

## CHCECE056

# Work effectively in children's education and care

I am going to  
and I know  
ride my  
bike. I  
have my  
the  
doll



Learner Guide

Updated to include  
National Quality  
Framework changes

CHCECE056

# Work effectively in children's education and care

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1



## CHCECE056 Work e actively in children's education and care, Release 1

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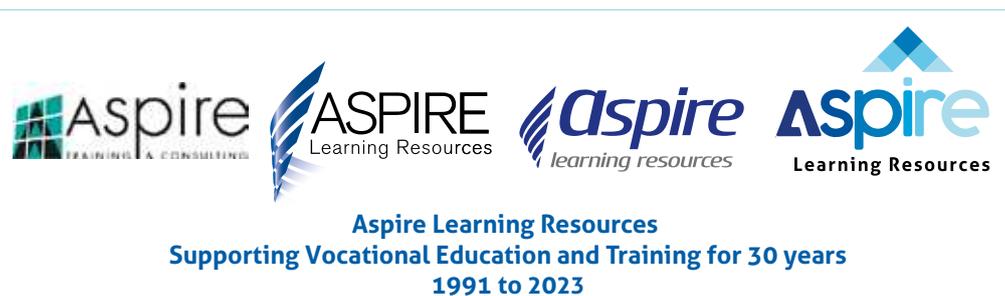
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# Contents

<b>Before you begin</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Topic 1 Working in children's education and care</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1A Sourcing information on working in children's education and care</b>	<b>2</b>
Roles in outside school hours care	3
Roles in family day care	4
Roles in education support	4
Staff handbooks	5
Position descriptions	6
Work role boundaries	7
Practice Task 1	8
<b>1B Sourcing information on educator roles</b>	<b>10</b>
ACECQA	10
Industry and professional associations	11
Peak bodies	12
Trade unions	12
Employer associations	13
Online research	14
Practice Task 2	15
Summary	16
Learning Checkpoint 1: Working in children's education and care	17
<b>Topic 2 Service requirements</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2A Requirements of the National Quality Framework</b>	<b>20</b>
Laws and regulations	21
National Quality Standard	22
National approved learning frameworks	22
Assessment and ratings process	23
Practice Task 3	25
<b>2B Service policies and procedures</b>	<b>26</b>
Policies and procedures	27
Employment requirements	27
Work role policies and procedures	29
Understanding policies and procedures	31
Practice Task 4	32
<b>2C Internal and external communication</b>	<b>34</b>
Types of communication	34
Using clear communication	35
Designated lines of communication	36
Responsibility for documentation	37

Completing documentation accurately	38
Practice Task 5	39
Summary	40
Learning Checkpoint 2: Service requirements	41
<b>Topic 3 Working collaboratively</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>3A Developing effective work practices</b>	<b>46</b>
Planning and organising daily work	47
Following procedures	49
Daily routines	51
Daily activities and experiences	52
Prioritising tasks	53
Importance of own well-being	55
Signs and symptoms of poor wellbeing	55
Self-care	56
Seek support	57
Support networks	58
Practice Task 6	59
<b>3B Seeking and sharing information</b>	<b>61</b>
Seeking information	61
Information from colleagues	62
Maintaining confidentiality	63
Practice Task 7	64
<b>3C Communicating clearly and respectfully</b>	<b>65</b>
Be courteous and polite	65
Respect individual differences	66
Forms of communication	66
Verbal communication cues	68
Non-verbal communication cues	69
Open and closed questioning	69
Active listening	70
Body language	70
Confirming understanding	71
Clear documentation	72
Responding to requests	73
Practice Task 8	74
Defusing and resolving conflict	75
Practice Task 9	77
Summary	77
Learning Checkpoint 3: Working collaboratively	78

<b>Topic 4 Develop personal professional practice</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>4A Explore theories and contemporary research</b>	<b>84</b>
Theories related to early childhood	84
Accessing research	87
Keeping up to date	87
Searching for research	87
Practice Task 10	90
<b>4B Reflect on personal values and beliefs</b>	<b>91</b>
Reflective practice	92
Reflect on personal values and beliefs	92
Ask others for feedback	93
Develop a personal professional philosophy	93
Advocating for children and the sector	94
Advocacy groups	95
Ways to advocate	95
Practice Task 11	96
Summary	97
Learning Checkpoint 4: Develop personal professional practice	<b>98</b>

## Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE056 Work effectively in children's education and care*, Release 1.

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 detailed in our mapping guide.

## How to work through this Learner Guide

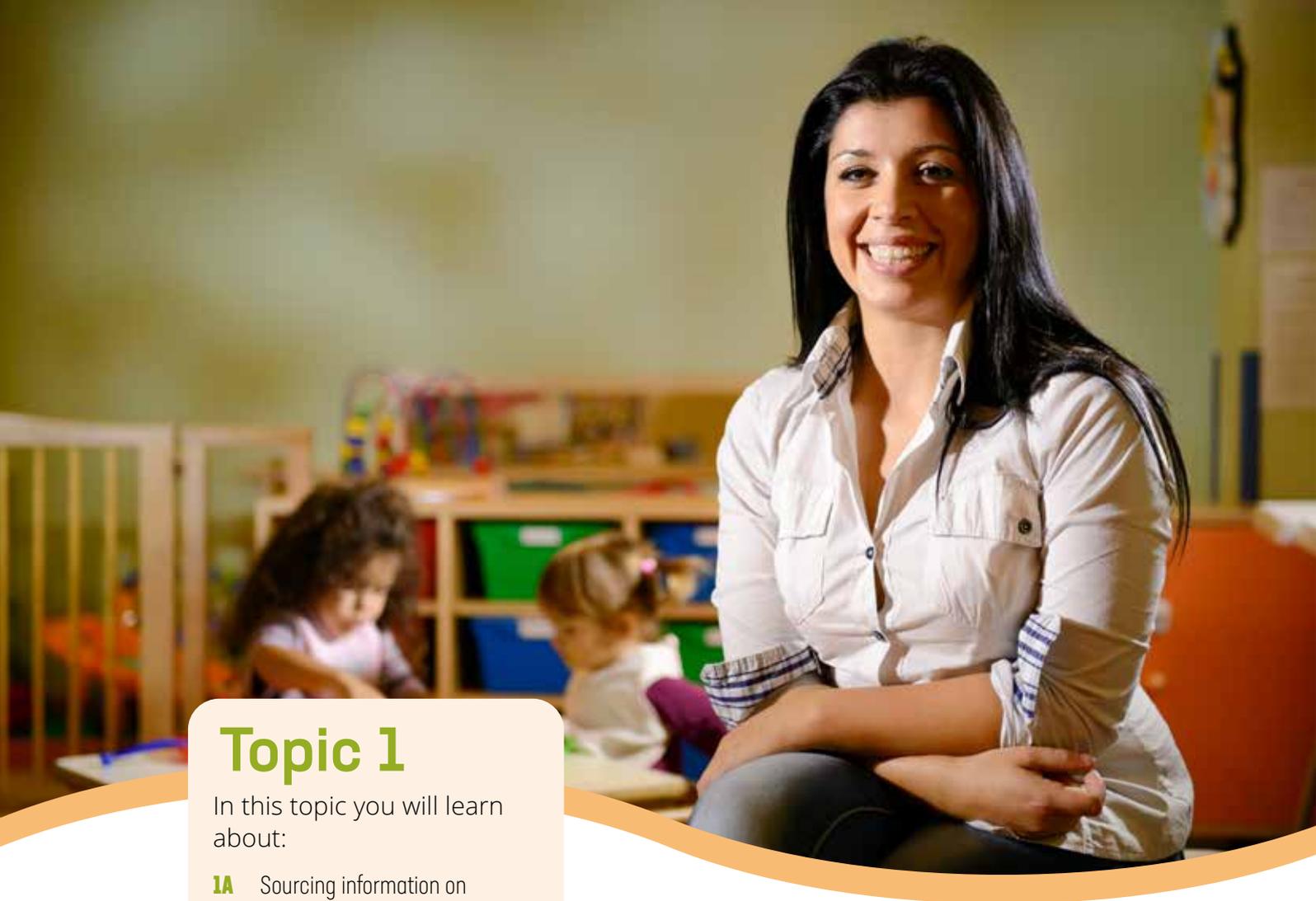
This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.</li> </ul>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.</li> </ul>
Practice Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.</li> </ul>
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.</li> </ul>
Learning Checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.</li> </ul>

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
T2	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
T2	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
T2	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
T2	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
T2	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
T2	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
T2	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>
	<b>Principles</b>
T2	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T2	Partnerships
	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
T4	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
T1-T4	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	<b>Practice</b>
	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
T2	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
	Learning environments
	Cultural responsiveness
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	4. Children are confident and involved learners
	5. Children are effective communicators



## Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A** Sourcing information on working in children's education and care
- 1B** Sourcing information on educator roles

# Working in children's education and care

*Prior to working in a children's education and care setting, do some research to make sure it is the career you want and you know what to expect.*

To collect information about education and care services and understand your role as an educator, you must be aware of:

- expectations and requirements
- ethical and professional responsibilities
- legislative and industry guidelines.

These details help you understand the responsibilities involved with educating and caring for children, as well as the standards and professional behaviour required. You also need to understand the roles and practices of other educators as well as the service's policies and procedures to support the work you do with children.

# 1A Sourcing information on working in children's education and care

*As a new educator, you need to understand the characteristics, boundaries and responsibilities that go with the role as well as the roles of others in the service.*

There are a number of different roles depending on the type of service. Here is a list of job roles and a brief description of each one. Specific job titles may vary across different organisations or services.

Role	Characteristics
<b>Owner</b>	The person who owns the business or is the franchise holder of a large service. The owner may also manage the service if they have the appropriate qualifications or employ a manager.
<b>Board of management</b>	The board of management is a group of professional and interested people who oversee the management of a community-based service. In these services the board of management is the employer.
<b>Director/manager/coordinator</b>	This person runs the service day-to-day, manages all finance and is responsible to the regulating agencies for ensuring the service meets all legislative and regulatory requirements.
<b>Approved provider</b>	The person who is identified as the holder of the licence for the service.
<b>Nominated supervisor</b>	The nominated supervisor is a qualified educator working at the service and is the responsible person when the manager is not there.
<b>Educational leader</b>	The educational leader is a qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual who is responsible for leading the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.
<b>Early childhood teacher (ECT)</b>	This is an educator with a minimum four-year teaching degree who must be part of the staff and working with the children a minimum of 60 per cent of the hours the service is open.  Each service with a licence of 25 places or more must have an ECT.
<b>Team leader/room leader</b>	The team or room leader is the educator in charge of a group of children. These children may be in a family grouping or grouped by age. The team or room leader is also responsible for managing the other educators in the room.
<b>Educator</b>	This is a Diploma or Certificate III or IV qualified staff member who is responsible for the education and care of children.

## Roles in outside school hours care

*In an outside school hours care (OSHC) service, the roles are different as many of the services are run by schools.*

The different roles may depend on the licensee or approved provider. Some of these are outlined in the following table.

Role	Characteristics
<b>Owner/manager</b>	If the service is managed by the school, this will be the school principal. If the service is run by an outside service, this will be the person who owns the business or is the franchise holder of a large service.
<b>School board/ board of management/ parents &amp; citizens association (P&amp;C)</b>	The school board or P&C is made up of parents and carers, teachers and community members. They meet regularly to contribute to decision-making, develop policies and management plans, and organise fundraising.
<b>Approved provider</b>	This is the person who is identified as the holder of the licence for the service – the school or business owner.
<b>Nominated supervisor</b>	The nominated supervisor is a qualified educator working at the service and is the responsible person when the coordinator is not there. The coordinator could also be the nominated supervisor on any licensing documentation.
<b>Coordinator</b>	The coordinator of an OSHC service is the person who runs the service day to day, manages all finance and is responsible to the regulating agencies for ensuring the service meets all legislative and regulatory requirements.
<b>Educator</b>	This is a Diploma or Certificate IV qualified staff member who is responsible for the education and care of children.

### Example

#### Matching skills to experience

Stacey applied to the Lone Bay Early Childhood Education Service for one of the jobs she had seen advertised for a room leader. She had spent the last six years completing her early childhood teaching degree part-time and had worked in an OSHC service as the coordinator while she studied.

On the day of her interview, she was able to explain to the director of Lone Bay that while coordinating the OSHC service, she had been responsible for documenting and recording children's development as well as managing staff. As the service was a school-managed OSHC, she had often met with the school principal to discuss the service.

Stacey believes that the management and coordination of the OSHC service has provided her with the experience she needs to manage staff, talk with parents and be responsible for what happens on a daily basis. This matches the skills the Lone Bay service is looking for.



## Roles in family day care

*Educators may also be employed in a family day care setting. However, the roles are quite different.*

Here are some of the roles in family day care services.

Role	Characteristics
<b>Owner/manager</b>	The person who owns the business or is the franchise holder of a large service. The owner may have a number of services in surrounding suburbs. They may manage a service if they have the appropriate qualifications or employ a manager.
<b>Approved provider</b>	The person who is identified as the holder of the licence for the service.
<b>Regional manager/ regional coordinator</b>	This is the person who has the responsibility of overseeing a number of family day care educators and must ensure that all of the educators and service premises meet the legislative and regulatory requirements.
<b>Educator</b>	A Diploma or Certificate III qualified person who is responsible for caring and educating up to seven children with no more than four children of preschool age or younger in their home.

## Roles in education support

*Education support workers generally work in either a school or a kindergarten.*

In a school the roles are different as the educator is generally working in the classroom with a teacher. This is also the case in a kindergarten, although the setting is very different. Here is a description of the staff and management roles in education support.

Role	Characteristics
<b>Person responsible</b>	If the service is in the school, this will be the school principal. If the service is a kindergarten, it may still be a school principal, or it may be managed as a community service run by a board, department of education and training (DET) or the local council – if that is the case, it would then be the kindergarten teacher.
<b>School board/ board of management/ parents &amp; citizens association (P&amp;C)</b>	The school board or P&C is made up of parents and carers, teachers and community members. They meet regularly to contribute to decision-making, developing policies and management plans as well as fundraising.

Role	Characteristics
<b>Early childhood teacher</b>	This is an educator with a minimum four-year teaching degree who manages the kindergarten and provides educational programming and care for children aged four to six years.  The teacher is also responsible for the other educators in the service and reports to either a board of management, school principal or local council management.
<b>Teacher's assistant</b>	This is a colleague who supports the teacher by preparing materials or helping in the room.
<b>Education support worker</b>	This is a Certificate III or IV qualified staff member who is responsible for supporting the teacher and children in the classroom. These children may have learning difficulties, behavioural problems or a disability.

### Example

#### Role characteristics in education support

Nina is an education support worker who has been working closely with Merri in the classroom. Merri is six and a half years old and is having difficulty with her Grade 2 reading and writing. Rob, Merri's teacher, has organised a meeting with Merri's parents to discuss her progress.

Rob and Nina meet with Merri's mother as her father can't attend. Rob discusses Merri's developmental progress over the last term and Nina is able to provide specific examples of areas Merri has improved on in her writing. Rob then outlines some of the developmental activities Nina will support Merri to do in order to further progress her reading.



## Staff handbooks

*All services and schools require basic information to be maintained and made available to staff, particularly during induction into the service.*

These help you to understand your role and the policies and procedures so the service runs legally and efficiently. Regularly check this information for updates. Here are some examples of information that will be in the handbook:

- organisation details, including the services provided and service operations and policies
- guidelines and legislation relating to government agencies and funding sources, including policies and statutory requirements
- confidentiality and privacy rules and legislation around family details and other specific data provided by family members
- network information, including which support services the organisation uses
- professional development resources and sources.

## Position descriptions

*A position description is also called a job description.*

This document is written to reflect a service's policies, procedures, philosophy, structure and objectives. It provides a clear statement about the obligations, responsibilities, boundaries and limitations of a particular role.

The position description provides you with details of the role. When applying for a position in an early childhood education and care service, it is important to detail your experience to address the essential knowledge and skills identified in the position description. Collecting evidence of the tasks you have been asked to perform during any work experience is useful for future job applications.

Once you are employed by a service, your position description will define your role in terms of:

- purpose or objective – the reason for your role
- level of responsibility – what you can and cannot do
- key areas of responsibility – what you are responsible for
- tasks that must be performed – what you must do as part of your role
- accountability and reporting arrangements – who your supervisor is and how you communicate with them
- specialist skills or knowledge required – qualifications, experience or other needs that make you particularly suited to this role.

Ensure that any decisions or actions you make are:

- appropriate to your level of responsibility
- in line with the service policies and procedures that apply to your role.

If you are unsure whether or not you are authorised to do something, always check with your supervisor first.

### Example

#### Role responsibilities

Carolyn has just been offered a position at the Wiz Kidz Early Learning Centre as an educator in the toddler room. On her first day at the centre, the director, Marcus, takes her through an induction process. As part of this process, the director hands her a packet of documents that includes the staff handbook, her superannuation forms, the list of policies Carolyn needs to read, as well as another copy of her position description. Marcus goes over each point of the role as it is described in the position description and thoroughly explains Carolyn's role, responsibilities, who her supervisor is and where she can access more information. Marcus then asks her to read the handbook as it explains a number of the policies and procedures of the service that are integral to her role.



# Work role boundaries

*Boundaries involve setting behavioural limits or requirements.*

Boundaries are guidelines, rules or limits that identify reasonable, safe ways for people to behave. They establish acceptable workplace behaviour and provide information on how you can communicate and work with others. Boundaries help you and your colleagues to understand your individual roles and responsibilities.

You will find these boundaries outlined in several documents, such as your position description and the policies and procedures of the service. You can also discuss boundaries with your supervisor who will help you understand what they are and why they are important; for example, what information can be shared with parents.

To maintain professional work role boundaries, you need to be aware of how you speak and work with others and what is and is not appropriate to say or do in certain situations.

## **Work role boundaries are about:**

- being professional
  - being friendly, but not overly friendly
  - maintaining confidentiality
  - respecting differences of opinion
  - ensuring parents also understand what the boundaries are.
-



## Practice Task 1

1. Draw a line to match each of the different education and care roles to the correct description.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Room leader/team leader</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* This is a Diploma or Certificate III or IV qualified staff member who is responsible for the education and care of children.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Education support worker</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* This is a colleague who supports the teacher by preparing materials or helping in the room.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Educational leader</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* This is a qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual who has the responsibility to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.</li> </ul>                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Early childhood teacher</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The person who owns the business or is the franchise holder of a large brand service.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Owner/manager</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* This is a Certificate III or IV qualified staff member who is responsible for supporting the teacher and children in the classroom. These children may have learning difficulties, behavioural problems or a disability.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Educator</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* This is an educator with a minimum four-year teaching degree who manages the kindergarten and provides educational programming and care for children aged four to six years.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Teacher's assistant</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* This is the educator in charge of a group of children. They are also responsible for managing the other educators in the room.</li> </ul>   |

2. Which of the following statements about information in staff handbooks are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Includes organisation details, such as the services provided and service operations and policies.                           | * Yes | * No |
| b. Includes guidelines and legislation for government agencies that deal with environmental issues.                            | * Yes | * No |
| c. Details family contact information and other specific data provided by family members.                                      | * Yes | * No |
| d. Lists network information such as support services the organisation uses.   | * Yes | * No |
| e. Lists professional development activities staff must undertake.   | * Yes | * No |
| f. Includes information on how to access employer and professional associations as well as trade unions related to employment. | * Yes | * No |

3. Where could you find information about your role, responsibilities and boundaries? Select all that apply.

- Position description
- Policies and procedures
- Staff handbook
- Speaking with the supervisor
- Speaking with families

# 1B Sourcing information on educator roles

*Reputable sources are ones that you can trust to provide accurate information.*

To ensure you are getting the most up-to-date and factual information about working in an education and care setting, you need to research using reputable sources.

These are recognised and respected bodies or individuals with high standing. Textbooks and study materials are useful, as well as fact sheets from specialists. If you use information from the internet, you should use a government-based website or one that is linked to a reputable source.

For current information about working with children in a school setting as an education support worker, it is best to access your state department of education website, which outlines local requirements, information and legislation.



Make sure you refer to reputable sources of information, such as the ACECQA website.

## ACECQA

*Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) provides the latest information on trends, services and legislation for education and care services.*

ACECQA has the most reliable and appropriate online information about current trends in the education and care industry. On its website ([aspirelr.link/acecqa](https://aspirelr.link/acecqa)) you will find 'News', useful links and information sheets for educators, service providers and families. This helps you find current information for working in the early childhood sector and working with children in after school hours care.

ACECQA provides specific details and links regarding:

- qualifications required for working with children in education and care settings
- the National Quality Framework (NQF) and National Quality Standard (NQS), both of which are required to be met by educators and services
- the approved learning frameworks – *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOF)
- the assessment and ratings process for services.

Here are two examples of information ACECQA provides for educators and education and care services.

### ACECQA newsletter

The ACECQA newsletter provides best-practice principles and details emerging trends. It links to components of the NQF and other relevant information sources. Industry statistics relating to NQS achievements are regularly updated.

The ACECQA newsletter is available through subscription by email or at the ACECQA website: [aspirelr.link/acecqa-newsletters](https://aspirelr.link/acecqa-newsletters).

### ACECQA National Education Leader

ACECQA has created the role of National Education Leader (NEL) to support all education and care services. The role includes sharing topics of interest and putting forward best-practice examples and ideas that support educators to develop high-quality skills.

The NEL adds topics of interest to the ACECQA newsletter. All NEL contributions can be found here: [aspirelr.link/nel](https://aspirelr.link/nel)

## Industry and professional associations

*Industry and professional associations provide information for educators about their role in working with children.*

The associations are generally about specific areas of interest in the sector and provide additional resources.

Some of these associations are:

- Child Family Community Australia (CFCA): [aspirelr.link/cfca](https://aspirelr.link/cfca) Membership support, e.g. Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA): [aspirelr.link/ccsa](https://aspirelr.link/ccsa)
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA): [aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia](https://aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia) Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) – provides a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families through a national body: [aspirelr.link/snaicc](https://aspirelr.link/snaicc)
- Early Childhood Resource Hub: [aspirelr.link/ecrh](https://aspirelr.link/ecrh)
- *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia*: [aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf](https://aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf)
- Be You (helps children experiencing mental health difficulties): [aspirelr.link/be-you](https://aspirelr.link/be-you)
- National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN): [aspirelr.link/napcan](https://aspirelr.link/napcan)
- Child Wise Community of Practice: [aspirelr.link/childwise](https://aspirelr.link/childwise)
- Care for Kids: [aspirelr.link/care-for-kids](https://aspirelr.link/care-for-kids)

### Example

#### Industry and professional associations

As part of Seth's induction pack for the Wiz Kidz Early Learning Centre, he is given documents with information regarding his employment and role. This pack includes a flyer or pamphlet for a number of associations and organisations he could join, all of which provide useful resources for researching his responsibilities and the latest industry information.

## Peak bodies

*Industry peak bodies maintain up-to-date information on best practice, industry trends, employment and issues.*

Peak bodies that represent a particular industry will obtain information that educators need to know about and publicise it to their members. They may encourage an early response to changes within the sector. They offer support and information to their members in relation to how these trends may affect the workplace, children and families.

The following table provides some examples of peak bodies in early childhood education and care.

Peak body and government organisations	Website
Early Childhood Australia (ECA)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia">aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia</a>
National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/noshsa">aspirelr.link/noshsa</a>
Community Child Care	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/cc-c-inc">aspirelr.link/cc-c-inc</a>
Family Day Care Australia	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/family-day-care">aspirelr.link/family-day-care</a>
Department of Education	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/department-of-education">aspirelr.link/department-of-education</a>
Gowrie Australia	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/gowrie-vic">aspirelr.link/gowrie-vic</a>

### Example

#### Industry peak bodies

While Maria was studying to become an educator, she researched many different organisations that provided her with the knowledge she was seeking. One that she found very useful was her state Gowrie website. It provides resources on the NQF and NQS as well as articles on current issues affecting the industry. Once she had completed her study and was employed in the industry, she was able to access the additional training that Gowrie provides on topics of interest.



## Trade unions

*Your employment is not affected by whether or not you belong to a trade union.*

In Australia, you have a choice of whether to join a union and to choose the union that suits you best. A trade union is an organised association of workers in a trade, group of trades or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests.

The Fair Work Ombudsman is a government website that provides help and support for both employees and employers about responsibilities, roles, employment support associations and unions. You can find this at: [aspirelr.link/unions-and-employer-associations](https://aspirelr.link/unions-and-employer-associations).

The following is a list of trade unions that support the education and care sector.

Trade union	Website
Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/actu">aspirelr.link/actu</a>
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/acci">aspirelr.link/acci</a>
Australian Industry Group (AI Group)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/aigroup">aspirelr.link/aigroup</a>
The Australian Workers' Union (AWU)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/awu">aspirelr.link/awu</a>
United Voice	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/united-voice">aspirelr.link/united-voice</a>
Australian Education Union (AEU)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/aeu">aspirelr.link/aeu</a>
Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ieu">aspirelr.link/ieu</a>

## Employer associations

*Employer associations are generally non-profit organisations that advocate and provide support for a group of member employers.*

Employer associations can be organised around location, size of the company or type of organisation. The following provides a list of employer associations relevant to the child education and care industry.

Employer association	Website
Community Management Solutions (CMS)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/cms">aspirelr.link/cms</a>
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/acci">aspirelr.link/acci</a>
Australian Industry Group (AI Group)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/aigroup">aspirelr.link/aigroup</a>
Business Council of Australia	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/bca">aspirelr.link/bca</a>
Australian Community Workers Association (ACWA)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/acwa">aspirelr.link/acwa</a>
Australian Childhood Foundation	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/australian-childhood-foundation">aspirelr.link/australian-childhood-foundation</a>
Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/cela">aspirelr.link/cela</a>
Australian Childcare Alliance	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/australian-child-care-alliance">aspirelr.link/australian-child-care-alliance</a>
KU (formerly the Kindergarten Union)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ku">aspirelr.link/ku</a>

## Example

### Employer associations

Ivan is the owner and manager of a 90-place early childcare service. He has owned this service for three years and has often spoken to a consultant at Community Management Solutions to help him with industrial information and reviewing some of the more complex policies regarding staff conditions and the rights of his workers. Occasionally he speaks to a consultant from KU as he also owns a registered and licensed kindergarten.



## Online research

*You may find out about developments in the industry or about particular areas of interest through research.*

You can search the term 'education and care industry developments' to find new information, or search using the particular topic you are seeking information on, such as 'natural resources in early learning'. You might also ask others in your team or your supervisor about online networks they use to keep up to date on information.

Your online networks are a good way to hear about others' ideas and to share knowledge. Given that there are no geographical boundaries for participants online, you can use the internet to find information and examples from professionals in other states, territories and countries, which will provide you with a range of different ideas and perspectives.

Remember that you must not trust everything you read online, so use your networks to find out more about trends, gain opinions and clarify issues. The most reliable sources are government or reputable organisations set up to provide information.

However, you may find some of the following online networks useful and interesting.

Network	Focus	Website
LinkedIn	Developing a professional status and networking	aspirelr.link/linkedin
Educators engaging with Educators	Support and networking for all educators	aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook (Facebook group)

Network	Focus	Website
<b>Educational Leaders network and support group</b>	Support and networking for all educators	aspirelr.link/educational-leaders-network (closed Facebook group – ask to join)
<b>Early Childhood Teachers</b>	Support and networking for ECT educators	aspirelr.link/early-childhood-teachers-network (closed Facebook group – ask to join)

**Example**  
**Online sources**

Some of Despina’s colleagues joke that she is ‘forever on her phone’ when she is in the staff room. She uses her breaks to regularly check her Facebook educator networking links so that she can find out the latest information about what is happening in early learning services in other parts of Australia.



 **Practice Task 2**

1. Which of the following statements about sourcing current professional information are correct? Select yes or no for each one.
  - a. ACECQA provides a resource page with helpful links. \* Yes      \* No
  - b. Information posted on Facebook network pages is usually based on fact and research. \* Yes      \* No
  - c. Peak bodies maintain up-to-date information on best practice and industry trends. \* Yes      \* No
  - d. Everyone working in the early childhood industry must join a trade union. \* Yes      \* No
  - e. Reputable sources of information are ones that you can trust to provide you with accurate information. \* Yes      \* No
  - f. Employer associations advocate for and provide support to employers who want to make a profit. \* Yes      \* No

## Summary

- Before you start working in a children's education and care setting, you should research to make sure you have the most up-to-date information about the industry.
- Different job role names are used for different service types.
- Staff handbooks and service policies and procedures are important documents you need to follow so the service runs legally and efficiently.
- ACECQA has the most reliable and appropriate information about current trends in the child education and care industry.
- Professional associations and peak bodies support members with current trends, research and best-practice information.
- Trade unions are an organised association of workers in a trade or profession, formed to protect and further workers' rights and interests.
- Employer associations are generally non-profit organisations that advocate for a group of member employers.

# Learning Checkpoint 1

## Working in children's education and care

1. Cameron is an educator who gathers information about his employment, role and responsibilities. Read each scenario and select yes or no for each one.
  - a. Cameron is given a pack of information at his induction. The director discusses his role and who he would be working with. She asks Cameron to read the policies and procedures in the staff handbook to familiarise himself with how the service operates. Cameron decides he'd rather talk to the staff about this, so doesn't bother to read the procedures. Is this the right thing to do?
 \* Yes      \* No
  - b. To confirm his understanding of the framework and standards that apply to his service, Cameron accesses the ACECQA website and downloads the NQF and NQS as well as the EYLF and MTOP. Are these all reputable and valid sources of information?
 \* Yes      \* No
  - c. Cameron observes two children having a tea party and isn't sure of the learning that he has observed. He consults with his team leader to gain a better insight on the development and learning of the children involved. Is this the right thing to do?
 \* Yes      \* No
  - d. Cameron has been asked to discuss the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics at the next staff meeting. He asks his colleagues for help and she directs him to the ECA website. From there he is able to download the document. Is this a reputable and valid source of information?
 \* Yes      \* No
  - e. One of Cameron's senior colleagues has suggested he join her union. Cameron decides to join the union because otherwise his job will be at risk. Is this correct?
 \* Yes      \* No
  - f. Cameron wants to check that his pay is correct. He checks the award with the Fair Work Ombudsman, then follows the links to view the award and payment schedule. Is this a reputable and valid source of information?
 \* Yes      \* No

2. Which of the following statements regarding the roles and responsibilities of educators are correct? Select all that apply.

- The coordinator of an out of school hours care service is responsible for all of the children in the service.
- The education support person in a classroom is responsible for reporting to the parents.
- The main responsibility of the manager of a service is to understand the job role boundaries of educators.
- All teachers and education support workers must join the Independent Education Union of Australia.
- Out of school hours care workers are referred to as educators.
- Educators in early childhood must have a LinkedIn profile to connect with other people in the industry.

3. Draw a line to match each source of information to the type of information it can provide on education and care sector roles, responsibilities and boundaries.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Peak bodies</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Provides access to the latest information on trends, services and legislation, including the NQF and NQS.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Provide information about different aspects to keep in mind when working with children.</li> </ul>                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Industry and sector associations</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Provides access to general information about developments in the industry or areas of interest.</li> </ul>           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Online research</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Provide up-to-date information on best practice, industry trends, employment and issues.</li> </ul>                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Employer associations</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Non-profit organisations that advocate and provide support for a group of member employers.</li> </ul>               |



## Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A** Requirements of the National Quality Framework
- 2B** Service policies and procedures
- 2C** Internal and external communication

# Service requirements

*Understanding your role will help you learn how to support the education and care of children, and communicate with colleagues, families and the community.*

Policies and procedures are important documents that underpin every aspect of a service. They are based on frameworks, standards and legislation. Policies and procedures are designed to ensure the requirements necessary for the safety, health, care and education of children and staff are considered and acted on.

## 2A Requirements of the National Quality Framework

*Education and care services are guided by the National Quality Framework (NQF).*

The NQF is a system used across Australia to help education and care services work towards best practice. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) oversees the implementation of the NQF. ACECQA also educates and informs the community, the education and care industry and government about current research and best practice across Australia.

There are many parts to the NQF, which can become confusing. Take time to read and understand each part and what role each one plays.

The NQF aims to improve the quality of education and care services. This framework applies to:

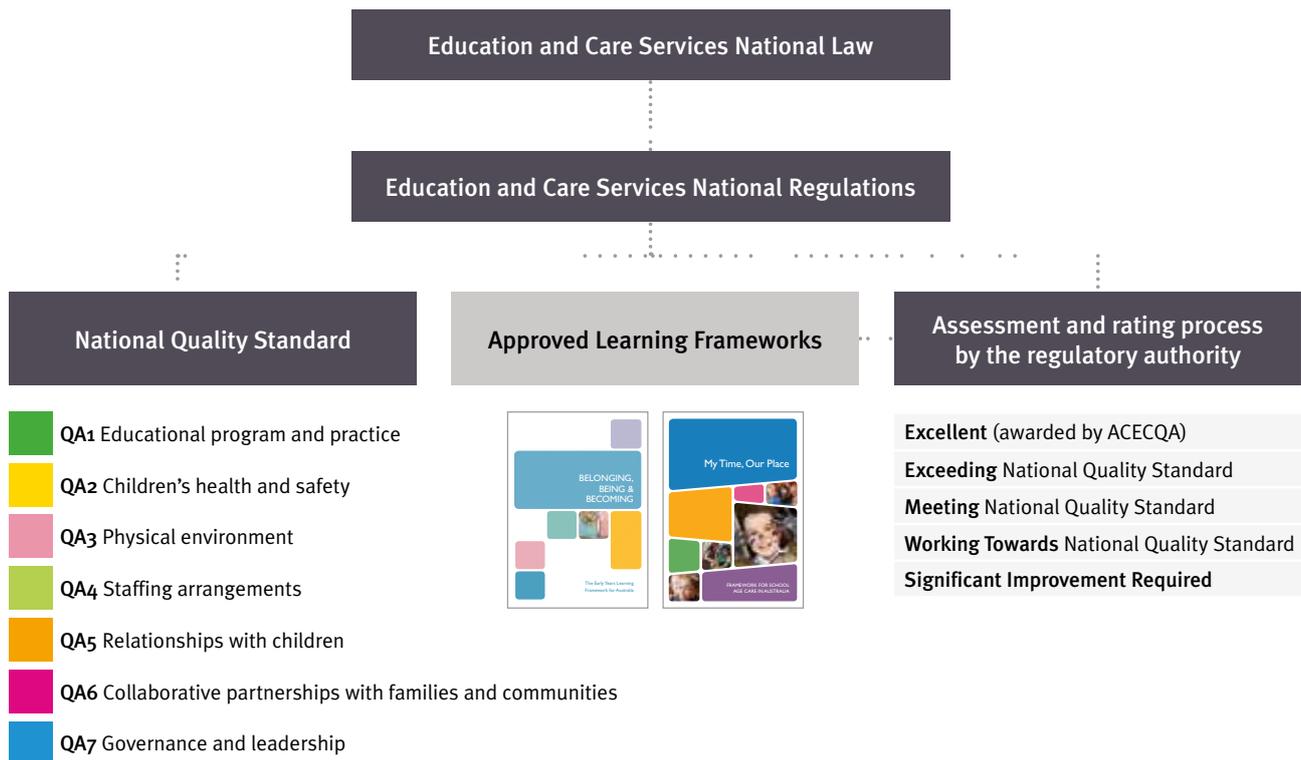
- long day care
- family day care
- preschool/kindergarten
- outside school hours care (OSHC).

The NQF incorporates licensing, regulations and quality assurance into a single system operating Australia-wide. It includes:

- Education and Care Services National Law
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Quality Standard (NQS)
- assessment and quality ratings process
- approved learning frameworks.

The following table provides an outline of how the NQF is broken down.

## The National Quality Framework



Source: ACECQA, *The Guide to the National Quality Framework*, [acecqa.gov.au](http://acecqa.gov.au)

## Laws and regulations

*The NQF follows the Education and Care Services National Regulations, which reflects the Education and Care Services National Law.*

Laws and regulations outline requirements that education and care services must follow. The declared approved learning frameworks are identified within the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

As an educator, you need to understand a range of other guidelines that impact on the service and underpin best practice according to your state or territory. This information includes other relevant legislation, such as:

- child protection and guardianship legislation
- privacy legislation
- health and safety legislation
- discrimination and harassment legislation
- United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is a legally binding international agreement.

### Regulations need to be put into practice as part of your daily work to:

- ensure your legal safety
- understand your legal obligations
- contribute to policy and procedure development
- support others to understand their work roles
- accept responsibility for your own actions
- provide correct and clear information to family members and other stakeholders.

## National Quality Standard

*The National Quality Standard (NQS) is the measurement system for education and care services.*

It is part of the NQF and its role is to provide services with a clear set of guidelines showing how the service is to meet an expected level of quality.

The NQS includes seven quality areas relating to different areas of education and care:

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

In general terms, the NQS is broken down in the following ways:

- Quality areas are very broad areas that identify what services must consider.
- Standards break the quality areas down into particular areas that are important.
- Elements tell you exactly what needs to be done in each standard to meet the quality level required.

You can access the NQS on the ACECQA website: [aspirelr.link/national-quality-standard](https://aspirelr.link/national-quality-standard). This includes detailed information about each quality area, as well as an A4 poster that provides a useful overview.

To find out what services and educators need to do to meet the NQS, access the *Guide to the National Quality Framework* at [aspirelr.link/nqf-guide](https://aspirelr.link/nqf-guide). This is a very detailed document that explains exactly what you need to do, consider and prepare for. This guide also links regulations and laws to each standard.

## Approved learning frameworks

*You must follow the approved learning framework that applies to your service.*

The Education and Care Services National Regulations outline the following as approved learning frameworks.

Approved learning framework	Common name	Jurisdiction (where it can be used)	Child's age
<i>Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia</i>	EYLF	Australia-wide	Birth to five years
<i>My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia</i>	MTOP	Australia-wide	School age (five to 12 years)
<i>Curriculum framework for kindergarten to year 12 education in Western Australia</i>	Kindergarten curriculum guidelines	Western Australia	Kindergarten to year 12
<i>Victorian early years learning and development framework</i>	VEYLDF	Victoria	Birth to eight years

All educators have access to two approved learning frameworks (EYLF and MTOP). The service will identify the one that is most relevant to you based on the age of children you work with.

## Assessment and ratings process

*A key focus of the NQF is to promote continuous quality improvement of early childhood education and care services through the national quality assessment and ratings process.*

In general, services are assessed and rated every three to five years. However, the occurrence of assessment visits is based on the principle of 'earned autonomy'. This means that the higher a service's rating, the less often the service will be assessed.

The assessment and ratings process has four steps, outlined in the following table.

### Assessment and ratings process

- 1 Self-assessment and reflection**  
 Services conduct a reflective self-assessment of their current practices against the NQS and the regulatory standards. It critically reflects on the service's philosophy, practices, policies and procedures, and how these relate to each of the quality areas.
- 2 Improvement planning**  
 Services then need to identify their strengths and where quality improvements can be made. They will use their self-assessment as a basis and determine how improvements can be implemented. This is all documented in a quality improvement plan (QIP), which makes up part of the ongoing processes of the service.

3

### Assessment and ratings visit

Depending on the size of your service, the ACECQA auditor may spend between one to four days at the service observing the day-to-day activities. They will observe the staff interacting with children and parents, and the way in which the education and care programs are delivered. They then rate the service using each of the standards of the NQS.

The auditor will then identify what rating the service has for each of the seven quality areas, as well as an overall rating. They will rate the service within the following six levels:

1. Excellent rating (the criteria for this rating level is determined by ACECQA)
2. Exceeding the NQS
3. Meeting the NQS
4. Working towards the NQS
5. Significant improvement required
6. Provisional – not yet assessed (services that have not yet been assessed and rated)

To meet the criteria of the NQS, services must meet all elements within a standard and all standards within each quality area.

4

### Notice of ratings

The service is required to display the notice of ratings, and the ratings of services are published on the ACECQA and My Child websites.

#### Example

##### Preparing for an assessment and ratings visit

Bettina's early learning and kindergarten service has been operating for over 20 years and has gained a good reputation for being a quality education and care service. Bettina receives the notice from ACECQA that their assessment and ratings visit will happen in three months. At the next management meeting, she advises the board, made up of parents and local community members, that they need to start preparing for the visit.



The following actions are agreed on:

- The board will send out a survey to all parents asking for their views about the care and education their children receive at the service.
- Bettina will tell all the staff about the assessment and ratings visit at the next staff meeting.
- Each of the room leaders will meet with their teams to reflect on their practices and identify any areas for improvement. They will use this to develop a room QIP.
- At the next staff meeting, all staff will review the room QIPs and use these to create a service QIP.
- Prior to the visit, staff will check to make sure they have completed all of the required documentation.

The staff are a little nervous about the upcoming visit, but they are not worried about their rating as the service has been operating well and received an 'Exceeding the NQS' rating last time a visit took place.



## Practice Task 3

1. Draw a line to match the requirements for children at different services to the relevant approved learning framework.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| * Kindergarten to year 12 students in Western Australia      | * <i>My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia</i> (MTOF)  |
| * Infants and children from birth to five years in Australia | * <i>Curriculum framework for kindergarten to year 12 education in Western Australia</i> (Kindergarten curriculum guidelines) |
| * Infants and children from birth to eight years in Victoria | * <i>Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia</i> (EYLF)                               |
| * School aged children in Australia                          | * <i>Victorian early years learning and development framework</i> (VEYLDF)  |

2. Which of the following are aspects of the NQF? Select all that apply.

- Education and Care Services National Law
- National Quality Standard (NQS)
- Approved learning framework
- National Quality Systems (NQS)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations

3. Number the assessment and ratings process in the correct order from 1 to 4.

- Publication of ratings
- Self-assessment and reflection
- Assessment rating visit
- Improvement planning

## 2B Service policies and procedures

*The policies and procedures of a service providing care to children must reflect the NQF.*

Service policies and procedures are in place to make sure that the education and care laws, regulations, standards and approved learning frameworks are followed. Policies outline requirements, whereas procedures outline how the policy is to be implemented. Your service is likely to have a range of policies that indicate what needs to be done to meet the requirements of the NQF.



Be aware of the policies and procedures used in your service.

### Examples of service policies and procedures

- Nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements
- Sun protection policy
- Water safety policy
- The administration of first aid
- Sleep and rest for children
- Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies
- Dealing with infectious diseases
- Dealing with medical conditions in children
- Emergency and evacuation policy
- Drop-off and pick-up policy
- Excursion policy
- Providing a child safe environment
- Staffing policy
- Interactions with children
- Enrolment and orientation policy
- Governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records
- The acceptance and refusal of authorisations
- Payment of fees
- Dealing with complaints

Most service policies link to a principle or practice of an approved learning framework, such as in the following examples.

EYLF principle/practice	Service policy
Principle: Secure respectful and reciprocal relationships	Providing a child safe environment
Principle: Partnerships	Enrolment and orientation
Practice: Responsiveness to children	Interactions with children

## Policies and procedures

*A policy is a guiding standard that the service believes in and uses as a basis for all of its actions.*

A procedure is a series of steps that need to be followed regularly and consistently to achieve what is set out in the policies.

As well as the policies that are required as part of the regulations, many procedures outline routine tasks and actions you need to follow as part of your job.

Policies and procedures must be made available to all of the parents that use the service. They explain to families what they should expect from the service and staff, and are usually reproduced in a handbook or information provided to families.

## Employment requirements

*All Australian businesses are required by law to meet a certain standard for the work conditions they provide to their employees.*

Your service will have policies and procedures that relate specifically to this area. The following table gives you some examples of the policies and procedures that relate to recruitment and employment.

Policy area	Description	Related policies and procedures
<b>Recruitment</b>	Where, when and how a position may be advertised to fill a vacant role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Approval to recruit</li> <li>➤ Advertising of vacant positions</li> <li>➤ Minimum qualifications</li> <li>➤ Award wages and payment of staff</li> <li>➤ Employee leave and holiday process</li> <li>➤ Interview process</li> <li>➤ Appointing and contracting staff</li> </ul>
<b>Induction</b>	The way in which each new employee is welcomed and shown what the responsibilities of their role are in the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Induction process</li> <li>➤ Shadow shifts</li> <li>➤ Team leader role of induction</li> <li>➤ Documentation provided to staff on employment</li> <li>➤ Award wages and payment of staff</li> <li>➤ Employee leave and holiday process</li> <li>➤ Role responsibilities</li> <li>➤ Internal communication</li> <li>➤ Teamwork</li> </ul>
<b>Position descriptions</b>	Outlines all of the points that must be included in the position description to ensure the staff member understands their role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Organisational chart</li> <li>➤ Role responsibilities</li> <li>➤ Reporting</li> <li>➤ Internal communication</li> <li>➤ Teamwork</li> <li>➤ Minimum qualifications</li> </ul>

Policy area	Description	Related policies and procedures
<b>Employment conditions</b>	What conditions the service will provide for the employee and what the employee should expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Award wages and payment of staff</li> <li>➤ Employee leave and holiday process</li> <li>➤ Role responsibilities</li> <li>➤ Study leave policy</li> <li>➤ Hours of employment and breaks</li> <li>➤ Grievance procedures</li> <li>➤ Association with a trade union</li> </ul>
<b>Grievance</b>	How an internal grievance or complaint of a staff member or parent would be handled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Grievance procedure</li> <li>➤ Internal communication</li> <li>➤ Communication policy</li> <li>➤ Conflict resolution</li> </ul>
<b>Personal presentation</b>	How the staff are expected to look and behave while at work or in the service uniform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Personal hygiene</li> <li>➤ Wearing of jewellery</li> <li>➤ Staff uniform policy</li> <li>➤ Standards of presentation</li> <li>➤ Professional conduct</li> <li>➤ Wearing of uniform outside the service</li> <li>➤ SunSmart policy</li> </ul>

### Example

#### Induction policy and procedure

It is Samuel's first day of work as an educator in the Sunny Side Learning Centre. On entering the service, he announces himself to the receptionist who then alerts the manager. The manager welcomes him to the service and takes him on a tour of the rooms. They end up in the manager's office, where she has prepared a stack of documents for them to go through as part of his induction. These include a staff handbook and forms that make sure he is paid the correct amount. It also includes his job description and a number of policies relating to the operation of the service and the responsibilities of his role.



This takes most of the morning. When they finish, the manager takes him to the staffroom, introduces him to the other staff and explains his activities for the afternoon. The team leader collects him after lunch to go through the specific information in the procedures for Samuel to carry out his role as an educator.

## Work role policies and procedures

*Many policies and procedures relate directly to your role and outline how you need to perform your duties.*

Your position description outlines your role and responsibilities, but policies and procedures provide a more comprehensive description of how you need to carry out your role and the expectations from your employer.

Policies and procedures that relate to your work role will reflect the NQF and NQS as well as the frameworks of the EYLF or MTOP. Procedures are more service-specific and based on the particular needs and practices valued by the service where you are employed.

Policy area	Description/ expectations	Related policies and procedures
<b>Health and safety</b>	Staff must minimise the risk of illness and accidents to themselves and others in the service, particularly the children in their care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hand-washing procedure</li> <li>➤ Toileting procedure</li> <li>➤ Nappy-changing procedure</li> <li>➤ Medication policy</li> <li>➤ Illness and accident reporting</li> <li>➤ Disinfection and cleaning of equipment</li> <li>➤ Placement of equipment</li> <li>➤ Food preparation</li> <li>➤ Children's bedding and sleep</li> <li>➤ Outdoor sandpit maintenance</li> <li>➤ Equipment maintenance</li> <li>➤ Occupational health and safety</li> </ul>
<b>Physical environment</b>	By ensuring the safety of the physical environment, the service and staff uphold the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Placement of soft-fall material</li> <li>➤ Height of climbing equipment</li> <li>➤ Appropriate garden flora</li> <li>➤ Pets in the service</li> <li>➤ Acceptable risk</li> <li>➤ Disinfection and cleaning of equipment</li> <li>➤ Placement of equipment</li> <li>➤ Outdoor sandpit maintenance</li> <li>➤ Equipment maintenance</li> <li>➤ Children's bedding and sleep</li> <li>➤ Supervision</li> </ul>

Policy area	Description/ expectations	Related policies and procedures
<b>Education program and practice</b>	The educational beliefs and theory that the service follow to provide a sound learning environment for the children in their care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Philosophy</li> <li>➤ Values and beliefs</li> <li>➤ Developmentally appropriate experiences</li> <li>➤ Programming</li> <li>➤ Staffing policy</li> <li>➤ Communication with children</li> <li>➤ Communication with families</li> <li>➤ Recording of developmental progress</li> <li>➤ Excursions and incursions</li> <li>➤ Supervision</li> <li>➤ Sunsmart policy</li> <li>➤ Inclusion policy</li> <li>➤ Cultural safety</li> <li>➤ Sleep and rest</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships with children</b>	The way in which the staff will interact with the children, showing respect and collaborative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Child agency</li> <li>➤ Cultural safety</li> <li>➤ Communication with families and community</li> <li>➤ Child protection policy</li> <li>➤ Child safe standards</li> <li>➤ Behaviour guidance</li> <li>➤ Mindfulness</li> <li>➤ Understanding children's behaviour</li> <li>➤ Challenging behaviours</li> <li>➤ Inclusion policy</li> </ul>
<b>Collaboration with families and community</b>	The service and staff value the contribution and collaboration of the people around the children, and show respect for differences and the knowledge the parent has as the primary educator and caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Child agency</li> <li>➤ Cultural safety</li> <li>➤ Parent and guardian participation</li> <li>➤ Communication with children</li> <li>➤ Communication with families and community</li> <li>➤ Relationships with children</li> <li>➤ Child safe standards</li> <li>➤ Management of the service</li> <li>➤ Excursions and incursions</li> </ul>

**Example****Collaboration with families**

Marissa is an educator who recently had three new children enter her outside school hours care service. To understand what the children enjoy, she checks their enrolment forms and speaks with each child, asking questions about their likes and dislikes.

To understand the expectations of families, she sets up a meeting with each family at the time of enrolment to discuss their expectations regarding activities and routines. Once she has this information, she is able to arrange activities to meet the individual interests of the children.



## Understanding policies and procedures

*Speak with and seek advice from your supervisor about ways to comply with the service procedures of your service.*

They will be able to explain any areas you may be unfamiliar with and what your responsibilities are regarding the procedures. Your supervisor can demonstrate procedures that relate to routines as they describe your work role in the room.

Along with advice from your supervisor, your work with other staff will ensure a healthy and safe workplace for both staff and children. Always follow the service policies and procedures because they are developed to encourage:

- positive communication and behaviour guidance strategies between staff and children
- care and protection of all children
- treating children and their families with respect and understanding
- professional development where you keep up to date with current child and family issues, including legal and ethical issues.

As the supervisor explains the process and procedure, they will also be providing you with procedural and routine information. For example, in relation to mealtimes, this may apply to:

- individual needs of each child regarding choice of meal, time and quantity (including progressive meals)
- supervising and engaging children at mealtimes, including promoting discussion of nutritious and healthy foods
- how, what and when to record details of the child's meal
- the hygiene routine for cleaning tables and food preparation areas before and after meals
- the hygiene routine of the children regarding toileting and washing hands before and after the meals.



## Practice Task 4

1. Draw a line to match each policy area relating to employment conditions to its description.

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| * Position descriptions | * Where, when and how a position may be advertised to fill a vacant role  |
| * Grievance             | * The way in which each new employee is welcomed and shown what the responsibilities of their role are in the service |
| * Personal presentation | * An outline of the skills and knowledge required to perform a role   |
| * Recruitment           | * The environment and conditions the service will provide for the employee and what the employee should expect        |
| * Induction             | * An outline of the steps and actions to take when a complaint is made  |
| * Employment conditions | * Expectations of uniform and personal grooming while at work   |

2. Which of the following procedures relate to a service policy on educational program and practice? Select all that apply.

- The service philosophy
- The values and beliefs of the service
- Morals and ethics that staff must follow
- Developmentally appropriate experiences for children
- Program development and implementation

### 3. Select yes or no for each of the following.

- a. Your supervisor can provide you with advice and information on service requirements. \* Yes \* No
- b. Service policies and procedures reflect the NQF. \* Yes \* No
- c. Collaboration with families occurs all the time and a service policy on this topic is usually not required. \* Yes \* No
- d. Services are required to provide you with access to policies and procedures that relate to your role and how you must perform your duties. \* Yes \* No

## 2C Internal and external communication

*There are many ways you can communicate with people both within and outside of your service.*

Internal communication may involve email, the intranet or printed newsletters. External communication may happen through social media, or via the service's website or email distribution lists.

### Types of communication

*The type of communication you use will depend on the context and reason for the communication.*

When you communicate on behalf of your workplace, you are representing the service, so policies and procedures must be followed.

Below are examples of different communication methods you may use with different groups.

#### Communicating with the team

- Staff meeting agendas and minutes
- Announcements via newsletter, email or memo
- Position descriptions
- Recruitment and human resources documentation
- Recording incidents and complaints

#### Communicating with management

- Reports of the activities of the program
- Contribution to strategic plans
- Written communication that relates to external agencies
- Passing on requests for information about the service
- Minutes and actions of meetings

#### Communicating with families

- Letters or emails to families
- Developmental assessments or progress notes about their child
- Education and care plans and reviews
- Medication records
- Incident reports
- Communication books

#### Communicating with the community

- Planning excursions or incursions
- Letters to referring practitioners (e.g. speech therapists)
- Progress notes for medical authorities
- Assessments and reports to child safe agencies and government departments
- Incident reports

In some cases, you may even communicate to people outside the service in order to promote the service. This may be done through contributions to publications owned or produced by the service, such as brochures and websites.

### Example

#### Advising a parent of an incident

Cerise, an educator, witnessed Stefan trip over one of the large boulders that surround the sandpit. He wasn't badly hurt; however, he grazed his left palm on the rock.

After administering first aid, Cerise went inside to advise her team leader and then complete an incident form. She described Stefan's fall and what first aid she had given him, then described his condition and what he was doing 10 minutes later. She explained it clearly, just including the facts on the form.



When Stefan's father came to pick him up later in the day, Cerise made sure that she spoke to him about the incident using clear and simple words because Stefan's father does not speak English as a first language. She used the diagram on the incident form to explain the location of Stefan's injuries.

## Using clear communication

*Each person you communicate with will require a different form of communication.*

The purpose of communicating could be to share information or ideas, give or receive a direction, or receive information needed to plan children's learning experiences. For example, if you are speaking to another educator in your room, you could use language relating to learning frameworks or child development. However, when talking to a parent you should use words that the parent would understand and examples to explain your meaning. There will be times when a language barrier exists with a family member and you need to find a way to break the barrier down in order to communicate clearly. If you are working with a baby or toddler, adapt your language to simple words that they can understand.

### Tips for using clear communication

- > Make sure you have the person's attention.
- > Provide a suitable, quiet environment, and a private one if needed.
- > Use words that the person can understand, considering their age, language, abilities and culture.
- > Use clear, specific and relevant words, and avoid slang or abbreviated terms.
- > Gain eye contact and speak to the person directly.
- > Use sentences that are easy to follow and interpret.
- > Ask if the person needs more information and explain yourself in different ways if necessary.
- > Use body language, words and a tone of voice that matches, and avoid communicating mixed messages.

## Designated lines of communication

*You will need to follow specific policies and procedures for communication.*

Having a designated person who is responsible for communicating particular information ensures that the information provided is accurate and that one person is accountable. Understanding your work role means knowing what you can communicate about and to whom. For example, it would not be appropriate for a new employee or a student on placement to speak to a family and provide advice about the emotional development of their child.

People with different roles in the service, including the director or manager, educational or room leader, have different responsibilities regarding communication. The higher the position in the organisation, the more complicated and confidential their communication responsibilities are.

Job role	Communication responsibilities
<b>Educator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Speaking with children to engage, interact and support teachable moments throughout the day</li> <li>➤ Speaking with parents at the beginning and end of the day to gather information and update them on the child's activities</li> <li>➤ Making notes in the room communication book if a parent has given specific instructions for their child</li> <li>➤ Asking a parent to complete a permissions form if their child needs any medication administered</li> <li>➤ Advising other colleagues of your whereabouts for supervision purposes and letting them know if you are going to be working with a specific group of children</li> <li>➤ Advising other team members if you are going out of the room or on break</li> <li>➤ Advising your room leader if you notice or are told something that is concerning regarding a child or a colleague's behaviour</li> <li>➤ Contributing to team meetings regarding planning and the types of educational activities you think are appropriate</li> <li>➤ Speaking to the director or manager if you see or hear something that concerns you about a room leader or educational leader</li> </ul>
<b>Team leader/room leader/educational leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Allocating tasks to team members</li> <li>➤ Meeting with parents and caregivers to gather additional information</li> <li>➤ Speaking with parents if there are any issues that have been noticed regarding their child's ongoing development</li> <li>➤ Reporting incidents that may indicate child abuse</li> <li>➤ Liaising with specialists that children are referred to</li> <li>➤ Taking control if there is an incident or near miss that involves children or staff</li> <li>➤ Allocating team members to specific activities or supervision areas</li> <li>➤ Conducting performance management and appraisals of team members</li> <li>➤ Writing or adding to the room or service newsletters</li> <li>➤ Posting information on the service's intranet or website to advise parents of children's successes</li> </ul>

Job role	Communication responsibilities
<b>Manager/ director/ teacher/ person in charge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meeting with parents and caregivers on enrolment or to provide initial information about the service</li> <li>➤ Meeting with parents and caregivers to gather additional information</li> <li>➤ Reporting incidents that may indicate child abuse</li> <li>➤ Providing information on Child Safe Standards and reportable conduct investigations</li> <li>➤ Liaising with specialists</li> <li>➤ Being responsible for running staff meetings and management/ board meetings</li> <li>➤ Being responsible for running general parent meetings</li> <li>➤ Organising assessment and ratings processes and meetings</li> <li>➤ Writing newsletters and policies</li> <li>➤ Posting information on the service's intranet or website</li> <li>➤ Conducting performance management of senior staff</li> <li>➤ Dealing with grievances – raised by either employees or parents</li> <li>➤ Communicating about staff rosters</li> <li>➤ Providing information on recruitment and employment</li> </ul>

### Example

#### Speaking with others

Rae has only been working at the outside school hours service for three weeks and is still getting to know all of the children. As part of this process she seeks out each parent to speak to them at the end of the day.

One of the children, five-year-old Sasha, told her that she is vegan and won't eat any meat, dairy or anything orange. Rae is confused by this as she doesn't remember reading it on Sasha's enrolment form, so she asks Sasha's mother about it when she comes to collect her that night.

Sasha's mother says that they definitely aren't vegan and don't consider themselves vegetarian; however, they don't eat red meat because of the expense. When Rae asks about the 'orange' comment, Sasha's mother replies that was just because Sasha doesn't like pumpkin, so had refused any other food that was orange since trying it.



## Responsibility for documentation

*Each person with a designated role in a service has different responsibilities regarding documenting communication.*

It may not be your role to complete complicated documents regarding the children or the service. However, you may be asked to contribute to a range of different forms and records.

Different types of documentation include:

- communication books
- internal and external emails
- staff handover notes
- developmental checklists
- newsletters and online information
- daily menus
- information provided by parents
- enrolment forms
- medication administration log
- incident forms
- health and safety checklists.

## Completing documentation accurately

*Before you complete any documentation, find out if the service uses particular templates.*

Templates ensure that documentation used by the service remains professional and consistent in its look and format, such as using the service's logo. These will vary between different organisations.

Write clearly and legibly in documents and forms such as incident reports, communication books, referral forms or checklists. Always re-read what you have written to ensure it makes sense and there are no spelling mistakes. It is easy to miss words if you are in a hurry. This applies to online forms as well as handwritten documents and forms.

Only use acronyms and abbreviations if you are confident they will be recognised by others in the service. If in doubt, use the whole word rather than an abbreviation. Have a dictionary nearby or use your phone to look up spelling and the correct terminology if you are unsure about a word.

### Example

#### Developing a menu

After Rae has her questions clarified by Sasha's mother, the coordinator asks her if Sasha has any allergies. Rae can't confidently answer the question, so she checks in the kitchen for a notice and on Sasha's enrolment form. There are no allergies and no indications of any food preferences noted on the enrolment form.

She discusses the preferences Sasha has described with her coordinator. They decide to make sure most of the food they provide for afternoon tea is not orange. They also discuss some vegan options that Sasha might enjoy, such as fruits and raw vegetables with dairy-free dips.





## Practice Task 5

1. Which of the following groups in the service will you communicate with as part of your work role as an educator? Select all that apply.

- Management
- The other team members/educators
- The local newspaper
- Family members
- Local government agencies

2. To ensure your communication is clear, you must follow a few simple rules. Select yes or no for each of the following.

- a. Always make sure you have the person's attention before you start speaking. \* Yes \* No
- b. Provide a suitable environment for discussing confidential information – you can do this while you supervise the children. \* Yes \* No
- c. Use professional acronyms when discussing a child's development and progress with parents. \* Yes \* No

3. Which of the following types of communication would be the responsibility of an educator? Select yes or no for each.

- a. Making notes in the communication book if a parent has provided specific instructions for their child for that day. \* Yes \* No
- b. Documenting Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct investigations. \* Yes \* No
- c. Advising other team members if you are going out of the room or on a break. \* Yes \* No
- d. Checking with the room leader if there are any particular tasks you need to achieve for the day. \* Yes \* No
- e. Responding to grievances either from someone in the service or from the community. \* Yes \* No
- f. Offering ideas at team meetings regarding planning and the types of educational activities you think are appropriate. \* Yes \* No

4. Which of the following documentation are educators responsible for?  
Select all that apply.

- Staff handover notes
- Developmental checklists on children
- Notes and information from families
- Administration of medication forms
- Accident and incident forms
- Health and safety checklists

## Summary

- Education and care services are guided by the National Quality Framework (NQF).
- The National Quality Standard (NQS) includes seven quality areas that relate to different areas of education and care.
- Service policies and procedures will reflect the whole of the NQF, including the applicable approved learning framework.
- You will need to become familiar with the policies that describe the beliefs and standards of the service where you work.
- Procedural documents describe how staff will make sure processes happen according to policies.
- The type of communication you use with different people in the service will depend on the context and purpose of the communication.
- The more responsible the position in the organisation, the more complicated, confidential and accountable their communication responsibilities are.

# Learning Checkpoint 2

## Service requirements

### Part A

1. Which of the following policies and procedures would the educator be responsible for in their role? Select all that apply.

- Supervision of children
- Employment conditions for the job
- Maintaining the vegetable garden
- Personal presentation and uniform
- Providing a safe play environment
- Ensuring all bills are paid

2. Draw a line to match the national frameworks, standards and legislation to the correct explanation.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Education and Care Services National Regulations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A system used throughout Australia to help education and care services work toward best practice and best quality.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Approved learning frameworks</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Sets out rules for education and care, underpinned by the Education and Care Services National Law.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* National Quality Framework (NQF)</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A measurement system for education and care services with seven identified quality areas.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Assessment and ratings process</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Includes <i>Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia</i> (EYLF) and <i>My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia</i> (MTOPI).</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The National Quality Standard (NQS)</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A continuous quality improvement process for early childhood education and care services.</li> </ul>   |

3. Which of the following statements relating to seeking and sharing information to improve work outcomes are correct? Select all that apply.

- If you notice behaviour of concern regarding a child, you should mention it to the team or room leader.
- You can get information about hygiene routines for the children from your supervisor or other team members.
- If you have a problem communicating with a colleague, you should ask for advice from a member from the board of management.
- The director is available to discuss daily program information with you, including setting up the room with equipment and resources.
- You can ask a supervisor or colleague for templates to use for your documentation.
- Families provide an important source of information about their child's interests and how they like to spend their time at home.

## Part B

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

### Case study

Debbie has been working at the school as an education support worker for the past 12 years. She has lots of experience working with children with learning difficulties, such as reading delays.

At the beginning of Term 2, a new student was enrolled and Debbie introduced herself to Cheri, aged six years. Debbie spoke to Cheri's parents with the classroom teacher to discuss the information provided in Cheri's enrolment documents. Debbie made some detailed notes about Cheri's support needs and plans for her program.

1. Which of the following statements about Debbie's communication responsibilities for her work role are correct? Select all that apply.

- Cheri's parents can confirm information about Cheri's school history, personal interests and other information they feel is relevant.
- Debbie can ask the principal for information about Cheri's support needs.
- Cheri can provide information about her interests and confirm that she likes the books Debbie has been providing for her to read.
- The teacher will be too busy to work with Cheri and she should develop the reading program on her own.
- It's not Debbie's role to keep a record of Cheri's progress, that is the teacher's role.

2. Which of the following policies and procedures would Debbie need to follow when working with Cheri? Select yes or no for each one.
- |                                   |       |      |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------|
| a. Health and safety policy       | * Yes | * No |
| b. Physical environment policy    | * Yes | * No |
| c. Education program and practice | * Yes | * No |
| d. Food safety policy             | * Yes | * No |
| e. Communicating with families    | * Yes | * No |
3. Which of the following are reasons Debbie must keep accurate and clear records on Cheri's progress? Select all that apply.
- The records can be shared with the rest of the class.
  - Debbie and the teacher can compare notes to identify different aspects of Cheri's progress.
  - Debbie can refer to the records to develop a program and books appropriate for Cheri to read.
  - When the teacher and Debbie meet with Cheri's parents, they will have a shared understanding to communicate about Cheri's progress.
  - The records may be referred to at a future time by another professional.





## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A** Developing effective work practices
- 3B** Seeking and sharing information
- 3C** Communicating clearly and respectfully

# Working collaboratively

*Once you have information about your role, you need to understand it well enough so you are able to work effectively.*

Creating effective work practices starts with knowing what to do and when, but that is only part of the task. You also have to work collaboratively with your team members so the workflow is clear. This helps to meet children's needs, and ensures a safe and positive environment for children and staff.

Your communication is a very important part of the impression you make on those around you. By speaking to families, you will be able to obtain specific information regarding the development, likes, interests and culture of the children in your care. From this information, you can plan, organise and identify learning experiences and opportunities to educate and care for children to the best of your abilities.

## 3A Developing effective work practices

*Working with children in an education and care setting requires good organisation and effective teamwork.*

These skills are necessary whether you are a team of two or a team of 10. Each person in the team will have specific tasks to complete throughout the day. These must be carried out to achieve a positive and safe education and care setting for the children.

Each person in the team will have specific tasks that cover a number of the day's activities.

### Daily jobs of an educator

- Greeting parents and children
- Nappy change routines
- Mealtime supervision
- Handwashing transition routine (children washing hands before eating)
- Sleep time routines and transitions
- Outdoor play supervision
- Supervision of specific activities
- Covering staff in other areas during their breaks
- Setting up/packing up activities
- Supporting children with activities
- Ensuring documentation is complete
- Taking photos to demonstrate activities
- Documenting developmental information and observations
- Supporting the planning cycle
- Maintaining children's portfolios
- Having a meeting with a parent

**Example****Tasks at the start of the day**

Mirabell and Sanji are both educators who are rostered on for the beginning of the day in the toddler room. When they arrive, they both look at the program of activities for the day and decide who will set up which activities. They agree that when the children start coming in, Mirabell will greet the parents and welcome the children.

Both educators start setting up activities for the children. After 10 minutes the first child arrives. Mirabell moves towards the door to greet them and chat to the parent and the child. Sanji can see what still needs to be done and completes the setting up that Mirabell didn't quite finish.



## Planning and organising daily work

*Although each day in education and care settings can be very different, you will be expected to follow similar processes and procedures.*

Daily tasks will be allocated to you in one of two ways: either the team leader, teacher or supervisor will give you specific tasks or you will decide as a team who should be given tasks based on the strengths of the other team members.

Family day care educators work in a team with their regional manager or coordinator, and are generally able to decide what tasks need to happen each day as they mostly work independently to meet set goals.

Most teams have a daily schedule they like to follow. This means if you are allocated a task you can easily see where it fits into the day's activities. This will give you an understanding of how you need to plan your day to achieve all of those tasks. You will need to work in collaboration with other educators to make sure that tasks are done on time and in the order they are planned.

As an example, the following schedule gives a broad overview of how your day might look, depending on the type of service you work in.

Time	Early learning centre	Family day care	Kindergarten	School	Outside school hours care (OSHC)
7.00am	Greet families	Greet families			Greet families
7.30am	Breakfast	Breakfast			Breakfast
8.00am	Indoor activities	Indoor activities			Indoor activities
8.30am	Greet families	School drop off	Greet families		School time
9.00am	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Indoor activities	Greet families	

Time	Early learning centre	Family day care	Kindergarten	School	Outside school hours care (OSHC)
9.30am	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Classes	
10.00am	Snack time	Snack time	Group time	Classes	
11.00am	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Rest time	Snack time	Recess	
11.30am	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Classes	
12.00pm	Lunch time	Lunch time	Group time	Classes	
12.30pm	Rest time	Rest time	Lunch time	Classes	
1.00pm	Quiet activities	Rest time	Rest time	Lunch time	
2.00pm	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Classes	
2.30pm	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Classes	
3.00pm	Group time	Quiet activities	Snack time	Classes	
3.30pm	Snack time	School pick up	Indoor activities	End of school	School pick up
4.00pm	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Snack time	Greet families		Snack time
4.30pm	Experiences – indoor/outdoor	Experiences – indoor/outdoor			Experiences – indoor/outdoor
5.00pm	Indoor activities	Indoor activities			Homework
5.30pm	Quiet activities	Quiet activities			Quiet activities
6.00pm	Greet families	Greet families			Greet families

As you can see from the schedule, there are several times during the day that require preparation. Each of the routine times, such as lunch time and rest time, have routines and transitions that need to be in place before and after them. If you are responsible for one of these transition routines, such as the children washing hands and going to the toilet before snack or lunch time, you need to be prepared with your timing and what you need to achieve.

When planning and organising your daily work, consider the following:

1. What time does the activity need to occur?
2. What do I need to get ready for the activity?
3. How long will it take me to get ready?
4. How long will the activity take?
5. Do I need to pack up after the activity and how long will that take?
6. What is happening after this activity?

**Example**

**Setting up for afternoon snack time**

Sid has been asked by his supervisor to set up the after-school snack time for the children at the OSHC service. Looking at the menu, he knows that he is meant to make pikelets for their afternoon snack.

He quickly goes into planning mode and identifies the following:

- All of the ingredients are in the cupboard and the toppings are in the fridge.
- He needs to have at least half the pikelets cooked by 3.30pm when the children get there.
- It will take 20 minutes to cook at least half of the pikelets and 5 minutes to set up the table for the children to serve themselves. He might ask some of the children to help with cooking and setting up the table.
- If he starts cooking at 3.00pm, by the time everyone has eaten it will be about 4.00pm.
- He will need time to clean up and pack away the food. If he packs away all the ingredients after he's made the last batch of batter, this will save time later.
- When the children have finished eating, they can go straight outside to Tanija who is supervising outdoor activities.



## Following procedures

*Once you know the activities you are responsible for throughout the day, you need to understand and follow the relevant procedures.*

Some common procedures you may need to follow are outlined in the following table.

Routine/scheduled activity	Related procedure
Greeting parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sign-in procedure</li> <li>➤ Appropriate communication</li> <li>➤ Confidentiality procedure</li> <li>➤ Medical authority, accident reports or other forms</li> <li>➤ Communication book</li> </ul>
Pre-meal routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children's hand-washing procedure</li> <li>➤ Hygiene policy and procedure</li> <li>➤ Preparation of tables</li> <li>➤ Meal procedure – all together or progressive meal</li> <li>➤ Food-handling procedure</li> </ul>

<b>Routine/scheduled activity</b>	<b>Related procedure</b>
<b>Sleep/rest routine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children's bedding</li> <li>➤ Children's agency regarding sleepwear</li> <li>➤ How to get children to sleep</li> <li>➤ Restful activities</li> <li>➤ Documentation of sleep</li> <li>➤ Packing up bedding</li> <li>➤ Washing bedding</li> <li>➤ Transition to activities</li> </ul>
<b>Experiences/activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Appropriate equipment for the age group</li> <li>➤ Where experiences are set up</li> <li>➤ Supervision</li> <li>➤ Engagement of children</li> <li>➤ Communication with children</li> <li>➤ Child agency</li> <li>➤ Transition to and from activities</li> <li>➤ Educational purpose of experience/activity</li> </ul>
<b>Supervision outdoors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Location/placement of staff</li> <li>➤ Engagement of children</li> <li>➤ Child–educator ratios</li> <li>➤ Outdoor clothing – for you and the children</li> <li>➤ Sunsmart procedure</li> <li>➤ Play spaces</li> </ul>

These procedures are likely to be explained to you at induction, but if you are uncertain or need additional support, you should speak to your supervisor before the activity or task is meant to happen.

## Example

### Pre-snack time tasks

Cora is an educator at an early learning centre. She is asked by her supervisor to be responsible for the transition of the children from outside play into the room for morning tea. She knows that the procedure for this transition is to ensure that all children go to the toilet and wash their hands before sitting in a circle on the mat.

There are a number of safety issues she needs to keep in mind:

- There can only be four children in the bathroom at a time.
- She has to minimise the bottleneck of children trying to get into the bathroom.
- She has to be vigilant about any water on the floor to minimise risk of slipping.
- The children need to wash their hands properly with soap and water.
- The children need to walk inside.
- Throughout this transition, staff need to be positioned to supervise outside, the bathroom and the children who are sitting on the mat.
- The children need to walk inside.
- Throughout this transition, staff need to be positioned to supervise outside, the bathroom and the children who are sitting on the mat.



## Daily routines

*Daily routines are the things that happen every day to provide for children's care needs.*

Daily routines in an education and care setting provide children with a sense of stability and reassurance. Even though activities may change throughout the day, having a known plan and schedule allows children to be more confident in their environment.

Most children, as well as adults, cope best if they know what is going to happen. For example, children will know there are certain times throughout the day when they will be offered snacks and lunch.

Carrying out daily routines is the responsibility of all educators; however, you will be required to be personally responsible for some specific tasks within the scope of your role.

At times, your supervisor will give you instructions regarding extra tasks that you need to complete. These are usually on-the-spot requests where the supervisor sees something that needs immediate attention, such as picking up a baby who is upset or sitting with children at an activity to defuse a situation.

If your supervisor asks you to do something, you need to act promptly on the instruction, remembering to follow all the appropriate procedures.

### Example

#### Acting promptly on instructions

Devi is an educator who is in the middle of clearing the tables ready to disinfect them for lunch when her room leader comes over with a distressed toddler in her arms. The room leader says to Devi, 'I know that you're in the middle of getting ready for lunch, but could you please check on Matti? I think he needs his nappy changed before we sit down, and I need to calm Verity down. She's overtired and is starting to get distressed.'



Devi puts the cleaning products high up on a shelf so they are out of the children's reach. She moves towards Matti, asking him if she can check if his nappy is wet. Matti nods and points to his pants, saying, 'Yucky'.

Devi changes Matti's nappy, then sets him down in the room again, washes her hands, and continues getting everything ready for lunch.

## Daily activities and experiences

*As an educator, one of the major parts of your role is to support the activities and experiences of the children in your care.*

These experiences are based on the educational program put in place by the team leader, teacher or coordinator using the suggestions and observations made by the whole team.

Each of the activities and experiences chosen as part of the program should focus on education as well as the children's enjoyment. However, not all activities go as planned and sometimes contingencies or back-up plans may be required.

You may need contingencies for the following reasons:

- It may start raining, so the children can't go outside.
- An experience that the children were previously interested in holds no interest now.
- An experience goes longer than you expected because all the children want a turn.
- You start another activity spontaneously because the children have shown an interest in a new idea or topic.
- You start reading a book to a few children and others leave their activity to join in.

Your daily plan needs to be flexible enough to cope with change. You also need to be attuned to the children so you can go where their interests lead.

As with any plan, if you are working in a group you need to communicate what you are doing and any changes you are making clearly in a way that the other educators and children understand.

In the same way, if you need additional support for a task, clearly communicate to your supervisor what is required and why. For example, the activity may have run overtime and you may need help cleaning up.

Working collaboratively as a team means that you can ask for help when necessary. You should also notice and offer to assist when others need help. As long as all time-bound tasks are achieved in the time set out, you can be a little flexible with other tasks and activities.

### Example

#### Asking for additional help and support

Byron is an educator who is responsible for the painting area, which is set up outside under the veranda. Tina and Saatchi are painting at the easels when a ball is accidentally kicked towards them and lands in the paint pots. All the pots fall to the ground and most of the paint spills onto the cement.

Byron knows that he needs to clean up the paint spill before anyone slips, but he is also responsible for supervising the sandpit area. Knowing that he can't supervise properly while cleaning up the spill, he pokes his head indoors and calls for the team leader to ask for some additional support with supervision while he cleans up the paint.



## Prioritising tasks

*Some tasks or activities need to be completed sooner or are more urgent because they may affect children's safety, or impact on what needs to happen later in the day.*

For example, if you notice spilled water on the floor while you are setting up an activity, you should prioritise cleaning up the water spill so that children and educators don't slip.

Your supervisor will explain the priority of tasks and what needs to be completed first if the tasks are unfamiliar to you. Tasks that generally take priority are those that keep the routine and schedule on track. This is because if these tasks are not done in the correct order or by the time required, they will have an impact on what happens later in the day.

Here are some examples of the negative consequences that may result from tasks not being completed on time.

Task	Possible impact of delay
<b>Setting up activities and experiences in the morning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children wandering around with nothing to do when they arrive</li> <li>➤ Parent departure becomes more difficult</li> <li>➤ Educators may need to rush to set up and may not be able to engage and settle children</li> <li>➤ Insufficient time to greet and speak with parents</li> <li>➤ Other educators may have their plans disrupted</li> </ul>
<b>Cleaning up after snack time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hygiene and food safety compromised</li> <li>➤ Possible safety hazards from slip, trip or fall hazards</li> <li>➤ Tables not able to be used for other activities</li> <li>➤ Young children putting scraps in their mouths</li> <li>➤ Children waiting for promised activity</li> </ul>
<b>Making up the beds for rest time after lunch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children bored and wandering around with nothing to do</li> <li>➤ Children getting irritable because they're tired</li> <li>➤ Children not settling easily</li> <li>➤ Delayed sleep time and a later wake-up time that affects bed time at home</li> <li>➤ Not completing planned activities</li> </ul>
<b>Packing up at home time or end of the day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents tripping on equipment</li> <li>➤ Children being messy or dirty for pick up</li> <li>➤ Children reluctant to go home as they haven't finished playing</li> <li>➤ Parents stressed about needing to leave</li> <li>➤ Parents forgetting to sign documents</li> <li>➤ Working additional hours to complete packing up and cleaning</li> </ul>

Sometimes you will have a number of tasks that all seem to need doing at the same time. Your priority for tasks should always be:

1. Safety of children, other staff and families
2. Tasks set by your supervisor
3. Routines and tasks that are part of the schedule
4. Engaging with and supporting the children – you can still be talking to them while you are setting up or doing other things

**Example****Prioritising tasks**

Gabrielle is an educator who is just about to start a reading support session with Mark (seven years) when she is asked by a group of children if they can have more worksheets. Gabrielle knows that it would only take two minutes to collect the worksheets, or she could complete the task after the session with Mark, which will take at least 20 minutes.

Gabrielle chooses to prioritise getting the worksheets for the children so they can continue their work, she then sits down to start the session with Mark.



## Importance of own well-being

*Wellbeing involves a person's mental and physical health, as well as their ability to manage stress and achieve overall satisfaction in their work and personal life.*

Wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or a mental illness. It involves a combination of a person's social, physical, emotional and mental health factors. A person who is in a good state of wellbeing may feel more happy, healthy, socially connected and purposeful in their life.

A combination of factors can cause stress and uncertainty when you are new to a role and the responsibility you might feel about performing your role.

## Signs and symptoms of poor wellbeing

*Everyone has different coping mechanisms and therefore a varied response to personal and work-related wellbeing factors.*

Stress and pressure impacts people in positive and negative ways. For some people, the experience of failure, physical injury, broken relationships and working under pressure will not affect them, in fact it can inspire them to achieve greater goals. For others, the first sign of uncertainty can cause great anxiety and stress.

A range of signs and symptoms will indicate that you are experiencing a negative state in your wellbeing. These signs can be physical, behavioural or emotional as explained below.

Physical	Behavioural	Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Nervous sweat or sweaty palms</li> <li>➤ A hard time feeling relaxed</li> <li>➤ Severe or chronic lower back pain</li> <li>➤ Chronic headaches</li> <li>➤ Tension or muscle spasms in face, jaw, neck or shoulders</li> <li>➤ Upset stomach</li> <li>➤ Skin rashes or itching</li> <li>➤ Problems with bowels (constipation, diarrhoea)</li> <li>➤ Frequent urination</li> <li>➤ Mouth ulcers</li> <li>➤ Shortness of breath</li> <li>➤ Very small or very large appetite</li> <li>➤ Unusual weight gain/loss</li> <li>➤ Sharp chest pains when physically active</li> <li>➤ Lack physical energy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stuttering or tongue tied</li> <li>➤ Working while eating lunch</li> <li>➤ Excessive work hours</li> <li>➤ Going to work when sick</li> <li>➤ Bringing work home often</li> <li>➤ Abuse of alcohol or drugs, especially to relax</li> <li>➤ Being more clumsy than usual</li> <li>➤ Problems walking without tripping</li> <li>➤ Sexual problems</li> <li>➤ Gambling addictions</li> <li>➤ Increased isolation</li> <li>➤ Lack of social interaction</li> <li>➤ Missing appointments</li> <li>➤ Anger problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Avoidance of dealing with issues</li> <li>➤ Trouble remembering things</li> <li>➤ Feeling anxious or frightened about problems</li> <li>➤ Withholding emotions</li> <li>➤ Difficulties relaxing</li> <li>➤ Lack of joy and excitement</li> <li>➤ Internal anger problems</li> <li>➤ Increased distrust</li> <li>➤ Taking offense easily</li> <li>➤ Feeling overly sensitive and irritable</li> <li>➤ Emotions changing quickly and without any apparent reason</li> <li>➤ Impulsive behaviour.</li> </ul>

## Self-care

*Self-care is balanced when your work and personal life are well coordinated.*

Anything that contributes to your emotional, mental, physical or social wellbeing is related to your self-care.

Taking responsibility for your self-care means maintaining your health and wellbeing. This includes taking actions to stay fit and healthy, meet your social and mental needs, prevent illness or accidents, and look after yourself. Examples include brushing your teeth, exercising, taking medicine when you are unwell, or taking time out to pray or meditate.

Self-care also means doing things that are important to you and involves looking at what you can do and want to do, rather than what you can't do or have to do.

## Seek support

*Ask for help when any aspect of your personal care is being negatively affected.*

From time to time, everyone will experience difficulty coping with the demands of a job role. Aspects of your personal life can also influence your ability to manage your daily work practices. By discussing and communicating with others you may:

- gain support
- learn how others have managed similar issues
- develop networks
- improve your practices
- increase your resilience.

Personal support networks can be helpful in dealing with matters relating to mental health, wellbeing and stress. A personal network may include family members (including partners, children and parents) and friends.

The people in your service may be able to provide support. Some ways this can happen are outlined in the following table.

	<p><b>Mentors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An educational leader or early childhood teacher is likely to be a good mentor. Each service may have slightly different expectations, but national regulations require that people in these roles carry out mentoring, coaching or supporting actions, so make the most of this.</li> <li>➤ A colleague can also be an informal source of mentoring. They may have skills, knowledge and experience that you admire and respect. On-the-job mentoring should be a positive experience with the aim of supporting you to develop greater knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Supervisors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Your educational leader, early childhood teacher or senior educator will provide professional supervision. A service director, coordinator or owner may also provide this supervision.</li> <li>➤ Professional supervision works best if your relationship with the supervisor is trusting, genuine, ethical, confidential and respectful.</li> <li>➤ Professional supervisors should be people who provide you with constructive feedback and opportunities to further your current skills and knowledge. They should have your best interests in mind and be focused on how you can help the service to provide the best quality education and care possible.</li> </ul>



### Peers

- Peers are your colleagues. Depending on their experience, skills and knowledge, they can be useful support people. A peer who is passionate about a particular area of their work, including day-to-day education and care, can have a lot to offer. A peer may have similar interests and be able to share and link you to information or services that they have found useful.
- Working with children demands a high degree of personal investment. It is no easy task to master the numerous and complex skills required of you; however, it is not possible to learn all of these skills in an academic setting. As a result, many educators must acquire additional skills by working directly with children and by observing fellow educators and other professionals in the field. With this in mind, mistakes are often made by those new to the industry. Not even the most experienced educator can avoid making the occasional mistake – this is where teamwork and peer support is vital.

## Support networks

*To develop your own support network, you must identify the areas where you need support or that you wish to develop.*

Some of these needs will be met by the people within your organisation, while others will be met externally.

Many external networks are found by talking to others. You might hear about a network from a colleague, at a meeting, a professional development session or during a conference. You can find out about local networks by talking to the local government or community services in your area. You will often find director networks, outside school hours care (OSHC) networks, educator networks and student networks.

Other networks might be found through internet searches or through social media links.

Network	Focus	Eligibility	Access	Website
LinkedIn	Developing a professional status and networking	Open to all	Membership (free or paid subscription)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/linkedin">aspirelr.link/linkedin</a>
Educators engaging with Educators	Support and networking for all educators	Educators	Closed Facebook group (must ask and be approved to join)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook">aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook</a>
ECE Facilitated Learning	Trainers support learners with assessment tasks (learners can be from any training organisation)	Open to all	Closed Facebook group (must ask and be approved to join)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook">aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook</a>

**Example****Use personal support networks**

Kristen usually calls her sister each Friday after work. Both Kristen and her sister have fairly stressful jobs, and they provide support to each other in dealing with challenging situations.

They understand the need for work/life balance, so whenever they chat together, they ensure that they talk for a short time about work but also spend time talking about other topics.

The sisters enjoy sharing ideas and strategies for dealing with workplace problems and both come away from their Friday night catch-ups feeling refreshed and ready to enjoy their weekends.



**Practice Task 6**

1. Which of the following statements about planning your daily work are correct? Select all that apply.
  - Planning daily work activities needs to consider the daily routines and schedule.
  - If a supervisor asks you to do something that is not part of your plan, you don't need to do it.
  - You must follow the service procedures for tasks such as cleaning tables ready for lunch.
  - When there are several tasks to complete within a certain time frame, you must prioritise tasks.
  - Any concerns you have about a child should be reported to the family even if that is not part of your work role responsibility.
  - If you need support with a task, you should ask your supervisor and clearly communicate the reason.
  
2. Number each of the following from 1 to 4 in the order you would prioritise tasks.
  - Tasks set by the supervisor
  - Engaging and supporting the children
  - Safety of children, staff and families
  - Routines and tasks that are part of the schedule

## Case study

Kim has been having difficulties at work. She hasn't been getting along with the two other educators in the room. She feels the other educators are ganging up on her and speaking to her inappropriately. She has tried on several occasions to speak to them both to find out why they are treating her this way. On these occasions, both educators have ignored her, then sniggered and whispered behind her back.

3. Which of the following statements are signs that Kim's self-care needs are being neglected? Select all that apply.

- Kim cries every morning on her way to work.
- Kim drinks three coffees per day instead of one.
- Kim is grumpy at her family members.
- Kim makes silly mistakes and gets teary easily.
- Kim books a range of appointments for beauty procedures.

4. Select true or false for the following statement.

When Kim speaks to her supervisor to explain her situation, she is revealing her weaknesses and showing that she is not capable of performing her job.

\* True      \* False

## 3B Seeking and sharing information

*Communication skills are important in your role of educating children.*

Colleagues, families and children all rely on you to be able to communicate important information. Effective communication will determine your ability to provide the best care possible for the children and families you interact with.

To maintain professional communication, you need to be aware of how you speak to others and what is and is not appropriate to say in particular situations. This applies to all groups you have relationships with in your role, including family members, friends or peers and the people in your team.



Always remain professional when communicating with families and other educators.

### Professional communication is about:

- demonstrating professional behaviour at all times
- being friendly, but not overly friendly
- maintaining confidentiality
- respecting differences of opinion, values and beliefs
- understanding what you are and are not able to discuss outside of the service.

## Seeking information

*You need to know how to gather information about the education and care of children.*

Make the most of opportunities to speak to and seek specific information from your colleagues, children and families. This allows you to gather the information you need to plan your day, and maximise the quality of education and care you provide.

You may investigate and find general developmental and age-specific activities for children online or from textbooks. However, the best source of information is from the children and families themselves. Collaboration with families provides you with valuable and personalised information about a child.

By asking families about the child's home life, you can gather information related to:

- developmental stages
- interests
- likes and dislikes
- food preferences
- cultural aspects of family life
- routines such as sleeping and toilet routines
- specific names for comfort toys, family members, everyday items, foods, etc.
- community information.

**Example****Information gathering**

Tommy (three years) has only been in the service for four weeks and the staff are still learning about his likes and dislikes. One morning Glenda is on the early shift when Tommy comes in with his mother. Glenda walks over to Tommy and his mother to say good morning and asks Tommy's mother if she has a couple of minutes for a chat.

Glenda asks Tommy's mother about his interest in animals and if they had ever been to the zoo. She explains that they are going to introduce some animals into the program next week. Glenda suggests they use these activities for Tommy to get to know the other children. They agree that Tommy would enjoy showing his giraffe book to the other children.



## Information from colleagues

*Enrolment forms are an excellent place to begin gathering information about the children in your care.*

These documents will be kept in a locked cabinet, so you may need to ask your team leader or manager for permission to access them.

If the children in your group have been in the service for a while, your colleagues should have documentation and anecdotal information that you can access about each child. You can refer to these records to get to know the children in your care better.

Planning meetings are also a good place to ask colleagues for information about the children in your care. Other educators may be able to share information on the family's cultural background that you are not aware of. More experienced staff can explain aspects of a child's development that will assist you in planning the educational requirements of the program. Planning meetings are opportunities for everyone to contribute and share information about recent observations or changing needs of children that should be documented.

Supervisors and team leaders are there to support you, as well as care for and educate children. If you have concerns about a child, a procedure or what you are meant to do, you should ask your supervisor. They may give you the information you require or suggest you talk to a family member.

Remember, some information may be confidential, so it is best to seek advice from your supervisor before asking a parent any in-depth questions about their child. When you have the information you require, make sure this is shared with the rest of your team.

Staff meetings are also a good place to:

- gather additional general information about new trends or research
- learn about valuable contacts and networks
- hear about changed routines
- discuss new equipment and how it can be used in the programs.

Some staff may be tasked with researching specific information to share with others at this meeting or a guest may be invited to provide more specific details to the whole group.

### Example

#### Sharing information

Brianna is an educator who attended the local network group last week and was asked by her manager to provide a report to the other educators at the next staff meeting. She was able to discuss some new routines that were being trialled at a nearby service and provide details about a change in local roadworks that would affect traffic in the area surrounding the service.



## Maintaining confidentiality

*Personal information is usually shared in confidence, so be respectful of others by keeping this to yourself.*

Never discuss the circumstances or details about a child or their family with other parents or people outside the workplace.

Sharing personal information inappropriately can cause upset, hurt and mistrust, and can create negative relationships. If someone shares information that you feel you should not be told, let the person know you feel uncomfortable knowing this. If you are unable to tell them, just don't respond to it. If you are concerned or if someone is continuing to share confidential details with you, mention this to a supervisor.

Documentation also needs to be treated with confidentiality. Any form of written notes, observations or personal information must be stored securely. For example, only those authorised, such as supervisors and teachers, should be able to access family information or child developmental records. If documentation relates to staff in the service, such as performance reviews or personal information, this should only be shared with supervisors or the manager/director of the service.

Personal and confidential information includes:

- personal employment details
- staff leave applications
- phone numbers and home addresses
- children's enrolment forms
- family information
- children's development records and notes
- specialist notes.



## Practice Task 7

1. Which of the following statements about seeking and sharing information are correct? Select all that apply.

- You should ask one of the parents what they think of another child's behaviour.
- Being professional means being friendly and feeling confident you can ask parents anything.
- When you are in a team meeting you can ask other staff about the development of children in your group.
- If you have concerns about a child, you should talk to your supervisor first.
- Some family information is confidential and should not be discussed outside the service.
- Families are a valuable source of cultural information.

2. Which of the following documents and information are confidential and need to be stored securely? Select all that apply.

- The daily menu
- Staff leave applications
- Enrolment forms
- Specialist notes
- Minutes of network meetings

## 3C Communicating clearly and respectfully

*Respectful communication involves exchanging information and developing healthy working relationships with others.*

Trust and confidence should never be assumed. They must be built over time as you learn to meet the needs of different people you work with.

Effective communication is essential in any workplace because without it, it is not possible to know people's wants or needs, or how best to respond to the children, families and staff you are working with.

Many factors play a part in communication, including body language, facial expression and gestures; these can be more powerful than the words you use. The way you communicate with another person, even when you do not speak the same language, can impact how you make that person feel and the way they will respond.



Effective communication involves showing respect and clearly explaining information.

### Be courteous and polite

*As an educator you need to be able to speak professionally with others.*

If you are polite and respectful and get along well with others, including families and educators, you are likely to be more successful at your job.

Being polite is about being considerate of another person's feelings, culture and values, and avoiding conflicts and arguments. When you are courteous and polite, it is easier to communicate in an effective, positive and friendly manner, leading to stronger relationships.

#### Tips to avoid conflict

- > Work through the situation using problem-solving or discussion.
- > Agree to disagree.
- > Change the subject.
- > Debate the issue calmly.
- > Excuse yourself from the discussion.

## Respect individual differences

*Respecting individual differences should be demonstrated in both verbal and written communication.*

Along with being polite and courteous, you need to recognise that others may have different opinions, beliefs or ways of doing things.

Staff differences may come from prior experience, learning styles or preferences. Differences between families may be due to parenting styles, routines, culture, religion or family structure.

### Respect for individual differences can be demonstrated by:

- listening carefully to others' opinions
- learning more about other cultures or practices
- having a conversation to explore differences
- negotiating to reach a compromise
- including a variety of family structure examples in the program
- inviting families to the service to talk about their culture or beliefs

### Example

#### Respecting individual differences

Dritiman and Stan are both educators who are having a meeting about next week's program. Dritiman mentions that where he grew up in Sri Lanka, Poya Day occurs each month to mark the full moon. It is a celebration and public holiday. He would like to put something in the program as it's a full moon the following week.

Stan has never heard of Poya Day and as it is September, the football finals are coming up soon and he wants to put that into the program. Stan asks Dritiman to explain more about what Poya Day means to Sri Lankans and how it is celebrated.

Once he has learnt more about the celebration, Stan suggests that they have some experiences around Poya Day as it is important that it is celebrated at the time of the full moon. Since September will last for another two weeks, they decide they can incorporate some football experiences in the program the following week.



## Forms of communication

*Communication is a two-way process that involves sending and receiving information.*

It is a natural human ability, learnt in infancy and early childhood and developed throughout life. Negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork and completing work tasks all rely on good communication skills.

It is often difficult to establish and maintain communication with others. You need to develop a high skill level to ensure effective communication with adults and children alike.

Here are explanations of different communication methods you may need to use.

	<p><b>Verbal communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Verbal communication involves speaking to others to communicate a message. Verbal communication may be with an individual, team or group, and may be sent in person or over the phone. It may be formal (such as in a meeting) or informal (such as talking to families during drop-off and pick-up times).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Gestures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gestures are forms of body language that convey specific messages in a particular culture or group. For example, putting your finger on your lips may be used to say, 'Be quiet'.</li> <li>➤ Some gestures have different meanings in different cultures; for example, in Australia, if you give someone a thumbs up, it usually means everything is okay. However, in some cultures, this gesture is considered rude.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Body language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Body language is a way of communicating by holding your body a certain way. It can add to your verbal communication or help you express how you feel without having to say anything at all.</li> <li>➤ For example, if someone is shy or uncomfortable, they may look at the ground or sit in a slumped position.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Facial expressions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The way your face moves as you deliver information provides many messages about your internal state. For example, a smile may indicate pleasure, whereas a frown may indicate illness, tension or concern.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Written communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Letters, emails, memos, text messages and newsletters are all forms of written communication. Effective written communication is clear, concise and can be easily understood by others. It can also be translated into various languages for families who have trouble understanding English.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Signs are pictures or words that are used to convey a clear message. Pictorial signs are often used to ensure those who are unable to read still understand the message; for example, toilet doors may have either a male or a female image on them.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Sign language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sign language (or signing) may be used by those with a hearing impairment, learning difficulty or physical impairment that makes speaking difficult. In Australia, people sign using Auslan (Australian sign language), one of several languages that use signs, body movements and facial expressions to communicate.</li> </ul>

## Verbal communication cues

*Verbal communication cues provide the listener with additional information about what is being said.*

Communication cues are often used unconsciously as part of normal communication; however, being aware of them allows you to modify your responses if you need to.

The following outlines examples of verbal communication cues.

<b>Emphasis cues</b>	<p>These focus attention on important information. For example, starting sentences with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'You need to know ...'</li> <li>➤ 'You need to understand...'</li> <li>➤ 'Listen carefully...'</li> <li>➤ 'Let me repeat...'</li> <li>➤ 'Let me explain...'</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational cues</b>	<p>These help the listener understand the order, sequence or relationship of the information. For example, starting sentences with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 'Today we shall discuss...'</li> <li>➤ 'To introduce...'</li> <li>➤ 'First of all...'</li> <li>➤ 'As a result...'</li> <li>➤ 'In conclusion...'</li> <li>➤ 'To summarise...'</li> <li>➤ 'To review...'</li> </ul>
<b>Mannerism cues</b>	<p>These are used to indicate something important is coming up. For example, change the way you speak by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ repeating the words or phrases for emphasis</li> <li>➤ speaking more slowly</li> <li>➤ speaking louder</li> <li>➤ stressing certain words</li> <li>➤ using a different voice tone.</li> </ul>

Voice tone is the use of pitch in language to give meaning. Most languages use tone and pitch to express emotions and other information.

### Examples of voice tonality

- Your voice may sound light and airy to indicate you are happy or content.
- Your voice may sound deep and 'growly' to indicate you are angry.
- You might stutter and sound breathless when you are nervous.
- Your voice may raise at the end of the sentence when you ask a question.

## Non-verbal communication cues

*Non-verbal communication includes the way you listen, look, move and react when communicating with someone.*

When your non-verbal cues match the words you are using, this increases trust, clarity and rapport. When they don't, it can lead to tension, mistrust and confusion.

Non-verbal cues tell the person you are communicating with a lot about your message, such as:

- whether or not you care
- if you are being truthful or dishonest
- how well you are listening.

## Open and closed questioning

*Two-way communication can be encouraged through questions and careful listening.*

An effective way to facilitate two-way communication is by using open-ended questions, as this involves both questioning and listening skills.

### Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are a useful and important tool to incorporate into your everyday interactions with children. They can also be used to effectively consult with children. This requires you to think about how your questions are worded and presented so that children will have an opportunity to explain and extend beyond a simple 'yes' or 'no' response.

Some examples of open-ended questions are:

- What is it like outside?
- What happened?
- What do you like to play with?
- How did you do that?

### Closed questions

Questions that require a 'yes', 'no' or another one-word answer are called closed questions because the response is limited. Some examples of closed questions are:

- Is it hot outside?
- Did that hurt?
- Do you like trains?
- Are you angry?

## Active listening

*Listening is a necessary part of communication; if people don't listen, they can't communicate effectively.*

If an adult is not listened to, they will not want to continue trying to communicate; it is the same for children.

When listening to someone, pay attention to their body language and the words they use, as well as how they present themselves and how they interact with others.

### Active listening tips

- Show the person you are focused on them and interested in what they are saying by moving towards them and maintaining eye contact.
- Check your understanding by paraphrasing what you have been told and asking open questions to clarify or seek further information.
- Let the person finish what they are saying before you reply to avoid interrupting.
- Listen attentively while being aware of what is going on around you.
- Use body language and gestures such as nodding to let the person know that they have your attention.
- Be open-minded so you don't immediately misinterpret what you are hearing.
- Try to see the issue from the other person's point of view.
- Pay attention to the person's body language, facial expression, tone of voice and other cues to understand how they are feeling and what they are trying to say.

## Body language

*Body language tells someone as much about how you feel as the words you use.*

With this in mind, think about the body language you display and be sure it reflects the point you are trying to make.

Crossing your arms, keeping your head down or frowning may show others that you are not interested in what they are telling you, that you are angry or upset, or that you don't care about what is being said. Smiling, facing the other person and maintaining eye contact can show them you are interested and welcoming.

Sometimes there is a mismatch between the verbal and non-verbal messages a person communicates; for example, what you are saying may be positive but your body language may be negative.

By noticing body language, you can gain more information about a person's mood or emotions. There are times when people choose to use body language to gain attention, let others know what type of mood they are in, or indicate whether or not they want to be spoken to.

Here are some actions that communicate non-verbal messages when interacting with someone face to face.

<b>Touching</b>	Touching another person may communicate that you are being friendly; however, this may make some people feel uncomfortable.
<b>Eye contact</b>	Glancing away may tell a person that you are distracted or not concentrating on what they are saying. Looking directly at the person and maintaining eye contact communicates that you are listening and taking the conversation seriously; however, be aware that some people find this intimidating.
<b>Proximity</b>	If you physically distance yourself from the other person, it may indicate that you are uncertain or feel your space is being invaded. If you stand close to someone, it may demonstrate intimacy. Be aware that it may make people feel uncomfortable if you stand too close.
<b>Posture</b>	A straight and open posture can imply interest or confidence. If you have your arms crossed or your body is slumped or turned away from the other person, this may suggest a lack of empathy or confidence.

### Example

#### Observing body language

Sammy is an educator and wants to make all families feel welcome each day. She likes to approach them as they arrive and speak to them individually. Over time, she has identified the best body language to use with each parent. One of her strategies is to watch their body language and then copy it.

Robin, one of the parents, has touched Sammy on the arm before, so Sammy knows that touching is acceptable for her.

Lina, another parent, steps back a little if Sammy moves too close. She also doesn't make eye contact. Sammy knows to keep a little distance between herself and Lina and not to expect eye contact. However, they still have great conversations and Lina is happy to share lots of information about her family.



## Confirming understanding

*While sharing information is important, its effectiveness comes from how well information is understood and applied.*

You can also gain insight into the understanding of others by asking them to contribute their ideas, share research, participate in processes or share information.

To confirm your understanding in a conversation you can:

- paraphrase – repeat back in your own words what you heard
- ask them to repeat the information in another way
- document your discussion
- ask the person to write down information.

At times, it might be appropriate to ask other types of questions to gain an insight into different perspectives and approaches.

Some open questions you could ask are:

- What approach has been the most successful for you?
- How do you incorporate a particular practice?
- How do you get the child to sleep at home?
- What are some of her likes and dislikes?

### Example

#### Seeking clarification

Kayla is a new education support worker at Mayberry Junior School. She is working with three grade 2 students to support their writing skills and knowledge. At the beginning of the lesson Mrs Hutchins, the teacher, tells Kayla that she wants the children to complete the activities on page 4 of their writing books before they start their creative writing.

To make sure that she has the instructions correct, Kayla paraphrases what Mrs Hutchins has said back to her: 'So, each of the children need to finish all of the tasks on page 4 of Writing Book 2a before they start their story writing today. Is that right?'



## Clear documentation

*When documenting information, you need to make sure that the other person reading it understands what you mean.*

The information needs to be clear, factual and have enough detail that your message is not interpreted in a different way than what you mean.

If your service has templates for certain types of information sharing, use them as all staff will be familiar with them. These could include documentation such as routines, daily logs, developmental information, medication authorisations, parent requests and daily schedules or plans. Using templates provides consistency in the documents and records kept at the service. It also helps to make sure important information is not left off a document, such as a signature or a date.

## Responding to requests

*Requests from a supervisor or family member need to be acted on in a timely manner and will require you to prioritise other tasks.*

Requests may include completing a task, such as adding something to the program, feeding a child a particular way, problem-solving with children or helping out with a routine.

When you are requested to do something, you should:

- listen carefully
- clarify your understanding
- ask additional questions if needed
- paraphrase the request back
- ask what the time frame is to complete the request
- respond with the action
- confirm that you have completed the task when it's done.

### Example

#### Responding to requests

Martina, a kindergarten teacher, has to take a phone call from a parent who is running behind schedule for group time. So that she doesn't alter the routine too much, she asks Brenda to start gathering the children inside for group time while she prepares what she needs for the session.

Brenda nods that she has heard her request and asks if Martina wants everyone inside now or just the older children. When Martina responds, 'All of the children', Brenda starts to move all the children into the room.





## Practice Task 8

### Part A

1. Which of the following statements show respect for individual differences? Select yes or no for each one.

- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Listen carefully to the opinions of others.   | * Yes | * No |
| b. Ask questions to learn more about a family's culture.   | * Yes | * No |
| c. Ignore a subject, culture or practice if you feel uncomfortable discussing it.                          | * Yes | * No |
| d. Work collaboratively by determining a time line and the priorities to complete a task for someone else. | * Yes | * No |
| e. Negotiate a compromise to move ahead with an action.  | * Yes | * No |
| f. Explain to a parent that there isn't enough time in the program to explore an area of interest.         | * Yes | * No |
| g. Invite parents/grandparents into the service to talk about their culture.                               | * Yes | * No |

### Part B

Select true or false for the following statements.

- |  |        |         |
|--|--------|---------|
| 1. There are five types of verbal and non-verbal cues:   | * True | * False |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ organisational</li> <li>➤ texting</li> <li>➤ emphasis</li> <li>➤ movement</li> <li>➤ tone.</li> </ul>   |        |         |
| 2. To use communication effectively, you need to be clear with your message, use active listening, use detailed documentation and confirm understanding of the message.                          | * True | * False |
| 3. When seeking information, it is better to use open questions so that the other person has the opportunity to explain and extend beyond the simple 'yes' or 'no' response of closed questions. | * True | * False |

## Defusing and resolving conflict

*Very often communication issues can be the source of conflict and you may need to defuse and resolve the conflict.*

Open communication in the workplace is about sharing appropriate information with your colleagues and supervisor, listening attentively, and communicating openly and effectively with the people you support. Resolving and dealing with conflict is a skill that takes practice. If a situation is concerning you, seek advice from your supervisor.

When supporting or responding to a conflict situation, arrange a suitable place to discuss the problem and make sure all the parties are able to attend. Everyone involved in the conflict needs to listen and be empathetic and sensitive to each other. It is often a good idea to have a neutral person act as a mediator to make sure everyone has their say.

The following are key communication skills you will need to develop and use.

### Be assertive

Assertiveness is different from aggression. Being assertive means being self-assured and confident. If you are assertive, you are more in control of the situation. Use positive, clear language and open body language. Avoid raising your voice, but speak audibly and clearly. Be clear about your own position.

For example, if you are defusing a conflict, you may say, 'Let's step back for a minute and think about this situation calmly. Then we can talk.'

### Listen attentively

Listening is a central part of communication. Listen to the other people involved in the conflict. Each person should be given time to share their perspective. Other people present should listen and pay attention to what is being said. Wait for the person to finish speaking and try not to interrupt. You should also paraphrase what you have heard to demonstrate you were listening. For example, you may say, 'You seem to be frustrated with the service. Is that right?'

### Be empathetic

Empathy is the ability to see a situation from another person's perspective. Being empathetic can be hard if you are emotionally affected by a situation. Take a moment to breathe, and then try to focus on what the other person is saying.

For example, if someone appears angry, you may use empathy to try to understand why they may be feeling angry, rather than focusing on the fact that they are angry with you.

### Allow time

The cause of the conflict may not be immediately apparent, especially if the situation is emotionally heightened. Allow others or yourself time to cool down and think before trying to resolve a situation. This could involve stepping into another room for a moment, or taking a day to think about what happened before addressing the conflict directly.

## Take ownership

If you are involved in a conflict, one of the most powerful things you can do is to take ownership of your part in it. This can be extremely difficult, particularly if the conflict is very recent and emotions are high. However, when you take ownership, the situation is likely to defuse quite quickly.

For example, if the conflict is about a misunderstanding, accept that you may have miscommunicated the information, and ask if there is any way you can improve the situation. This also encourages the other person to take ownership of their part in the conflict.

## Encourage a win-win solution

A win-win solution is when all parties are satisfied with the outcome. Help parties identify what they hope to achieve from the situation. Both parties should be involved in identifying possible solutions, and they should both agree on the solution before proceeding.

For example, if a person is complaining about having to work too much overtime, help them identify their desired outcome and see how it could meet the organisation's needs. Check with the person that they are satisfied with the outcome.

## Resolve conflicts

You may be involved in a conflict. You may also be mediating a conflict between others. When resolving a conflict, the goal is to find a win-win solution that satisfies both parties. To reach this outcome, help each person listen to each other's perspective. Ask open-ended questions and encourage active listening. If the conversation becomes heated, you may need to ask parties to separate momentarily or use calming techniques, such as a soft and low voice that still remains assertive. Resolving conflicts can often require several sessions.

### Example

#### Resolving a conflict

Two outside school hours care educators are having a disagreement about whether they should allow children to play outside before they have had a snack after school.

Sebastian believes that the children are old enough to know when they are hungry and will come in when they want to eat. Sally doesn't want to leave the afternoon snacks outside for long periods because it might spoil and attract insects.

During the discussion about the routine they listen to each other's reasons and are able to understand and appreciate the other person's opinion.

While they both agree that the children are old enough to know when they are hungry, Sebastian and Sally come to a compromise. They will change the routine to have one small afternoon snack when school finishes and another later on.



## Practice Task 9

1. Which of the following statements about defusing and resolving conflict are correct? Select all that apply.

- If the person is not telling the truth, you should interrupt rather than wait for them to finish speaking.
- Being assertive means being self-assured and confident.
- Empathy is the ability to see a situation from another person's perspective.
- You don't need to take ownership of the argument or conflict if you didn't start it.
- Both parties should be involved in identifying possible solutions.
- When resolving a conflict, the goal is to find a win-win solution that satisfies both parties.

## Summary

- Working with children in an education and care setting requires good organisation and effective teamwork.
- Work in collaboration with other educators to make sure procedures are followed, and that tasks are done on time and completed in the order they were planned.
- Routines are the responsibility of all educators; however, you will be required to be personally responsible for some specific tasks within the scope of your role.
- If you need additional support for a task, clearly communicate to your supervisor what you need and why.
- Prioritise tasks that are more urgent because they relate to the children's safety or impact what happens later on.
- Self-care means balancing work and personal life and doing things that contributes to emotional, mental, physical or social wellbeing.
- To maintain professional communication, you need to be aware of how you speak to others and what is and is not appropriate.
- Personal information is usually shared in confidence, so be respectful of others by keeping this to yourself.
- Respectful communication involves exchanging information between educators and families as well as developing healthy working relationships with other staff members.
- An effective way to facilitate two-way communication is by using open-ended questions, as this involves both questioning and listening skills.
- When documenting any information you need to make sure that the other person reading it understands what you mean.
- When resolving a conflict, the goal is to find a win-win solution that satisfies both parties.

# Learning Checkpoint 3

## Working collaboratively

### Part A

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

#### Case study 1

Nabila is a new educator at the service and has not worked with toddlers before. Her supervisor introduces her to the other two educators in the room and explains that she needs to work as part of the team, and to ask for help if she needs it.

The supervisor completes the induction of the room, showing Nabila what each piece of equipment is used for, and where the relevant documents are located, including policies, procedures and the room schedule.

1. What information did the supervisor provide that will help Nabila plan her daily work activities? Select all that apply.
  - The location of the room schedule
  - The relevant procedures for the toddler room
  - The purpose of the equipment
  - A reminder that she must ask for help if she needs it
  - The names of each of the toddlers in the room
2. Which of the following types of procedures would Nabila need to understand before being responsible for supervising children outside? Select all that apply.
  - Supervision of children
  - Engagement of children
  - Kitchen cleaning procedure
  - Child-educator ratios
  - Sun safety procedure
  - Outdoor play spaces
  - Kitchen cleaning procedure

3. Which of the following are situations where Nabila must take action, even though the task isn't part of her daily plan? Select all that apply.

- If she identifies that the children are at risk.
- If the supervisor asks her to complete another task because she is too busy.
- To support other educators who have asked for help.
- If one of the other educators decides that he doesn't want to do a particular task.
- If someone needs additional help when supervising children.

4. How would Nabila prioritise tasks to ensure they are completed in the designated time frames? Select all that apply.

- Complete the tasks that keep the routine and schedule on track.
- If the supervisor asks her to complete another task, she would need to identify the urgency of current task.
- Prioritise tasks that will have an impact on what happens next.
- Think about the time the task would take to complete.
- Consider the tasks she needs to complete and then choose to do the ones she likes best first.

5. List one benefit of maintaining your own wellbeing and one sign or symptom of poor wellbeing.

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## Part B

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

### Case study 2

Mika is a new educator at the service. As part of her induction Mika knows that she has to gather as much information about the service as possible. There are eight other educators as well as two supervisors and a manager working in the service.

1. When Mika talks to the other staff, what does she need to do to effectively carry out her work? Select all that apply.

- Be friendly, but still remain professional.
- Maintain confidentiality of private information.
- Respect differences of opinion, values and beliefs.
- Find out information for herself rather than ask questions.
- Carefully read the documents in the manager's filing cabinet on the enrolment forms.
- Speak up at planning meetings and ask questions to find out relevant information about the children in her care.

2. When Mika talks to staff and families, which of the following types of communication techniques could she use to communicate effectively? Select all that apply.

- Gestures and body language
- Facial expression and tone of voice
- Communication cues such as pointing directly at the person
- Open questions and active listening
- Writing quick notes and giving them to others to read later
- Paraphrasing the information to confirm understanding

3. When Mika is listening to the staff and parents to gather information, which of the following will help her to understand? Select yes or no for each one.

- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Keep all her attention on the person she is speaking to.  | * Yes | * No |
| b. Interrupt if she doesn't understand something.            | * Yes | * No |
| c. Check her understanding by paraphrasing information.      | * Yes | * No |
| d. Keep her focus on the issue at hand.                      | * Yes | * No |
| e. Try to formulate her answer while they are still talking. | * Yes | * No |

4. Mika needs to be conscious of her body language. Draw a line to match the following body language terms to the correct explanation.

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| * Proximity   | * Physical contact with another person may communicate that you are being friendly; however, be aware that this may make some people feel uncomfortable.     |
| * Posture     | * Looking directly at the person relays a message that you are listening and taking the conversation seriously; however, some people find this intimidating. |
| * Touching    | * If you physically distance yourself from the other person, it may indicate that you are uncertain or feel your space is being invaded.                     |
| * Eye contact | * If your body is slumped or turned away from the other person, this may suggest a lack of empathy or confidence.  |

5. Which of the following strategies should Mika use if there is a conflict with another educator about a routine? Select all that apply.

- Be empathetic
- Allow enough time to win the argument
- Be assertive, but not aggressive
- Tell the other person their mistakes
- Listen attentively
- Encourage a win-win solution





## Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

- 4A** Explore theories and contemporary research
- 4B** Reflect on personal values and beliefs

# Develop personal professional practice

*As an educator, you should value the idea of lifelong learning, personal reflection and looking for ways to improve your practice.*

Professional practice involves keeping up to date with current and new trends as well as investigating theories that interest you. You should view your professional development as an important part of your role as an educator; after all, it is something you will continue to do for the length of your career.

Reflection is an important part of your personal professional practice because of the benefits it brings to you as an educator and the contributions you can make to ensure the best possible care to children. Through your professional practice, you will be able to help build a stronger and more professional industry and advocate for young children.

## 4A Explore theories and contemporary research

*Early childhood research should be of interest, as this is the foundation of your job role.*

Knowledge is essential if you are to perform your job in early childhood education. You need information to carry out your responsibilities but also in particular areas of interest that you may have. For example, if you work with preschool age children you may want to know more about the ratios of educators to children and to understand about transition to school or behavioural and social learning concepts relevant for this age group. You may have an interest in the use of language and literature or want to introduce more technology or environmental concepts into the programs.



Reviewing a variety of sources will help you find the most relevant information.

Keeping up to date with current information stimulates discussion with your colleagues and peers and gives you the chance to ask questions about existing ideas and ways of doing things.

The information you gain from investigation into educational theories and current research can affect the way you:

- work with children and their families
- perform your role and carry out responsibilities
- think about your career path and ideas of training and developing new skills
- apply your methods and practice to children (your pedagogy).

### Theories related to early childhood

*Study in early childhood education requires that you understand the current ways of thinking.*

As an educator you may want to learn more about a known and accepted theory that underpins curriculum approaches used in early education. You might research articles or access books available from your training provider, other educators, local library or government websites. Emergent curriculum is a method used in early education and care that is child-led where curriculum and planning focus on the child's interest and strengths. Here is a brief overview of some emergent curriculum theories:

Theory	Core beliefs and responsibilities
Steiner	<p>Curriculum is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ regular and includes routines such as free play, artistic work, circle or group time, and practical tasks</li> <li>➤ inclusive of a variety of traditions and festivals from the community.</li> </ul> <p>Educators believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ love, warmth and guidance are required for healthy development</li> <li>➤ children’s physical, behavioural, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual aspects can be stimulated to foster creative and inquisitive thought</li> <li>➤ children should lead their learning</li> <li>➤ children should feel that the world is a good place</li> <li>➤ electronic media (television and computers) should be used minimally because they limit physical activity, may display inappropriate content and reduce the imagination.</li> </ul>
Reggio Emilia	<p>Curriculum is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ play-based</li> <li>➤ constructivist (learning is guided by the environment and community)</li> <li>➤ adaptable – planned experiences are extended based on children’s interest and feedback</li> <li>➤ linked to emergent curriculum.</li> </ul> <p>Educators believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ children express their ideas through ‘a hundred languages’, meaning they express themselves in many ways each day, such as through painting, music and drama.</li> <li>➤ the approach is aimed at instilling a love of learning</li> <li>➤ families and the community are responsible for children</li> <li>➤ families are partners and the child’s first teachers</li> <li>➤ the environment is the third teacher.</li> </ul>
Montessori	<p>Curriculum is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ child-initiated</li> <li>➤ thoughtfully prepared</li> <li>➤ planned based on each individual child</li> <li>➤ focused on sensory exploration and scaffolding</li> <li>➤ linked to emergent curriculum.</li> </ul> <p>Educators believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ children are eager to learn and gain knowledge</li> <li>➤ in the development of the whole child, including their physical, social, emotional, communication and cognitive areas</li> <li>➤ children should first develop order, then coordination, concentration and independence</li> <li>➤ the environment design, materials and routines help children to self-regulate their learning.</li> </ul>

Theory	Core beliefs and responsibilities
Abecedarian	<p>Curriculum is based on four key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ language priority</li> <li>➤ learning games</li> <li>➤ conversational reading</li> <li>➤ enriched care-giving.</li> </ul> <p>Educators believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ language is the number one priority</li> <li>➤ at-risk children develop well if provided with safe, responsive and stimulating environments.</li> </ul>
STEAM (Science, technology, engineering, arts and maths)	<p>Educators believe that children use their creative skills to play and explore naturally in the learning space. Educators with a STEAM philosophy, recognise that when they incorporate science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM or STEM) in children's daily learning and development, they will be placing a high priority on planning for Outcome 4 of the approved learning framework: Children are confident and involved learners.</p>

## Developmental milestones

Every child passes through key stages of development. Each child develops at their own rate, so there is a period of change between each of these stages.

Developmental stage	Approximate age
Infant (from birth to walking)	0–12 months
Toddler (from walking to preschool age)	1–3 years
Preschooler	3–5 years

Milestones are the markers that identify that a particular stage of development has been reached. Many planning processes use milestones in some way, as they are significant skills or events in a child's life that help educators, families and health professionals to monitor and support their development and learning.

The milestones of child development are divided into major areas called domains or areas of development. When considered together, this is called 'holistic learning and development'. The domains include:

- **Physical development:** The development of large muscles (gross motor skills) and small muscles (fine motor skills).
- **Social development:** The development of the skills of interacting with others and understanding how people communicate and send messages to each other through their words and actions.
- **Emotional development:** The development of feelings and how to understand and manage these, as well as developing an understanding of who we are and where we belong.
- **Cognitive development:** The development of thinking skills and the ability to learn, including problem-solving and understanding concepts such as mathematics and symbols.
- **Communication development:** The development of language including speaking, listening, reading, writing and body language.

These domains are the foundation of a quality education and care curriculum. The quality areas in the NQS and the EYLF are based on your ability to understand development, to develop relationships and to provide an environment appropriate to this understanding.

For more information on the ACECQA milestones based on the EYLF and NQS, visit: [aspirelr.link/acecqa-developmental-milestones](https://aspirelr.link/acecqa-developmental-milestones)

## Accessing research

*Current and emerging trends are influenced by the industry and its statistics.*

Research is often driven by current trends or topics that are important to educators, families, the general public, types of care being used, and the needs of children.

Early childhood education and care is a popular area for research. Statistics indicate that 49 per cent of all Australian children aged 0–12 years attended some type of childcare, and 17 per cent of all children attended formal care, (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

You can find out about new areas of research from:

- professional development activities and conferences
- professional discussions online as a part of a network or group
- from media and news reports
- the websites of peak bodies and organisations
- subscribing to associations and journals.

## Keeping up to date

*Professional associations maintain up-to-date information on best-practice principles, industry trends and issues.*

These organisations are often the first to respond with an industry response to changes that would affect their members and how it might affect the staff and the delivery of services to children and families.

A complete list of peak body organisations was provided in topic 1. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) lists several professional support and networking services including a range of organisations undertaking research at: [aspirelr.link/educators-providers-links](https://aspirelr.link/educators-providers-links)

## Searching for research

*During your search for information you must differentiate between facts and opinions.*

You can begin your online search with terms such as 'education and care industry developments' or search using the topic you are seeking such as 'opportunities for inclusion', 'safe sleeping practices', etc.

Information found on the internet is either based on the experience or opinion of others or on data and facts.

- A fact is something that can be proven to be correct. There is evidence to support it.
- An opinion is something that someone believes. It cannot be proven true or false.

Always verify information before you recommend it to others, or you use it as a basis for decisions. You must first consider quality and source of the information. Generally, you should only use information that is less than 10 years old. This may be identified by the dates shown on an article or the webpage, which indicates when the information was published, updated or copyrighted.

The most reliable sources are government or reputable organisations set up to provide information and support the early childhood education sector.

Reputable sites may be recognised in the following ways.

Site	Site address includes	Example
Government organisations	.gov	dese.gov.au
Organisational sites and foundations	.org	simplypsychology.org
Educational sites, including universities and colleges	.edu	utas.edu.au

Commercial sites (that contain .com) should only be trusted if you are already familiar with the topic or theory. Commercial sites may also be reputable if they are linked to a reputable site; for example, ACECQA provides a link to the Kidsafe website: [aspirelr.link/kidsafe](https://aspirelr.link/kidsafe).

Your supervisor, colleagues or networks can be a good source of information. Online networks can be helpful in finding resources that others have found useful and informative. Here are some examples of free online networks where you can access information on early childhood:

Network	Focus	Eligibility	Access	Website
LinkedIn	Developing a professional status and networking	Anyone	Membership	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/linkedin">aspirelr.link/linkedin</a>
Educators engaging with educators	Support and networking for all educators	Educators	Closed Facebook group (ask to join)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook">aspirelr.link/educators-engage-facebook</a>
ECE Facilitated Learning	Trainers answer study questions (learners can be from any training organisation)	Anyone	Closed Facebook group (ask to join)	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook">aspirelr.link/ece-facilitated-learning-facebook</a>

**Example****Staying abreast of industry changes**

Ruby likes to keep informed about changes in the industry and to maintain her knowledge. This is how she keeps up to date:

**Professional membership**

- Ruby joins Early Childhood Australia, reads their newsletters to gain up-to-date and best-practice information.

**Conference attendance**

- She attends a conference organised by Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) that highlights the NQF. She meets and has discussions with other educators working in the role of educational leader and second in charge.

**Online forum**

- She begins reading and posting on the Educators engaging with Educators online forum, to ask how others have advanced their career.

**Online network**

- She creates a LinkedIn account, hoping to develop professional relationships with people who could support her or offer her future employment.



## Practice Task 10

1. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- |   |       |      |
|---|-------|------|
| a. Early childhood education and care is a popular area of research.  | * Yes | * No |
| b. One of the benefits of reading about new ideas is that you can change the practices of your colleagues.      | * Yes | * No |
| c. Peak bodies are often the first to respond to changes within the sector.                                     | * Yes | * No |
| d. You can't believe anything you read on the internet.   | * Yes | * No |
| e. Becoming a member to an early childhood organisation means you can read about new information as it emerges. | * Yes | * No |

2. Match each term about developmental milestones to its example.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| * Social development        | * A 5-month-old baby begins to play with their feet and toes and brings toys to its mouth. |
| * Communication development | * An 18-month-old child holds out its arms to be picked up.                                |
| * Cognitive development     | * A 2-year-old child demands adult attention.  |
| * Physical development      | * A 2 month-old baby imitates the facial gestures of its parents.                          |
| * Emotional development     | * A 3-year-old uses two or three words together.   |

# 4B Reflect on personal values and beliefs

*Reflection occurs when you analyse and challenge the things you have done.*

The NQF encourages educators to reflect on their practices and to think about their skills and ways to improve. Reflection means thinking about the things that are important to you, examining your strengths and weaknesses, and setting goals to improve.

Some of the quality areas based on the NQF are outlined in the following table. Read these to see if any of these areas of your practice are topics you would like to investigate further.



Avoid framing critical reflection negatively; rather, view it as an opportunity for self-improvement.

## Quality area and related areas for reflection

Educational program and practice:

- Pedagogy
- Recording methods
- Theories and approaches
- Educational leader roles

Children's health and safety:

- Varied, seasonal and culturally rich menus
- Routines that allow flexibility to meet children's individual sleep, rest and hunger needs
- Awareness of asthma, allergy and anaphylaxis
- Availability of risk-taking activities
- Awareness of abuse and neglect

Physical environment:

- Simultaneous indoor/outdoor play
- Environmentally sustainable practices
- Natural materials and learning in the environment

Relationships with children:

- Responsiveness to lifelong learning
- View of children as capable
- Belonging, being and becoming goals
- Development of agency
- Recognition of the importance of children's mental health

## Reflective practice

*You should be open to investigating new ways of looking at things.*

Reflection is important because it improves practices which in turn helps services to provide the best possible care to children and help build a stronger and more professional industry.

When reflecting on the way you work, consider asking yourself the following questions.

<b>Applying knowledge</b>	Do I have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ knowledge of relevant legislation?</li> <li>➤ skills in implementing frameworks?</li> <li>➤ understanding of theories applied to learning and care?</li> </ul>
<b>Following procedures</b>	Do I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ understand and follow organisational policies, plans and procedures?</li> <li>➤ understand what the service philosophy means to you?</li> <li>➤ agree with all the procedures in place?</li> </ul>
<b>Ways of working</b>	Do I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ have knowledge of best practice and the theories behind these practices?</li> <li>➤ have professional role models such as a supervisor?</li> <li>➤ act as a professional role model to others?</li> </ul>
<b>Information gathering</b>	Do I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ monitor trends related to roles and responsibilities?</li> <li>➤ know how to report health and safety issues?</li> <li>➤ share information with colleagues and others?</li> </ul>
<b>Communicating</b>	Do I feel confident asking for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ support when others are busy with their own issues?</li> <li>➤ training to improve on areas that can be improved?</li> <li>➤ access to professional networks?</li> </ul>

## Reflect on personal values and beliefs

*Reflecting on your personal beliefs, means you are willing to find out about yourself and ways you can improve.*

Attitudes are influenced by personal life experiences, including life events and interactions with people. Your own child rearing and family expectations play a major role in the development of your attitudes.

Reflection means thinking about how your own values and beliefs align with practices used at the service and the theories and research behind these practices. For example, you may hold the value that children should be given the opportunity to experience a culturally diverse community. You might feel strongly about sustainability practices and believe that children should be introduced to these practices in every program and across the curriculum.

Reflection opens up ways to extend your abilities or to try something new. Through reflection, you can identify ways to improve or modify your practices.

At the end of a work day or after an activity with children ask yourself questions as a way of reflecting on your work with children.

- What worked well? What did not work well?
- Who participated, who did not participate?
- Were learning experiences age-appropriate?
- Did I include and assist other children to become involved?
- How could I have extended the learning experience?
- Was each learning experience effective and enjoyable for the children?
- Did I demonstrate enjoyment with the children?
- What feedback have I received from children, other educators, families or others?
- How does the feedback I received affect my pedagogy (teaching practices)?

## Ask others for feedback

*Supervisors, colleagues, families and children, can give you feedback.*

You might ask for feedback about the way you perform your role and interact with children, families and other staff. This can provide you with new insights that you might not have considered.

### Ways to get feedback from others:

- talking to people – during visits, interviews, spontaneous discussion, meetings
- ask for written comments from suggestion boxes, communication books, communication apps, emailing, etc.
- arrange one on one meetings where you can ask questions
- observe and listen to others
- use social media such as Facebook or in-house programs or apps
- conduct surveys of families.

## Develop a personal professional philosophy

*A personal philosophy statement expresses your values and beliefs about early childhood education and practices.*

You can write a statement that outlines what you value and hope to achieve as an educator. It is a personal statement that you can use as a guide for your own professional practices. It can be shared with employers or families, so they can read about your individual approach to early childhood education and care. It can be used in a job interview, where you may be asked to explain your personal philosophy. The potential employee may want to determine if your philosophy aligns with that service where you want to work.

Your personal philosophy will need to be reviewed as you gain experience and are introduced to new ideas.

A professional philosophy statement is written in the first person. This means you are writing about yourself, your opinions etc and you use terms such as I, me, my, mine and myself. Use specific examples to illustrate your points and to show how your values and beliefs align with your practices.

Some of the information you can include could be:

- what you believe and how you implement and support your beliefs.
- your values that guide your beliefs and actions
- the goals you have for children
- theories and approaches that guide your actions and provide example of these
- the role of families and the community
- the type of learning environment you like to create
- your individual strengths and areas of interest.

There are examples of personal philosophy statements online. When you develop your own personal professional statement, ask a supervisor to read it and provide you with some feedback.

### Example

#### Reflecting on ways to improve

Isabelle planned the following experience to encourage children to explore texture and colour. She placed yellow, blue and red blobs of paint on a table. She added a thick paint brush, a small jug of water and a cup of sand. She encouraged the children to use the materials as they chose.

Following the experience, she asked children and other educators for feedback.

The children said they would like to do it again. They said they would like to use foam rollers so they could roll paint onto their hands. One child said he didn't like having paint on his hands.

Other educators mentioned that there was too much water. This caused the paint to become thin and spilt from the table, making the floor slippery.

Isabelle used the feedback to reflect on her practice. She realised she didn't consider safety enough and could have altered the amount of water during the experience to cater for this. She decided that she needed to consider all children's needs to explore texture, so should provide a feely game in a quiet space.



## Advocating for children and the sector

*Advocacy is arguing or speaking in favour of a cause or belief on behalf of others.*

Most educators want the early childhood sector to have a higher professional standing in the community. Many feel an ethical responsibility to enhance children's health and wellbeing and to promote access to high quality early childhood education and programs for children.

## Advocacy groups

*Drawing attention to an issue can lead to change.*

Advocacy groups can be found representing all sectors of the industry including community run services, family day care, outside school hours care etc.

Here are some of the issues being advocated for in the early learning and care sector:

- promoting quality services for children and their families
- raising awareness of the importance of education and care
- increasing the level of childcare rebate funding available to families
- speaking up for children facing disadvantages such as disabilities
- providing additional financial support for vulnerable families to access quality early learning
- promoting the importance of a highly qualified and respected workforce
- investing in professional development and pay for early childhood professionals.

Advocacy campaigns mostly target people or organisations that make decisions or have influence. Governments control funding and regulation so they are the targets of advocacy campaigns. The public is also a strong ally because many of them have children and have interactions in the sector as well as voting and electing representatives to government who can influence decisions.

This table provides a list of some associations who advocate and representing early childhood.

<b>Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/aca-role-in-advocacy">aspirelr.link/aca-role-in-advocacy</a>
<b>Early Childhood Australia (ECA)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/eca-advocacy">aspirelr.link/eca-advocacy</a>
<b>Family Day Care Australia</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/fdc-representing-you">aspirelr.link/fdc-representing-you</a>
<b>National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/noshsa">aspirelr.link/noshsa</a>
<b>Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/elacca">aspirelr.link/elacca</a>
<b>Early Learning Association of Australia (ELAA)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/elaa-our-advocacy">aspirelr.link/elaa-our-advocacy</a>
<b>Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/cela-advocacy">aspirelr.link/cela-advocacy</a>
<b>Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ausccs">aspirelr.link/ausccs</a>
<b>Early Childhood Management Services (ECMS)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/ecms-advocacy">aspirelr.link/ecms-advocacy</a>
<b>Association for Children with a Disability</b>	<a href="https://acd.org.au/about-us/advocacy">acd.org.au/about-us/advocacy</a>
<b>The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)</b>	<a href="https://aspirelr.link/aedc">aspirelr.link/aedc</a>

## Ways to advocate

Educators can become involved in advocacy by joining as a member to an organisation who they feel will represent the issues that are important to them. They might choose to join or start an advocacy group or advocate as an individual.

Advocacy activities can include being part of a campaign, writing submissions to government or their representatives, being part of an advisory or reference group, gathering information and evidence through surveys, or participating in government forums etc. Showing support might mean sharing ideas within your local community through online and print media.

An example of current campaigns to raise awareness of early childhood include:

Early Learning Matters Week. This promotes the role of early childhood education and care in children's development and wellbeing. You can read more about this campaign here: [aspirelr.link/early-learning-matters](https://aspirelr.link/early-learning-matters)

## Practice Task 11

1. Select true or false for each of the following.

Reflection happens when you analyse and challenge the things you have done. It makes you assess each experience and use the answers to inform your future actions and practices. \* True \* False

2. Which of the following statements relate to a personal professional philosophy? Select all that apply.

- Provide details of your own childhood experiences.
- Describe how your values relate to your individual approach to early learning.
- Describe your special areas of interest in relation to early childhood.
- Provide examples of theories and approaches that guide your actions.
- List the changes you would make to the practices of other educators.

3. Give three examples of issues affecting the early childhood sector that are important to you.

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## Summary

- Researching into educational theories and current research can affect the way you work with children and their families.
- Current and emerging information can challenge existing ideas and ways of doing things.
- Professional organisations, peak bodies, and online searches can provide information on current research.
- Information found online needs to be verified before it is passed onto other people or for decisions to be based upon it.
- Reflection means thinking about the things that are important, examining strengths and weaknesses, and setting goals for improvements.
- Think about how values and beliefs align with practices and the theories behind these practices.
- A personal philosophy statement outlines what you value and hope to achieve as an educator.
- Most educators want the sector to have a higher professional standing within the community.
- Educators have an ethical responsibility to promote the rights of children and families to have access to high quality early childhood education.
- Advocacy campaigns mostly target Governments because of they control funding and regulation.
- The public can be a strong ally to improvements in the sector because they elect the representatives who can work to bring about change.

# Learning Checkpoint 4

## Develop personal professional practice

### Part A

1. Which of the following are correct about reflection? Select all that apply.

- Reflection occurs when you analyse and challenge the things you have done.
- Reflection is an ongoing process that encourages change.
- Reflecting on work practices shows other educators you are good at your job.
- Reflection is necessary so families don't complain.

2. Which of the following are reliable sources for researching information? Select all that apply.

- The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website
- The local newspaper
- A government website
- A newly employed educator

3. Use the following image to answer the question.



Milestones of development are interrelated, and when considered together, this is called 'holistic learning and development'. Match the developmental area used to the example based on the image.

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| * Cognitive development     | * The children run to the fires and use hoses to put them out.  |
| * Social development        | * The children dress in their costumes and work out who will be the fire chief, the driver and the hose carrier.  |
| * Physical development      | * At the fire scene, the children save a teddy bear. They hug the bear and say they will look after it until it gets better.                            |
| * Communication development | * The children work out the shortest route to the fire. They measure the hose to check it is long enough to reach from their engine to the fire.        |
| * Emotional development     | * The children are not sure about the name of the place where the fire fighters stay. They ask an educator and then make a sign saying, 'Fire Station'. |

## Part B

### Case study

Samira is new to the industry and in her first year of practice.

As part of a team exercise at her service, each educator was asked to collect evidence on their skills and knowledge. This was discussed as a team and a range of skills were identified along with some skill gaps and areas of interest to staff that could be developed.

Samira's evidence included:

- her certificate-level qualification
- examples of programs she has been involved in or helped to develop
- examples of how her practices align with current theories and research
- a statement of her professional philosophy for early education that she wrote as a student.

1. Which of the following questions are reflection questions Samira could ask herself after the team exercise? Select all that apply.

- Do I know what is expected of me in my job role?
- Should I try to improve or just stay how I am?
- What aspects of early learning do I have the most interest?
- Do I need to know more about the theories and current research behind my practices?
- If the team continues to tell me what to do, should I leave the job?

2. Samira discussed her interest in incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into the programs. Give two examples of where Samira could begin her research.

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3. Which of the following statements relate to Samira's professional philosophy statement? Select all that apply.

- Samira's statement might need a review now she has some experience working in the sector.
- Samira can provide examples of theories and approaches that reflect her values and beliefs.
- Samira will need to make sure her philosophy aligns with her employer otherwise she might lose her job.
- Samira can use a statement she has found on the internet.

4. After the team activity, Samira realises that she feels very strongly about the professional standing of educators within the community. Suggest two things Samira can do to advocate for her beliefs?

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