintained according to organisational policy? • Is outdoor play equipment checked regularly for signs of damage or wear? • Are gates kept closed and are childproof latches in working order?
Indoor play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of floor surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are spills attended to quickly? • Are flooring surfaces non-slip?

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Area of evaluation	Criteria	Evaluation questions
Excursions and travel situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with organisational requirements for safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do transport options such as minibuses comply with organisational requirements, including seatbelt regulations? Are children provided with instructions about staying with the group? Are head counts performed according to procedure?
Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe practices for children with allergies Safe food preparation procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are precautions (such as having a nut-free environment) taken to ensure that children with allergies do not come into contact with relevant foods? Do meals arrive at the appropriate temperature? Are children prevented from entering kitchen areas?
Basic fire safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarity of staff and children with basic fire safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are children and adults who use the service aware of basic fire practices and the location of fire alarms and firefighting equipment? Are fire drills carried out every three months? Are smoke alarms in working order and tested regularly?

Practice task 14

Design three questions to evaluate each of the following criteria. An example has been provided.

1. Level of participation of children:

- Did the children talk, smile and interact during the activity?
-
-

2. Cultural diversity of programs:

-
-
-

3. Adequate instructions given to children:

-
-

4B Using appropriate evaluation strategies for revision and development

Evaluation strategies are used to measure the success of an activity or program against set criteria. The results of evaluations form the basis for revising and developing future activities and programs. Evaluation strategies are described here.

Observing children's participation

Watching children learn and play is just as important during the review process as it is when assessing the children's needs. Children of different ages and abilities participate in activities and programs in different ways. For example, younger children may be content to sit and watch other children playing sport. For older children, participation in a board game may involve a higher level of communication and interaction with other children.

Questions that you may ask when observing a child participating in programs include:

- Does the child play actively with other children?
- Does the child show signs of enjoyment during the program, such as smiling, laughing and talking to others?
- Is there any evidence of unmet needs, such as withdrawing or exhibiting behaviours of concern?



A good way to assess an activity against your criteria is to observe children's participation.

Collecting feedback from children

You can discover how a child feels about programs and activities by asking questions and listening to the child's ideas and opinions. For example, you can gather feedback during group or individual discussions where you ask children what they like about the program and what they think could be better.

Younger children can also identify their feelings about programs through creative expression, such as by painting and drawing. These techniques can reveal the program experience as seen through the child's eyes, in either a positive or negative light.

Consulting with parents or carers

Children often talk openly to their parents about their experiences and preferences at the service, and parents can communicate this information to you. Parents often see nonverbal indicators of their child's enjoyment, such as noticing that the child is reluctant to leave home or that they return home excited and chatty on certain activity days.

Collecting feedback from parents can take place informally, during a discussion with the parent at drop-off or pick-up times. More formal processes for consultation with families include regular care review meetings and distributing questionnaires.

Parent meetings are either scheduled regularly or held as needed when a problem or concern is identified. Examples of questions you may ask during parent meetings include:

- Does your child have any complaints about the service?
- Are you satisfied with the current program and activities?
- Are there any needs that you feel are not being met adequately?
- Do educators regularly update you about your child's progress and participation?

Reviewing records of attendance and participation

Attendance records are kept in line with legislation to show evidence of children's attendance at the program, as well as late arrival or early pick-up routines.

Poor attendance does not necessarily indicate that a child does not enjoy the program. However, if you suspect that a child is having difficulty separating from parents or participating in activities, poor attendance may indicate problems. Parents may give in to a child's request not to attend the service, and may make other arrangements for the child.

Records of participation can be kept for individual activities and excursions. They can indicate gaps in a child's level of interest, particularly when the child consistently chooses to engage in solo activities, like reading, rather than participating in group activities. While all children also need some down time, there may be concerns that the child's social development is restricted by too much time alone. This could be an indication of their dissatisfaction with the centre's programs. It could also be a demonstration that the child has had ample social activity during the school day, so prefers to wind down after this time.

Reviewing incident reports

Incident reports can provide you with evidence about the safety of an activity. For example, a sudden increase in falls in the playground may indicate that sports games are too boisterous or poorly supervised. It may also mean that playground equipment is not suited to the ages of all children who attend the service.

Surveys and questionnaires

Surveys are used to collect information using set questions. You may give a group of children a survey about what they enjoy most at your service, and then compare the responses to see if a pattern of interests and preferences emerges.

Questions on a survey should be specific and appropriate for the age of the children. For example, you may ask a group of 8-year-olds, 'Do you think there are enough activities to choose from?' and 'What other types of activities would you like to take part in?'

Surveys can also be conducted through methods such as a show of hands. For example, you can ask a group of children, 'Who thinks we should do that activity again?' and make a note of the number of responses.

Questionnaires, sometimes called evaluation forms, can also be used to establish how children feel about a certain program or activity. They can be useful in determining the preferences and feelings of children aged 5 years and over.

Children do not necessarily need to be able to read to complete a questionnaire if there is an adult at hand to help read the questions and guide them. It is very important, however, that the questions and the format of the evaluation suit the age and developmental stage of the child.

When designing questionnaires, make sure you ask specific (rather than general) questions particularly for younger children, as in the following example.

Example

Put a circle around the face that shows how you feel about the sentence.			
I liked sitting on the floor to watch the play.	😊	😐	😞
The play had music that I could sing to.	😊	😐	😞
The play was funny.	😊	😐	😞

Practice task 15

Design a questionnaire to give to children to evaluate an activity. Make sure the questionnaire is appropriate for the children's age. Include a sufficient number of questions to help you identify a range of reactions from the children. Focus questions on establishing the success of the activity.

4C

Preparing feedback reports on activity or program outcomes

PC 4.3

Completing documentation is an important part of your role as an educator. It provides evidence that your program planning is based on quality continuous improvement practices. Just as importantly, it also forms a record of program successes and problems that can help you reflect upon and improve your service.

Your service may have a standard form on which you can record program outcomes after an activity. The form may ask questions such as:

- What worked well during the activity?
- What went wrong?
- Were the materials relevant?
- Did everyone join in?
- Was it run safely?
- Was there anything you did not consider that may have made it more enjoyable?
- Did you achieve what you set out to do?

Being objective

Where possible, provide factual evidence for your responses, rather than making subjective statements that are your own opinion. For example, 'The children enjoyed the activity' is a subjective statement that does not explain how you came to this conclusion. However, 'The children smiled and clapped during the activity' is a more objective statement that supports your opinion. Providing further evidence that the activity was successful in terms of enjoyment is even better. For example, 'Several of the children said they enjoyed the activity when asked. Two children came up to me and asked if we could do it again next week'.

Any evidence you can provide strengthens your report. Examples include:

- the results of surveys or questionnaires
- incident report statistics
- complaints or suggestions made by children or parents
- observations about lack of participation or other behaviours
- the amount of time children spent on each activity.

Writing professional reports

It is important to think about your audience when writing reports. In most cases your audience is educators and education professionals from within and external to your organisation. Always use professional language when writing reports, with no slang or jargon. Abbreviations should only be used if they are widely accepted and understood by the target audience.

Reports are clearer and easier to read if you write in a direct, concise way, rather than using complex words and long sentences. Use headings to separate ideas and arrange the information in a clear, logical sequence.

The following case study describes feedback that could be used in reporting on an activity.

Case study

The children at Maryann's school age care service have a visit from a local puppet group. The puppet show goes for an hour, and on the whole the children seem to enjoy the play. Some of the younger children laugh and smile the entire time. However, the grade 5 and 6 children seem to lose interest after the first half of the show. Some tell Maryann later that they thought the show was 'a bit childish'.

The puppet group members tell Maryann that they are developing some new acts to appeal to a wider age range. She makes note of this, and thinks to herself that if the service has another visit from this group in the future, she should ask them to deliver a play that appeals to all the children's ages.

A few children say later that they would have enjoyed the show more if they had been offered a snack first, as they felt hungry. In future, Maryann thinks snack time could be moved to earlier in the session.

Practice task 16

Write a short report about an activity that you helped to deliver recently in your workplace. Remember to write using professional language, and include information that may be relevant to other educators planning similar activities.

Chapter summary

1. Evaluation in school age care settings is the process of determining the effectiveness of activities and programs.
2. Criteria are statements or measures against which you can judge the effectiveness of your programs.
3. Depending on the type of activity or program you are reviewing, there may be several stakeholders who can help you to establish the answers to your evaluation questions.
4. Evaluation strategies are the methods used for measuring your evaluation criteria.
5. The results of evaluations form the basis for revising and developing future activities and programs.
6. Evaluations should take place both formally and informally.
7. Completing documentation provides evidence that your program planning is based on quality continuous improvement practices.
8. Documentation also forms a record of program successes and problems that can assist you to reflect on and improve your services.
9. Where possible, provide factual evidence of responses, rather than making subjective statements.

Assessment activity 4

Evaluating activities and programs in school age care

Your trainer or assessor may require you to complete this assessment activity and will provide you with instructions as to how to present your responses. They may provide alternative or additional assessment activities depending on the circumstances of your training program.

The following table maps the assessment activity for this chapter against the element and performance criteria of Element 4 in *CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care*.

Part	Element	Performance criteria
Whole activity	4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3

Purpose

This assessment activity is designed to assess your skills and knowledge in evaluating activities and programs in school age care.

Requirements

To complete this assessment activity, you need:

- access to a children's services environment
- to answer the questions and submit responses as directed by your trainer/ assessor/training organisation.

Choose an activity that you helped to deliver or observed being delivered in your workplace. Using this activity and the age group of children who attended as a basis for your project, complete the following tasks to evaluate the activity.

1. Write a list of at least three criteria you could use to evaluate the activity.
2. Design an evaluation strategy suited to the children's age group and type of activity. The strategy could include a formal questionnaire, a list of questions to ask the children or an observation checklist.
3. Write a half-page report about the activity and your evaluation process, including the results of the evaluation strategy and some suggestions about how the activity could have been run more effectively.

Record your foundation skills

When you have completed the assessment activity, make sure you record evidence of how you have developed and applied foundation skills. You may use the table at the end of this learner guide for this purpose. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills. Refer to the information on foundation skills in Appendix 2 of this learner guide for further guidance.

Appendices

Appendix 1: How the learner guide addresses the unit of competency

The following table details the elements and performance criteria for this unit of competency. The second column shows where they are covered in this learner guide.

CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
Element 1: Identify play and leisure interests of children in school age care	Chapter 1: Identifying play and leisure interests of children in school age care
1.1 Collect information about children in school age care through a variety of methods including asking the children	1A Collecting information about children in school age care
1.2 Observe and evaluate children's wellbeing, development and learning	1B Observing and evaluating children's wellbeing, development and learning
1.3 Use information collected to address the needs of children in school age care	1C Using information collected to address the needs of children in school age care
1.4 Identify and review a range of possible experiences and programs that are suitable to the school age care context	1D Identifying and reviewing a range of possible experiences and programs suitable to the school age care context
1.5 Select activity or program based on children's expressed needs, organisation requirements and resource availability	1E Selecting activities or programs based on children's expressed needs, organisation requirements and resource availability
1.6 Ensure individual children's support and guidance needs are clarified by parents/carers, supervisor or other staff and child	1F Clarifying individual children's support and guidance needs
Element 2: Prepare play and leisure experiences	Chapter 2: Preparing play and leisure experiences
2.1 Plan experiences in consultation with children, parents and other stakeholders ensuring requirements and needs are met	2A Planning experiences in consultation with children, parents and other stakeholders ensuring requirements and needs are met
2.2 Determine operational arrangements for experiences and assess feasibility within budgets and timeframes	2B Determining operational arrangements for experiences and assessing feasibility within budgets and time frames

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CHCSAC002 Develop and implement play and leisure experiences in school age care	Where covered in this learner guide
2.3 Develop flexible implementation plans to suit a variety of contexts and to respond to contingencies	2C Developing flexible implementation plans to suit a variety of contexts and to respond to contingencies
2.4 Include evaluation strategies in the program plan	2D Including evaluation strategies in the planning process
Element 3: Implement school age care experience and/or program	Chapter 3: Implementing a school age care experience and/or program
3.1 Set up environments for leisure and play according to interests and needs of children	3A Setting up environments for leisure and play according to children’s interests and needs
3.2 Adapt activities and programs to changing needs of the group and dynamics as required	3B Adapting activities and programs to changing needs of the group and dynamics, and responding to and managing implementation problems
3.3 Respond to and manage implementation problems promptly and where necessary seek support from the supervisor	3B Adapting activities and programs to changing needs of the group and dynamics, and responding to and managing implementation problems
Element 4: Evaluate activities and programs in school age care	Chapter 4: Evaluating activities and programs in school age care
4.1 Define criteria to judge effectiveness of activity/program in consultation with relevant stakeholders	4A Defining criteria to judge the effectiveness of an activity or program
4.2 Use appropriate evaluation strategies during and after activities/programs for revision and development of future programs	4B Using appropriate evaluation strategies for revision and development
4.3 Prepare feedback reports on activity/program outcomes as required	4C Preparing feedback reports on activity or program outcomes

Performance evidence

The following table details the performance evidence required for this unit of competency and outlines where it is addressed in the content of this learner guide.

Performance evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
Planned, implemented and assessed at least two indoor and two outdoor learning experiences, including how you:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying particular support needs of at least one individual child and at least one group of children 	1A, 1B, 1C, 1E, 1F, 2A, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B

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Performance evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing implementation and evaluation plans and strategies 	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementing play and leisure experiences according to plans and respond to issues promptly 	2C, 2D, 3A, 4A, 4B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluating the play and leisure experiences for effectiveness and future development 	3A, 3B
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> preparing feedback on activity or program outcomes. 	4C

Knowledge evidence

The following table details the knowledge evidence for this unit of competency and outlines where it is in the content of this learner guide.

Knowledge evidence	Where covered in this learner guide
How to access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the National Quality Framework the National Quality Standard the relevant approved learning framework 	1E, 2A, 2B, 3B
How to navigate through framework and standards documents to find areas relevant to this unit of competency	2A, 2B, 3B
Good practice and industry standards for working with children in outside of school hours care	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C
Budgetary and timeframe requirements for developing and implementing activities/programs in school age care	1E, 2B, 2C, 2D
Development factors relevant to the age group and appropriateness of the activity/program	1D, 1E, 2A, 2C, 3A
Evaluative processes for school age care programs	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1F, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 4A, 4B, 4C
Legislation and industry standards as they relate to activities delivered in the school age care context	1E, 2A, 2B, 3B
Organisational policies, procedures and guidelines	1E, 2A, 2B, 3B

Appendix 2: Foundation skills

As an employee, you need to have a wide range of skills and knowledge to perform the various tasks you undertake as part of your day-to-day duties.

The specific skills and knowledge required for your job are listed in your position description; for example, you may be responsible for operating equipment, planning a program, maintaining financial records or caring for children. However, underpinning all your duties and tasks are a set of skills that are essential if you are to participate successfully in work and be a valuable and productive employee.

Employers and industry have identified these skills as:

- learning
- reading
- writing
- oral communication
- numeracy.

In addition, employers require people who can contribute effectively to the organisation by being able to:

- work in a team
- plan and organise
- make decisions
- identify and solve problems
- create and innovate
- use technology
- work in a digital world.

Together, these skills are referred to as foundation skills.

Most tasks use a range of foundation skills. For example, if you are required to operate equipment or machinery, you need to be able to read organisational procedures and manufacturers' instructions to use the technology safely and correctly; plan and confirm your task with others; carry out numerical calculations specific to the task; work as part of a team; solve any problems that may arise; meet a deadline; and perhaps complete a written record or form for the work carried out.

Foundation skills are discussed in each chapter of this learner guide as part of your learning program. They are included in the content, the practice tasks and the assessment activities. Sometimes they are easy to spot, but sometimes you will need to read carefully to see where a foundation skill is included.

Following the assessment activity at the end of each chapter, you have the opportunity to record the things you did to develop foundation skills while working through the chapter by completing the form at the end of this learner guide.

Providing evidence of foundation skills

The foundation skills you develop while working through this learner guide are assessed at the same time as the specific skills and knowledge outlined in Appendix 1.

It is important to keep notes and evidence of the actions you have taken that show you have developed these foundation skills. For example, if you work in a team, comment on the things you did to develop teamwork skills. If you wrote a letter, prepared a meeting agenda or developed a plan, use this material to show your written skills. If you carried out measuring, weighing or calculating, provide the results to show your numeracy skills.

You may also keep a written, audio or visual record and examples of your work as evidence of your skills.

Use the table at the end of this learner guide to record your achievements and describe the activities you have undertaken that demonstrate how you developed foundation skills as you worked through this learner guide. Here are some examples for oral communication.

Foundation skills	The activities undertaken to develop and apply the foundation skill
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked my supervisor to clarify an instruction. Repeated the instruction to confirm I understood it. • Presented an item at a staff meeting. • Provided information to a colleague. • Gave feedback to a team member. • Accurately conveyed information to a customer. • Reported a hazard.

The following table provides a definition for each foundation skill and examples of how you can develop it as you work through this learner guide.

Foundation skill	What this skill means	How you can develop this skill
Learning	<p>Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities.</p> <p>Managing your work and seeing how well you are going. Making goals for yourself at work.</p> <p>Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out about the individual needs of children. • Use stakeholders to evaluate the program and provide feedback.

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Foundation skill	What this skill means	How you can develop this skill
Reading	<p>Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents.</p> <p>Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology.</p> <p>Interpreting key information in relevant documents.</p> <p>Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read relevant policies and procedures before implementing programs. • Read evaluations to inform future practice.
Writing	<p>Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents.</p> <p>Communicating through written letters, email and online.</p> <p>Recording progress; reporting incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write objectives for each activity or program. • Write surveys for completion by all stakeholders as part of program evaluation.
Oral communication	<p>Clarifying instructions.</p> <p>Providing information.</p> <p>Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to parents and other educators about the children's needs. • Ask children questions about how they are enjoying experiences you plan.
Numeracy	<p>Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance.</p> <p>Interpreting measurements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate survey results. • Follow a timetable or routine.
Teamwork	<p>Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend meetings to evaluate programs. • Implement program plans with other staff.
Planning and organising	<p>Planning your workload and commitments.</p> <p>Implementing tasks.</p> <p>Completing work on time.</p> <p>Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop activity timetables. • Set planning objectives.

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Foundation skill	What this skill means	How you can develop this skill
Making decisions	Understanding and applying decision-making processes. Reviewing the impact of your decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose how to adapt an activity to meet the needs of a child. • Select activities relevant to the children attending and their needs.
Problem-solving	Identifying problems. Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes. Reviewing the outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find environmentally sustainable alternatives for costly materials. • Work out how to adapt activities for children with different abilities.
Innovation and creation	Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas. Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something. Making suggestions to improve work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create experiences that engage children. • Identify ways to include children with disabilities in all activities.
Technology and digital literacy	Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely. Accessing, organising and presenting information. Using equipment correctly and safely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use computer software to design activity timetables. • Search for activity ideas on the internet.

Foundation skills

Using the following table (or similar), describe the activities you have undertaken that demonstrate how you developed and applied foundation skills as you worked through this unit. Keep copies of material you have prepared as further evidence of your skills.

Foundation skills	The activities undertaken to develop and apply the foundation skill
Learning	
Reading	
Writing	
Oral communication	
Numeracy	
Teamwork	
Planning and organising	
Making decisions	
Problem-solving	
Innovation and creation	
Technology and digital literacy	