

Educational and recreational programs

Practice Note 13 | May 2010

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A children's service licence is granted subject to the condition that the children's service is operated in a way which ensures the safety of the children being cared for or educated, that their developmental needs are met and the health and wellbeing of the children is supported. Children's developmental needs can be met through quality educational and recreational programs in licensed children's services.

The provision of appropriate educational and recreational programs for children in licensed children's services is a requirement of the *Children's Services Act 1996* and the *Children's Services Regulations 2009*.

The legislative requirements are discussed below.

Programming requirements when applying for a licence

In applying for a licence to operate a children's service the applicant must provide an outline of the educational and recreational programs that will be provided by the service (clause 15(o) of schedule 1). In the case of an integrated service, an outline of the educational or recreational programs that will be provided for the children (clause 16(n) of schedule 1).

Educational and recreational programs

When a children's service is caring for or educating children an educational or recreational program must be available to each child that is:

- based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each of the children cared for or educated by the service
- that is designed to take into account the individual differences of those children
- that enhances each child's development (section 26B).

Display of educational or recreational program

An outline of the educational or recreational program must be displayed at the service (regulation 40(1)(e)).

Materials and equipment

A children's service must ensure that each child being cared for or educated by the service has access to furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the educational or recreational program provided to that child (regulation 93).

Materials and equipment are fundamental to a program. The design, placement and variety of materials and equipment provided assist in creating an environment that allows children the opportunity to explore, discover and make decisions.

The overall aesthetics of the service should be considered as this can assist in creating an environment that feels welcoming and inviting.

In selecting furniture, materials and equipment it is important to ensure that the environment enhances children's emotional and social wellbeing, promotes learning and meets individual needs.

Approved learning frameworks

Children's programs should be guided by the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (Victorian Framework), and the appropriate National Framework: either the *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* or *My Time Our Place - Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

The *Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* and *My Time Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* are available at: www.acecqa.gov.au.

Services receiving funding for the child care benefit from the Commonwealth Government are required to use an approved framework.

Inspection of a children's service and the children's program

During an inspection of a children's service an authorised officer will spend time observing the educational or recreational program in action. The authorised officer may also discuss the program planned and available to the children with the responsible staff members and ask to see the program documentation.

Resources

A range of resources to help make quality program decisions are available at www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/edcare/Pages/veyladf.aspx.