CHCECE056

Work effectively in children's education and care

LEARNER GUIDE

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Version Control & Document History

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This Learner Guide

CHCECE056 - Work effectively in children's education and care (Release 1)

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to work in a children's education and care context using effective communication and knowledge of job roles, responsibilities and service procedures to complete daily work activities.

This unit applies to individuals who work according to established policies and procedures and under the supervision and guidance of others in regulated children's education and care services in Australia.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian standards and industry codes of practice.

No occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

A complete copy of the above unit of competency can be downloaded from the TGA website:

https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCECE056

About this Unit of Study Introduction

As a worker, a trainee, or a future worker, you want to enjoy your work and become known as a valuable team member. This unit of competency will help you acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as an individual and in groups. It will give you the basis to contribute to the goals of the organisation which employs you.

It is essential that you begin your training by becoming familiar with the industry standards to which organisations must conform.

This Learner Guide Covers

Work effectively in children's education and care

    I.   Source and use information on work in children's education and care

    II.   Work within service requirements

    III.   Use effective work practices

    IV.   Work collaboratively

    V.   Develop personal professional practice

Learning Program

As you progress through this unit of study, you will develop skills in locating and understanding an organisation's policies and procedures. You will build up a sound knowledge of the industry standards within which organisations must operate. You will become more aware of the effect that your own skills in dealing with people have on your success or otherwise in the workplace. Knowledge of your skills and capabilities will help you make informed choices about your further study and career options.

Additional Learning Support

To obtain additional support you may:

- Search for other resources. You may find books, journals, videos and other materials which provide additional information about topics in this unit.

- Search for other resources in your local library. Most libraries keep information about government departments and other organisations, services and programs. The librarian should be able to help you locate such resources.

- Contact information services such as Infolink, Equal Opportunity Commission, Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, Union organisations, and public relations and information services provided by various government departments. Many of these services are listed in the telephone directory.

- Contact your facilitator.

Facilitation

Your training organisation will provide you with a facilitator. Your facilitator will play an active role in supporting your learning. Your facilitator will help you at any time during working hours to assist with:

- How and when to make contact,

- what you need to do to complete this unit of study, and

- what support will be provided.

Here are some of the things your facilitator may do to make your study easier:

- Give you a clear visual timetable of events for the semester or term in which you are enrolled, including any deadlines for assessments.

- Provide you with online webinar times and availability.

- Use 'action sheets' to remind you about tasks you need to complete, and updates on websites.

- Make themselves available by telephone for support discussion and provide you with industry updates by email where applicable.

- Keep in touch with you during your studies.

Flexible Learning

Studying to become a competent worker is an interesting and exciting thing to do. You will learn about current issues in this area. You will establish relationships with other students, fellow workers, and clients. You will learn about your own ideas, attitudes, and values. You will also have fun. (Most of the time!)

At other times, studying can seem overwhelming and impossibly demanding, particularly when you have an assignment to do and you aren't sure how to tackle it, your family and friends want you to spend time with them, or a movie you want to see is on television.

Sometimes being a student can be hard.

Here are some ideas to help you through the hard times. To study effectively, you need space, resources, and time.

Space

Try to set up a place at home or at work where:

1. You can keep your study materials,

2. you can be reasonably quiet and free from interruptions, and

3. you can be reasonably comfortable, with good lighting, seating, and a flat surface for writing.

If it is impossible for you to set up a study space, perhaps you could use your local library. You will not be able to store your study materials there, but you will have quiet, a desk and chair, and easy access to the other facilities.

Study Resources

The most basic resources you will need are:

1. A chair

2. A desk or table

3. A computer with Internet access

4. A reading lamp or good light

5. A folder or file to keep your notes and study materials together

6. Materials to record information (pen and paper or notebooks, or a computer and printer)

7. Reference materials, including a dictionary

Do not forget that other people can be valuable study resources. Your fellow workers, work supervisor, other students, your facilitator, your local librarian, and workers in this area can also help you.

Time

It is important to plan your study time. Work out a time that suits you and plan around it. Most people find that studying, in short, concentrated blocks of time (an hour or two) at regular intervals (daily, every second day, once a week) is more effective than trying to cram a lot of learning into a whole day. You need time to 'digest' the information in one section before you move on to the next, and everyone needs regular breaks from study to avoid overload. Be realistic in allocating time for study. Look at what is required for the unit and look at your other commitments.

Make up a study timetable and stick to it. Build in 'deadlines' and set yourself goals for completing study tasks. Allow time for reading and completing activities. Remember that it is the quality of the time you spend studying rather than the quantity that is important.

Study Strategies

Different people have different learning 'styles'. Some people learn best by listening or repeating things out loud. Some learn best by 'doing', some by reading and making notes. Assess your own learning style and try to identify any barriers to learning which might affect you. Are you easily distracted? Are you afraid you will fail? Are you taking study too seriously? Not seriously enough? Do you have supportive friends and family? Here are some ideas for effective study strategies:

1. **Make notes.** This often helps you to remember new or unfamiliar information. Do not worry about spelling or neatness, as long as you can read your own notes. Keep your notes with the rest of your study materials and add to them as you go. Use pictures and diagrams if this helps.
2. **Underline keywords** when you are reading the materials in this Learner Guide. (Do not underline things in other people's books.) This also helps you to remember important points.
3. **Talk to other people** (fellow workers, fellow students, friends, family, or your facilitator) about what you are learning. As well as help you to clarify and understand new ideas, talking also gives you a chance to find out extra information and to get fresh ideas and different points of view.

Using this Learner Guide

A Learner Guide is just that, a guide to help you learn. A Learner Guide is not a textbook. Your Learner Guide will:

1. Describe the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve competency for this unit.

2. Provide information and knowledge to help you develop your skills.

3. Provide you with structured learning activities to help you absorb knowledge and information and practice your skills.

4. Direct you to other sources of additional knowledge and information about topics for this unit.

How to Get the Most Out of Your Learner Guide

Some sections are quite long and cover complex ideas and information. If you come across anything you do not understand:

1. Talk to your facilitator.

2. Research the area using the books and materials listed under Resources.

3. Discuss the issue with other people (your workplace supervisor, fellow workers, fellow students).

4. Try to relate the information presented in this Learner Guide to your own experience and to what you already know.

5. Ask yourself questions as you go. For example, 'Have I seen this happening anywhere?' 'Could this apply to me?' 'What if...' This will help you to 'make sense' of new material, and to build on your existing knowledge.

6. Talk to people about your study. Talking is a great way to reinforce what you are learning.

7. Make notes.

8. Work through the activities. Even if you are tempted to skip some activities, do them anyway. They are there for a reason, and even if you already have the knowledge or skills relating to a particular activity, doing them will help to reinforce what you already know. If you do not understand an activity, think carefully about the way the questions or instructions are phrased. Read the section again to see if you can make sense of it. If you are still confused, contact your facilitator or discuss the activity with other students, fellow workers or with your workplace supervisor.

Additional Research, Reading, and Note-Taking

If you are using the additional references and resources suggested in the Learner Guide to take your knowledge a step further, there are a few simple things to keep in mind to make this kind of research easier.

Always make a note of the author's name, the title of the book or article, the edition, when it was published, where it was published, and the name of the publisher. This includes online articles. If you are taking notes about specific ideas or information, you will need to put the page number as well. This is called the reference information. You will need this for some assessment tasks, and it will help you to find the book again if you need to.

Keep your notes short and to the point. Relate your notes to the material in your Learner Guide. Put things into your own words. This will give you a better understanding of the material.

Start off with a question you want answered when you are exploring additional resource materials. This will structure your reading and save you time.

Introduction

As an early childhood educator, you have to work cooperatively and responsibly with those around you. This way, you will be assisting workplace sustainability by ensuring tasks are completed efficiently, accurately and appropriately. The most effective teams are those that demonstrate unity, purpose, direction and agreement. You can contribute to this by taking responsibility for understanding what skills, attitudes and knowledge are necessary for your best work performance.

Through your study of this unit, you will learn a range of skills and knowledge that will assist you in working effectively in a children's education and caring workplace.

I. Source and Use Information on Work in Children's Education and Care

It is essential to find out as much as you can about working in early childhood education and care, including information about the expectations, rights, responsibilities and boundaries of your role. Gathering information on the work will help you get ready when your time has come to work for education and care services. That is why this chapter will discuss the following things:

1. Identifying and accessing sources that provide current and accurate information on work in children's education and care aligned with the national quality framework

2. Sourcing and interpreting information on rights and responsibilities of own role

3. Sourcing and interpreting information on skill and knowledge requirements for own and related roles

1.1 Identify and Access Sources That Provide Current and Accurate Information on Work in Children's Education and Care Aligned with the National Quality Framework

You must be able to identify and have access to relevant and updated information on children's education and care so that you are well-informed of the work in children's education and care. The National Quality Framework can provide critical information on this subject.

1.1.1 National Quality Framework (NQF)

The National Quality Framework is an Australian Government agenda or plan to provide a better avenue for education and development for children. It is a quality standard that took effect in 2012 to help revise and refine education and care, specifically across day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten and outside school hours care services.

The NQF aims to promote a high-quality standard for children's education and care through the following laws, Regulations and standards:

- **The National Law and National Regulation** – These are the legislations and regulations that provide the national standard for children's education and care in the country.

- **The National Quality Standard (NQS)** – This is a part of the NQF that serves as the benchmark or standard for children's education and care quality of the country through seven quality areas.

- **Assessment and Quality Rating Process** – Using the NQS, the education and care services are regularly assessed and rated through the process provided by the NQF.

- **Approved Learning Frameworks** – These serve as basis for education and care services' programs and curriculum.

- **Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority** (ACECQA) This is the national statutory body who implements and oversees the application of the NQF in the country.

The NQF and other related information can be accessed through the ACECQA website.

1.1.2 Sources of Information

As you have knowledge on the NQF and its elements, you can now research on information related to work in children's education and care. Checking information against the NQF will make sure that the information is current and accurate.

The following sources of information are different groups and associations in the industry that can serve as a good starting point in looking for what you need.

Employer Associations

Employer associations in child education and care provide information about best practice, professional development, work health and safety, access to resources (such as practice/management manuals), industry news and developments and industry research and reports.

Some of the employer associations in Australia include:

- Australian Community Children's Services

- Child Australia

- Child Family Community Australia

- Child Wise

- Kidsafe

- Kids Matter

- Child Care Finder

- Playgroup Australia

- Raising Children Network

Professional Associations

Meanwhile, professional associations provide information about industrial relations, best practice, professional development, work health and safety, governance support, resources (such as practice/management manuals, parent resources), industry news and developments, industry research and reports, association publications, newsletters and job vacancies.

Professional associations in Australia include:

- Australian Childcare Alliance

- Australian Early Childhood Association

- Community Connections Solutions Australia

- Community Early Learning Australia

- Early Childhood Australia

- Early Childhood Teachers Association

- Early Learning and Care Council of Australia

- Early Learning Association Australia

- Education Council

- Family Day Care Australia

- Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)

Trade Unions

Trade Unions provide information about working conditions, including leave entitlements, salary and enterprise agreements, advice on work issues, your rights and responsibilities as an employee, industry news and events, industry publications, safe work conditions and training and development.

Trade unions relevant to the Australian education and care sector include:

- Australian Education Union

- Australian Services Union

- Independent Education Union of Australia

- United Voice

Staff Handbooks

Every workplace will have a staff handbook that is specific to that individual workplace. It typically contains significant information on organisational policies. These include leave entitlements, dress code/uniform, confidentiality/privacy of own information and that of families, work role boundaries, disciplinary action, reporting concerns, work health and safety requirements, emergency procedures, housekeeping, professional development and the centre philosophy.

Below are sources of information in the workplace itself:

Employment Contract	**Orientation and Induction**	**Education and Care Service (Workplace) Management**
	Buddy (or Mentor) Systems	**Industrial Relations Support**
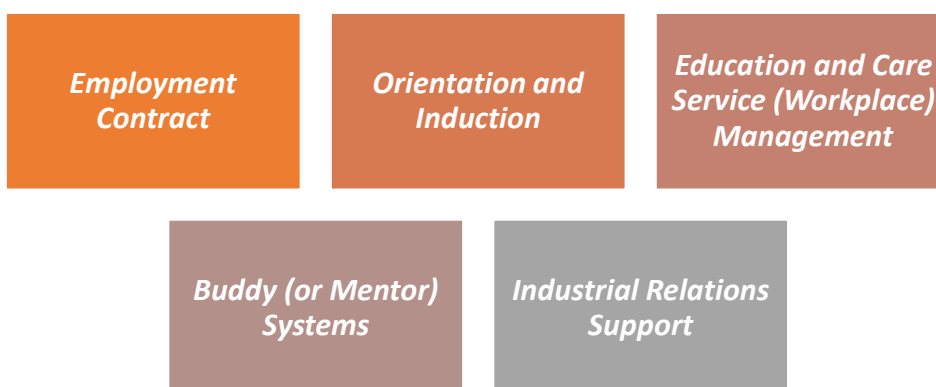
Employment Contract

At the start of a job, you will usually sign a contract of employment that will outline your job role, duties and responsibilities. This contract should also list the responsibilities the employer has assigned to you.

Your contract should indicate the required hours of work, the award or wage you will be paid, any superannuation and taxation details, the status of employment (full time, part-time, or casual) and who you will report to.

The contract should then discuss the specific terms of your employment, presenting a range of responsibilities, tasks and duties that you will have to complete within the workplace by following the centre policies and procedures.

It is important to read and understand your contract thoroughly before signing to ensure that both you and the employer are getting a fair deal.

Orientation and Induction

Your orientation/induction should occur on your first day, where you will be introduced to the centre's policies, procedures, responsibilities, workplace health and safety policies concerning all stakeholders coming in and out of the centre.

This is done so that the work to be performed and service routines can be explained and demonstrated (where applicable and possible). A thorough and informative orientation/induction presented by experienced existing staff can assist and guide you, as a new staff member, to settle in. This will minimise undue stress, confusion, pressure and even reduce the risk of accidents.

The orientation/induction process for a new employee may include:

- General background information about the centre, history, structure, services, promotion opportunities and opportunities to acquire new skills

- Discussion of the job description, responsibilities, expectations and overall working environment

- Details of relevant awards or agreements about wages, superannuation, taxation, employment conditions, rosters, recording hours worked, communication hierarchy within the service, organisational policies and procedures, etc. These are normally communicated through a staff handbook.

- Fire and emergency evacuation procedures

- Sources of advice and assistance within the organisation (e.g., Manager, mentor etc.)

- A tour of the organisation (including all rooms and functional areas)

- An introduction to other staff members

Education and Care Service (Workplace) Management

To get more information on working in children's education and care, it is very important to ask as many questions as possible so that the employer can clarify points. The Nominated Supervisor (Director) or the Supervisor/Assistant Director may present the induction or accompany you through the process with a senior staff member, but in some cases where the centre is run by a management committee, it may be the president or another officer who undertakes this role. Remember that you can inquire on any details you may want to know.

Buddy (or Mentor) Systems

On the other hand, you may also ask information from a mentor or buddy in the new workplace. Usually, an experienced staff member will be nominated to be a buddy and mentor new employees, volunteers and students. This person would become your first point of contact, but any of your colleagues should be able to offer support if you require assistance.

Industrial Relations Support

In the unlikely circumstance that workplace issues or disputes arise, and you need advice, there are many avenues of assistance. If you are a trade union member, they are your first point of contact. Other avenues include either of the following:

- Fair Work Ombudsman

- Fair Work Commission

There are also both Commonwealth and State laws, Industrial Awards, Enterprise Agreements and the Australian Industrial Relations Commission that provide frameworks for employment systems in the workplace.

As an Early Childhood Educator, there are a lot of expectations from you. The better you know your rights and responsibilities as an employee of an education and care service, the more you will be able to meet those expectations and become a valuable member of staff.

1.2 Source and Interpret Information on Rights and Responsibilities of Own Role

As a childcare educator, you will need to identify and follow certain roles and responsibilities in order to work efficiently and effectively. There is an expectation that at work, there will be many roles to fulfil and with each comes different degrees of responsibility. Staff members have various roles and responsibilities, each of which complements each other and ensures the smooth running of the service. These roles and responsibilities also come with your rights.

Employee rights include but are not limited to:

Leave entitlements

Protection from discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace

Right to work in a safe environment

There are different sources of information you can use to identify the responsibilities of your own role:

- Your job description – You may review your job description to see all the responsibilities expected of you to fulfil. This description may be included in your contract or your company website.

- Your supervisor – Your supervisor is a great source of advice and feedback. Consult them about what your daily responsibilities are and what is expected of you.

- Employment websites – You may search for the job role that you currently have and look at the responsibilities that come with it. A lot of employment websites would post for job vacancies and list down what they are looking for in a person and what the job entails.

- Human Resources (HR) – The HR department in your organisation should have a comprehensive guide as to what your responsibilities are. You may consult them for guidance and information on what you need to do to satisfy your role.

There are different sources of information you can use to identify the rights of your own role:

- Government websites – The law ensures that all citizens have rights and protects them against breach. Get more information on what your rights are by searching government websites.

- Peers and colleagues – Your peers and colleagues who have similar roles and responsibilities may also be a source of information on what your rights are. They are good sources of idea on what rights your role have.

- Human Resources (HR) – The HR department is responsible for taking care of the humans in your organisation. For any questions and clarifications that you may have about your rights, you may always consult them.

Finding information can be a lot easier with technology and the accessibility it provides. However, the information you find may not always be credible. You will need to further research any crucial information that you get.

The table below provides you with some of the questions you must check to verify that your research sources or materials are credible:

Things to Check
Is this material published within the last 10 years?
Is this article written by respectable authors?
Is this website registered by a government or educational institution?
Is this from an academic database?
Is there a proper reference or citation used for this?
Is there other related research that verifies this information?

Interpreting the information you have gathered is another crucial part of knowing your rights and responsibilities. Merely reading about them online or hearing them from someone is not enough to get a full grasp of the information. To interpret information, you may do the following:

- Consult your lawyer – For vital information concerning the law, you may need advice from an expert. There are free services that you may avail through legal aid.

- Consult your supervisor – Other information about roles and responsibilities should be clarified with your supervisor to ensure that you are able to fulfil your role.

- Consult HR – HR handles all concerns about the workforce. Any concerns, clarifications, or confusion that you may have can be addressed by HR. Ask for their help interpreting information that may have confused you.

1.2.1 Understand the Rights and Responsibilities of Your Own Role

As an Early Childhood Educator, your main areas of responsibility are to:

- your employer

- the children and families

- your co-workers

As a staff member starting a new position in an Early Childhood Education and Care centre, a job description should be provided that will outline your roles, duties and responsibilities.

It is very important that all staff work within these guidelines as they outline any laws, regulations and centre policies and procedures which govern staff actions and behaviour.

You also have to be aware of your position's requirements for customer service. Your 'customers' include children and their families or carers. The quality of the service you provide to your customers is fundamental to your role and is the primary function of your organisation. The requirements for service to your clients are detailed in Commonwealth and State Legislations and associated service standards:

- National Regulations

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

- National Quality Standard

Organisations may have their own set of standards for job quality and customer service for all staff. However, there may also be an extra range of indicators specific to individual job responsibilities. Customer service requirements include, but not are limited to:

- the quality of the relationship between early childhood educator/assistant and clients

- the timeliness of the support provided

- the responsiveness of early childhood educator/assistant to the changing needs of their clients

- the flexibility of early childhood educator/assistant

- the quality of communications between early childhood educator/assistant and others

- adherence to the organisation's code of conduct

- early childhood educator's/assistant's ability to work effectively as part of a team.

To be able to maintain job quality, it is essential that you understand the quality requirements of your job. Gain a clear understanding of your job description and talk with your supervisor or manager if you have any questions. Quality requirements may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- being aware of workplace policies and procedures and actively following them

- being aware of your own job role and responsibilities

- monitoring your own work effectiveness

- reporting and discussing with your supervisor any inability to meet work requirements or any changes needed

- working cooperatively with others

- contributing to the development of your team and organisation

Below is an example of the role of an Early Childhood Educator in an education and care centre from a *Sparkling Stars* position description.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR
Key Responsibilities and Duties

DUTIES OF THE POSITION

Provision of early childhood education and care

- Support parents and be available to discuss the child's experience within the program.
- Implement a high-quality early childhood program under supervision.
- Ensure a safe, caring and stimulating environment exists for all children and that the health and well-being of each child is a priority.
- Ensure the efficient, effective functioning of the service which meets the requirements of the regulatory and funding bodies and is responsive to changing needs and trends.
- Assist in ensuring that the early childhood building, grounds and equipment are maintained to a high standard of safety, cleanliness and repair.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Participate in meetings and liaise and network with Sparkling Stars staff.
- Assist in reporting any service developments, difficulties and opportunities.
- Assist in maintaining accurate records in accordance with legislative requirements and service policy and procedures.
- Undertake additional duties as required.
- Other duties within the scope of the employee's skills, competence and training as directed.

Centre Responsibilities

- Promote excellence in client service and in conjunction with the Nominated Supervisor, identify, review and implement strategies to improve service quality and efficiency.
- Maintain strong team relationships with colleagues and community groups, on a formal and informal basis, across all Sparkling Stars functions.
- Ensure the security of Sparkling Stars' property and assets and maintain a commitment to the care of all Sparkling Stars' property and assets.
- Participate as directed in training and education to maintain an up to date knowledge of emergency management responses.
- Provide administration, logistics and specialist support and advice during identified emergency events.
- Comply with Sparkling Stars policies and procedures.

Additional responsibilities and duties

It is very important to remember that all centre staff need to work within their job roles and responsibilities and not to go beyond that unless otherwise directed by management.

Additional responsibilities and duties may be given to staff at different times.

This will be an opportunity to demonstrate your further abilities to perform extra tasks and practise new skills and to step up to perform when the team requires it.

There are also many policies that staff will need to learn about which describe appropriate conduct within the job role. It is essential you become familiar with these as soon as possible.

1.2.2 Responsibilities and Boundaries of Different Roles

The responsibilities and boundaries of the role will vary depending on the particular job role. Following are some examples of responsibilities and boundaries that are common to each identified early childhood education and care job.

Early childhood educator

Example responsibilities:

- Caring for children between the ages of 0–6 years

- Ensuring the safety of the care environment

- Applying the centre's approved learning framework

- Ensuring the health and safety of children

- Collaborating with families about the education and development of their children

- Attending family meetings

- Attending staff meetings

- Ensuring relationships with children and their families are positive and respectful

- Observing and recording development and behaviour

- Planning and implementing experiences

- Applying basic first aid as required

- Following centre policies and procedures

- Caring for children between the ages of 0–6 years

- Ensuring the safety of the care environment

- Applying the centre's approved learning framework

- Ensuring the health and safety of children

- Collaborating with families about the education and development of their children

- Attending family meetings

- Attending staff meetings

- Ensuring relationships with children and their families are positive and respectful

- Observing and recording development and behaviour

- Planning and implementing experiences

- Applying basic first aid as required

- Following centre policies and procedures

- Supervising children at all times

- Taking children on excursions

- Immediately reporting concerns of suspected abuse

- Completing basic administrative tasks

- Housekeeping (of room and other areas of the workplace)

- Adhering to legal and ethical requirements of the job role

Example role boundaries:

- Adhering to confidentiality and privacy requirements

- Declaring conflicts of interest

- Not accepting gifts or money from families (or adhere to centre's monetary limit)

- Not asking for gifts

- Not contacting families after hours

- Not instigating friendships with families

- Not offering to look after children out of work hours

- Not using personal social media in the workplace

- Not adding families to own social media

- Not attending birthdays or special events of children outside of work hours

Early childhood leader/supervisor

Example responsibilities:

- Running regular meetings

- Supporting educators

- Leading and supporting educators to implement programs

- Reviewing and making changes to programs

- Reviewing and making changes to policies and procedures

- Ensuring the centre is working in line with the approved learning framework

- Role modelling professional behaviour

- Rostering educators

- Dealing with complaints or other issues with families

- Ensuring staff are adhering to WHS requirements

- Ensuring training is available for staff who may require it

- Establishing and maintaining external networks

- Completing required workplace documentation (reporting, budgets, purchasing etc.)

- Applying first aid

- Adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the role

Example role boundaries:

- Adhering to confidentiality and privacy requirements

- Declaring conflicts of interest

- Not accepting gifts or money from families (or adhere to centre's monetary limit)

- Not asking for gifts

- Not contacting families after hours

- Not instigating friendships with families

- Not offering to look after children out of work hours

- Not using social media in the workplace

- Not adding families to own social media

- Not attending birthdays or special events of children outside of work hours

Out of school hours care educator

Example responsibilities:

- Working with school-aged children

- Collaborating with families

- Developing positive relationships with children and families

- Complying with the legal and ethical requirements of the role

- Implementing programs for children

Example role boundaries:

- Adhering to confidentiality and privacy requirements

- Declaring conflicts of interest

- Not accepting gifts or money from families (or adhere to centre's monetary limit)

- Not asking for gifts

- Not contacting families out of work hours

- Not instigating friendships with families

- Not offering to look after children out of work hours

- Not using social media in the workplace

- Not adding families to own social media

- Not attending birthdays or special events of children outside of work hours

Before and after school care coordinator

Example responsibilities:

- Planning/developing programs

- Collaborating with families

- Developing positive relationships with children and families

- Complying with the legal and ethical requirements of the role

- Mentor and train staff

Example role boundaries:

- Adhering to confidentiality and privacy requirements

- Declaring conflicts of interest

- Not accepting gifts or money from families (workplace may have a monetary limit, however)

- Not asking for gifts

- Not contacting families out of work hours

- Not instigating friendships with families

- Not offering to look after children out of work hours

- Not using social media in the workplace

- Not adding families to own social media

- Not attending birthdays or special events of children outside of work hours

Integration aide (education support)

Example responsibilities:

- Assisting/supporting teachers in non-teaching work
- Attending meetings
- Working with children with special needs or with disability
- Participating in learning activities
- Preparing resources (teaching aides etc.)
- Assisting with individual/personal support requirements
- Working with families
- Review programs for effectiveness

Example role boundaries:

- Adhering to confidentiality and privacy requirements
- Declaring conflicts of interest
- Not accepting gifts or money from families (workplace may have a monetary limit, however)
- Not asking for gifts
- Not contacting families out of work hours
- Not instigating friendships with families
- Not offering to look after children out of work hours
- Not using social media in the workplace
- Not adding families to own social media
- Not attending birthdays or special events of children outside of work hours

1.3 Source and Interpret Information on Skill and Knowledge Requirements for Own and Related Roles

You are responsible for the implementation of the education program to the children under your care. In order to properly do this, it is imperative that you understand what the qualification requirements are for your role.

1.3.1 Qualification Requirements

The National Quality Framework took effect on 1 January 2012, with key requirements being phased in over time. In 2018, the National Quality Framework was changed and updated following a review and consultation. The 2018 National Quality Standard (NQS) was introduced, and its implementation commenced in February 2018 across all states and territories. The National Regulations describe the mandatory requirements regarding qualifications for services.

Regulation 136 Part 4.4 – Staffing arrangements, Division 6 – First aid qualifications have more information about First Aid Qualifications, Anaphylaxis Management Training and Asthma Management Training.

Below is a summary of the different requirements for centre-based, school-based and family daycare services.

- **Centre-Based Services - Regulation 136(1)**

    The approved provider of a centre-based service must ensure that the following qualified people are **at all times in attendance** at any place children are being educated and cared for by the service and immediately available in an emergency:

    - At least one staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who holds a current and approved first aid qualification

    - At least one staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current and approved anaphylaxis management training

    - At least one staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current and approved emergency asthma management training

    Services must have staff with current approved qualifications on duty at all times and be immediately available in an emergency. One staff member may hold one or more of the qualifications.

- **Premises on School Site - Regulation 136(2)**

  If children are being educated and cared for at service premises on the site of a school, the following qualified staff must be in attendance at the school site and immediately available in an emergency:

  - At least one staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who holds a current and approved first aid qualification

  - At least one staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current and approved anaphylaxis management training

  - At least one staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current and approved emergency asthma management training

  One staff member may hold one or more of the qualifications.

- **Family Day Care - Regulation 136(3)**

  The approved provider of a family day care service must ensure that each family day care educator and family day care educator assistant engaged by or registered with the service:

  - Holds a current and approved first aid qualification

  - Has undertaken current, approved anaphylaxis management training

  - Has undertaken current approved emergency asthma management training

  Each family day care educator and educator assistant must hold all three qualifications.

Further information on first aid qualifications, anaphylaxis management training and asthma management training can be found in Regulation 136 Part 4.4.

Based on content from the New South Wales Legislation website on April 15, 2021. For the latest information on New South Wales Government legislation please go to https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/

Minimum Requirements for Educators

Service Type	Educator Title	Qualification required to meet Regulations
Childcare Centre Pre-school Kindergartens	Nominated Supervisor (Director)	Minimum Advanced Diploma (or Diploma and studying towards an Advanced Diploma)
	Supervisor (Assistant Director)	Diploma
	Educator (Group Leader)	A Diploma (or Certificate III and studying towards a Diploma)
	Early Childhood Educator (Assistant)	Minimum Certificate III (or studying towards, except in South Australia, where all educators must obtain a Certificate III or equivalent before being permitted to educate and care for children)
Family Day Care (Legislation commenced 1 Jan 2014)	Co-ordinator	Minimum of a Diploma
	Educator	Minimum Certificate III (or studying towards)
	Early Childhood Educator Assistant (minimum requirements)	Current approved First Aid qualification; and has undertaken current approved Anaphylaxis Management training; and has undertaken current approved Emergency Asthma Management training.

1.3.2 Skills and Knowledge

Most Education and Care centres will have a defined structure where either the Director or a Qualified Early Childhood Educator will be the Nominated Supervisor under NQF requirements. A diagram that shows a sample hierarchy for an Education and Care centre is shown on the following page.
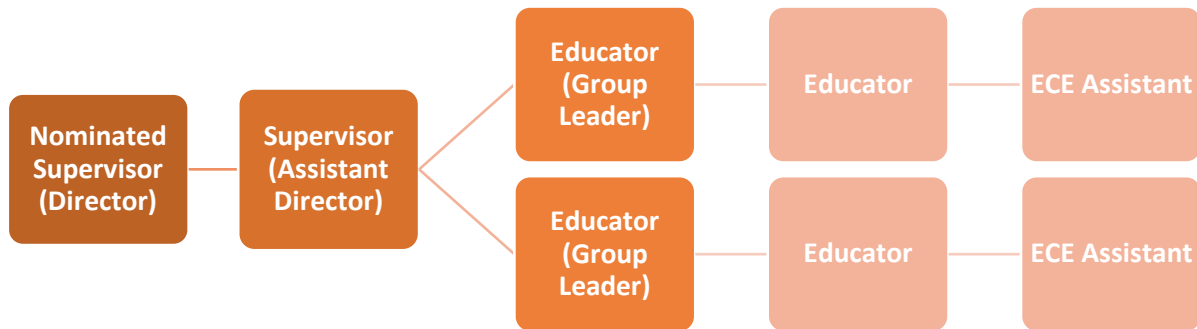
The following are examples of the kinds of skills and knowledge that may be required for each position, some organisations or centres may require additional responsibilities for each role:

Nominated Supervisor (Director)

Skills and knowledge necessary to:

- To oversee the general running of the day-to-day requirements of the centre.

- To manage and delegate staff to ensure the centre staffing meets regulations.

- To ensure that all staff work within the duties specified for their level of responsibility

- Supervise the quality of the centre's care and education programs for all age groupings.

- To develop and promote honest and open communication with staff, parents and children.

- Purchasing of resources and equipment as required.

- Establish and maintain liaison with community groups and specialist professional and integrate them into the centre.

- Maintain centre records, policies and procedures.

Supervisor (Assistant Director)

Skills and knowledge necessary to:

- Fulfil role as Educator (Group Leader)

- Step into the role of Nominated Supervisor (Director) as required.

- Assist the Nominated Supervisor in providing positive relationships between staff, families and children.

- To liaise with the Nominated Supervisor (Director) concerning professional issues in the centre.

Educator (Group Leader)

Skills and knowledge necessary to:

- Plan, implement and evaluate a developmentally appropriate program based on the needs and interests of their group.

- Develop a consistent, caring relationship with ALL children in the group.

- Make regular observations of the children as individuals and to show evidence of this in their planning.

- Ensure the health and safety of the environment and the children in their care.

- To maintain effective communication with parents/guardians of each child within your group.

Early Childhood Educator Assistant

Skills and knowledge necessary to:

- Work in conjunction with the Educator to ensure the smooth running of the room.

- Interact and assist children with daily routines and play.

- Develop a good rapport with parents, sharing information about the child's day.

- Refer any concerns problems to the Educator.

- Assist the Educator in ensuring the health and safety of the environment and the children in care.

- Contribute to the room program through writing observation, contributing own talents, ideas and skills in conjunction with the Educator (Group Leader).

Job Descriptions for each centre may vary to meet the particular needs of that centre. You must become familiar with the job descriptions that apply to your centre.

Your role in the provision of Early Childhood Education and Care is:

- Provide support to families and be available to discuss the child's experience within the program.

- Implement (under supervision) a high-quality early childhood education and care program.

- Ensure that the health and well-being of each child is a priority and maintain a safe, caring and stimulating environment.

- Ensure the efficient, effective functioning of the service which meets the requirements of the regulatory and funding bodies and is responsive to changing needs and trends.

- Assist in ensuring that the early childhood building, grounds and equipment are maintained to a high standard of safety, cleanliness and repair.

- Ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times.

- Participate in meetings and liaise and network with staff.

- Assist in reporting any service developments, difficulties and opportunities.

- Assist in maintaining accurate records in accordance with legislative requirements and service policy and procedures.

- Undertake additional duties as required.

- Other duties within the scope of the employee's skills, competence and training as directed.

1.3.3 Personal Qualities and Characteristics

It takes a special kind of person to work in early childhood education and care. It is a vocation – not just a job! There are certain personal qualities and/or characteristics that suit each job role.

Early childhood educator

Communicative	Creative	Patient	Trustworthy
Motivated	Empathic/ compassionate/ caring	Passionate for childhood education and development	Dedicated
Friendly	Has initiative	Has a great attitude	Able to work as part of a team

Early childhood leader/supervisor

Example characteristics:

- Communicative
- Able to deal with conflicts
- Creative
- Patient
- Motivated
- Empathic/compassionate/caring
- Passionate for childhood education and development
- Dedicated
- Friendly
- Organised
- Flexible/adaptable
- Analytical
- Innovative
- Supportive
- Has maturity

Before and after school care educator

Example characteristics:

Passionate	Trustworthy	Friendly	Motivated
	Creative	Caring/empathic/compassionate	Able to work as part of a team

Before and after school care coordinator

Example characteristics:

Communicative	Ability to lead	Able to deal with conflicts	Creative
Patient	Motivated	Empathic/ compassionate/ caring	Love/passion for childhood education and development
Dedicated	Friendly	Organised	Flexible/adaptable
Analytical	Innovative	Supportive	Has maturity

Integration aide (education support)

Example characteristics:

Communicative

Patient

Empathic/compassionate/caring

Able to work as part of a team

Has maturity

Respectful

Passionate about education

Flexible/adaptable

Resilient

Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre

Sparkling Stars is the simulated early years learning centre environment referenced in our learning resources.

Their sample job descriptions are published on their site. You can access them through the link below for further reference:

Sparkling Stars Early Childhood Assistant Position Description

(username: newusername   password: new password)

Further Reading

You can access the link below for further information on the roles and responsibilities of early childhood teachers.

Early Childhood Teachers – NSW Department of Education

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Employer Associations, Professional Associations, Trade Unions, and Staff Handbooks provide current and accurate information on work in children's education and care.

2. Different roles in children's education and care have specific rights and responsibilities related to each role.

3. When starting work in the early childhood sector, your job description, employment contract, and Orientation and Induction process will provide you with essential information about your own and other's roles, rights and responsibilities.

4. Other sources of information include your work colleagues, your supervisor and industrial relations agencies.

Learning Activity for Chapter 1

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

II. Work Within Service Requirements

Children's education and care services are required to operate under certain policies and procedures. These may be contextualised to the specific workplace, but these are grounded in the National Quality Framework (NQF) and its associated National Law and Regulations and National Standards.

It is essential that you seek clarification and advice from your supervisor if you are unceratin about any aspect of organisational requirements. Ensure you use designated lines of communication for formal communications and reporting. You must also follow organisational presentation standards that are designed to provide a safe and healthy environment and to maintain the professional image of the service.

In this chapter, you learn how to:

- obtain, interpret and comply with organisational procedures according to own job role

- seek advice and information from supervisors to ensure full understanding of organisational requirements

- use designated lines of internal and external verbal and written communication and reporting

- follow organisational presentation standards

2.1 Obtain, Interpret and Comply with Service Policies and Procedures According to Own Job Role

Policies reflect the service's philosophy and is the system of principles that is implemented as procedures. These outline the practices and procedures in the service. Procedures on the other hand, are the steps or action plan that show how a policy may be carried out.

Policies and procedures are essential to ensuring childcare services provide consistent quality care to children and families. They provide guidance and direction for educators, parents and management in clearly communicating the expectations and the daily practices within the service.

For example, the "Immunisation Medication and Management of Illness Policy" clearly outlines the exclusion procedures for Sparkling Stars Centre for parents and educators. Therefore, if a child displays signs and symptoms of a contagious disease, such as conjunctivitis, the educators will contact the parents to collect the child and be confident that the policy supports their decision as best practice.

2.1.1 The National Quality Framework (NQF)

The policies and procedures in individual childcare centres are informed by the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF includes the Education and Care Services National Law, Education and Care Services National Regulations, National Quality Standard, assessment and quality rating process and national learning frameworks.

National Law and Regulation

The Education and Care Services National Law was created to ensure that education and care services in Australia have a national standard. Each state and territory has their own version of the law, which is essentially the National Law with some adaptations.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations support the Education and Care Services National Law by providing further information about operational requirements.
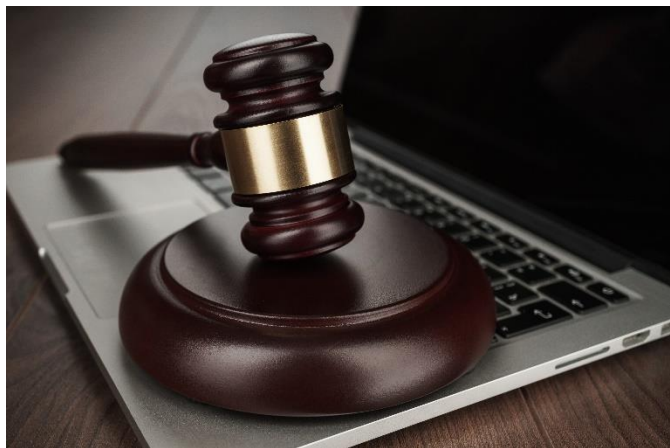
Assessment Rating

The assessment rating process is used to rate education and care services against five ratings. Services are assessed against each area of the National Quality Standard. The five NQS ratings are indicated below, from the best to the least:

5. Excellent

4. Exceeding National Quality Standards

3. Meeting National Quality Standards

2. Working towards National Quality Standards

1. Significant improvement required

Approved Learning Frameworks

An approved learning framework guides educators in developing programs that support learning. The approved provider and nominated supervisor must ensure that their programs align with at least one of the frameworks.

Approved frameworks include:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF, for children from birth to 5 years of age)

- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (for school age children)

- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (specific to Victoria)

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Each Quality Area of the National Quality Standards (NQS) has some basic requirements. These requirements can be considered as the expectations in the children's education and care service. The following table provides a general summary.

Quality Area	Basic Requirements
Quality Area 1 Educational program and practice	Stimulating, engaging education programs and practice. Programs meet the diverse needs of children enrolled at the centre. Programs and routines provide opportunities to extend learning. Promotion of children's agency. Staff apply reflective practice. Families are kept informed of their child's progress.
Quality Area 2 Children's health and safety	The centre ensures the environment is safe and healthy for all children. The centre promotes good health, with nutritious meals and physical activity. Risk assessments are undertaken to reduce, as much as possible, the risk to children. Centres have accident and emergency procedures in place.
Quality Area 3 Physical environment	Indoor and outdoor spaces/environments are fit for purpose. Physical environments are safe and kept clean. Spaces meet the needs of every child in the centre. Adequate numbers of resources are available. The centre promotes sustainable practices. Exploration and play-based learning are supported.
Quality Area 4 Staffing arrangements	Educators, coordinators and nominated supervisors are qualified and experienced. Staff are respectful and demonstrate ethical and collaborative conduct. Where possible, children have continuity of educators. Staff create safe, predictable environments and engage children in learning.
Quality Area 5 Relationships with children	Promotion of positive, respectful relationships with children. Interactions build trust and allow children to feel secure and that they belong. Children learn how to regulate their behaviour and have sensitive, respectful and responsive relationships with others.

Quality Area	Basic Requirements
Quality Area 6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	Engaging with families with the understanding that they are their child's first educator, and their knowledge, culture and experiences can help in achieving quality outcomes. Relationships with families are respectful. Families are supported in parenting. Families are supported from enrolment to be actively involved in the centre.
Quality Area 7 Governance and leadership	Continuous improvement of operations. This includes policies and procedures, record keeping processes, reflective practice, risk assessment, professional development and performance appraisals, and so on. Leadership promotes quality education and care and outcomes for children.

2.1.2 Policies and Procedures

Education and care services are required to implement policies and procedures. Under the new National Regulations (s168), early childhood education and care service must have policies and procedures that cover the following areas:

- health and safety
    - nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements
    - sun protection
    - water safety, including safety during any water-based activities;
    - administration of first aid; and
    - sleep and rest for children;
- incident, injury, trauma and illness
- dealing with infectious diseases
- dealing with medical conditions in children
- emergency and evacuation
- delivery and collection of children
- excursions
- providing a child-safe environment
- a code of conduct for staff members

- determining the responsible person present at the service

- volunteers and students on practicum placements

- interactions with children

- enrolment and orientation

- governance and management of the service

- confidentiality of records

- the acceptance and refusal of authorisations

- payment of fees

- dealing with complaints

Communication

- Diversity and equity

- Inclusion

- Interacting with children

- Parental access and involvement

- Code of Conduct

- Information technology/email/internet

Reporting

- Incident, injury, trauma and illness

- Mandatory reporting/child protection

- Health and safety

- Notifications to the authority

- Child progress reporting

Employment conditions

- Code of conduct

- Performance review

- Termination of employment

- Staff orientation/induction

- Work health and safety

- Participation of volunteers and students

- Recruitment

- Leave

- Confidentiality/privacy'

- Conflict of interest

- Social media

- Meals/tea breaks

Uniform/personal presentation

- Code of conduct

- Dress code

- Uniform

- Staff clothing

General work role activities

- Cleaning

- Housekeeping

- Administration/documentation/record keeping

- Meetings

- Reporting

- Health and safety

- Timesheets

Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre

As additional reference, you can access and review Sparkling Stars' policies and procedures through the link below:

Sparkling Stars Policies and Procedures

(username: newusername   password: new password)

2.2 Seek Advice and Information from Supervisors to Ensure Full Understanding of Service Requirements

If you are unsure or do not understand your job role or the instructions provided to you by your supervisor (either Group Leader or Nominated Supervisor-Director) it is important that you ask for clarification. It is always better to use your initiative and clarify your understanding than complete the task incorrectly.

Service requirements refer to all the necessary conditions that must be satisfied to fulfil your job. It is very important to ask for assistance or clarification if you are uncertain of what is required of you. It is always best to discuss the task with the colleague who initially gave you the task or information in order to ensure that you fully understand what they are asking you to do.

Serious mistakes can happen if help and clarification are not obtained. It is vital to ensure that you fully understand the task, especially when dealing with young children as any errors made could be hazardous and even life-threatening in extreme cases.

For example, if a child has a medical condition and, it is treated incorrectly, there could have severe consequences.

In order to maintain a safe environment, it is imperative that any doubts or confusion is clarified with authorised personnel.

Get Support When You Need It

Clearly communicate to your supervisor or appropriate person, the need for additional support to improve performance.

Additional support may be communicated in:

verbal exchanges

during meetings

in writing according to organisation practices

Training

Training allows staff to develop the skills and confidence required to carry out tasks and responsibilities effectively.

A staff member may feel that they need more training in order to work to their full capacity. It is the responsibility of each individual employee to ensure that they are continually monitoring their own work performance. It is important to discuss with your supervisor any concerns you have regarding your work standards. It is also the organisation's responsibility to equip their employees with the proper training applicable to the workplace in order to expect them finish their tasks within a specific duration. Trainings can be acquired within the organisation or outside the organisation. In the early childhood education industry, there are often changes and updates in legislation and practice. Often, these changes require the workers to update their skills and knowledge as well. The organisation has the responsibility to keep their employees and workplace practices up to date with respect to such changes. In the same manner, you are responsible to check if your skills and knowledge are at part with the standards set by the industry.

Most centres will have a review process, whereby a colleague and their supervisor or manager will sit down and have a detailed discussion regarding an employee's performance over a certain time period.

Performance Review

One way that employers decide whether their staff members require extra training and support is through performance reviews or performance appraisals.

These are used in many Early Childhood Education services and can be either formal or informal ways of assessing a staff member's performance.

Performance reviews are usually in the form of a written assessment or a performance checklist and are accompanied by observation, an interview or a discussion. They assist managers of organisations to:

- determine the level of performance of workers with the goal of maintaining or improving performance
- determine the suitability of workers for opportunities in higher responsibility positions
- evaluate training and development needs of workers
- open up lines of communication about performance between managers and workers
- ensure that organisational goals can be shared and built into performance expectations

This can also provide the employee with a good opportunity to inform their employer of any professional development they would like to undertake.

2.3 Use Designated Lines of Internal and External Verbal and Written Communication and Reporting

Internal communication and reporting are those that happen within your workplace. For example, between yourself and other staff, including management. External communication happens between staff in your workplace and outside clients, professionals and agencies. Internal communication may be either formal or informal, whereas external communication is usually formal.

Formal Communication	Informal Communication
▪ follows designated lines or passes through predefined channels.	▪ happens due to social and personal needs and flows in all directions.

Ensure that you always follow your organisation's policies and procedures for formal communication. Read your organisation's staff handbook and other relevant manuals and consult with your supervisor and other experienced co-workers about matters that you are unclear of.

Your workplace will have designated lines of communication and reporting (these may be specific forms to complete, processes to follow or a designated person to talk to) for formal matters within the workplace, such as:

- communicating concerns and issues (including child safety)

- requesting or providing feedback

- reporting incidents and injuries

It is your responsibility to report any matters of concern or safety as soon as possible.

Written internal communication methods may include email, forms, reports, newsletters, meeting minutes and agendas etc.

Formal verbal (spoken) communication may include pre-arranged meetings, appointments or interviews.

Your workplace will also have protocols for external communication, for example, with families, other professionals, government departments, agencies, communities and the media.

Hazard Reporting

- All staff should take immediate action to minimise or remove the risk associated with any hazards. This might involve removing equipment or isolating an area. You must work within your role and responsibilities when reporting risks or hazards.

- If staff are not able to control the hazard themselves, they must notify the supervisor immediately.

- Staff must document all hazards that they identified or were reported to them by clients, visitors and/or family members which cannot be eliminated immediately.

- All hazards must be documented on a Hazard Report Form.

- The completed Hazard Report Form must be completed and forwarded to the appropriate person within 24 hours.

Incident Reporting

- Staff must report all concerns, injuries, incidents or 'near misses' to their supervisor for hazard identification and control.

- All incidents must be documented on an Incident Report Form or similar.

- If staff are unable to complete an Incident Report Form at the time of the incident, they must complete the form within 24 hours and submit it to the supervisor.

WHS legislation sets mandatory reporting requirements for notifiable incidents. These are workplace incidents that need to be notified to designated WHS regulators.

Notifiable incidents are:

- Death of a person

- A 'serious injury or illness'

- A dangerous incident arising out of work carried out by a business, undertaking or a workplace

Organisations will have different protocols for reporting incidents and injuries, but these typically include completion of workplace documents such as the Incident Report Form.

2.4 Follow Service Presentation Standards

The main reason for personal presentation standards for Early Childhood Education professionals is to provide a safe and healthy environment for both staff and children and their families.

Your service's dress code should be explained to you at your induction/orientation and details may also be in the staff handbook.

You should aim to dress in a way that:

- protects the health, safety and hygiene of children and other staff
- is comfortable and non-restrictive to allow you to perform your duties safely
- presents a professional image
- provides an appropriate, friendly and positive role model for children
- is respectful of diverse cultures

Some workplaces may provide a uniform; otherwise some general guidelines are:

- wear clothes that are clean, neat and tidy
- wear clothes that are loose enough to allow you to move freely
- wear tops and shirts that have sleeves (short sleeves at a minimum)
- wear pants that are at least mid-thigh in length
- wear comfortable, safe footwear with no attachments (e.g., buckles) or spiked heels, open-toed sandals or thongs
- do not perfume (may cause irritation or allergic reactions)
- dot not wear pointy, sharp or dangly jewellery
- tie long hair back or up and ensure all hair is tidy and clean (a cap/hairnet should be worn if preparing food)
- always wear a shade hat outside
- wear sunglasses worn outside as needed or desired, but not inside

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Children's education and care services are required to implement policies and procedures based on the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

2. Seek advice from your supervisor if you are unclear about organisational requirements.

3. Use designated lines of communication for formal communications and reporting.

4. Follow organisational presentation standards designed to provide a safe and healthy environment and to maintain the professional image of the service.

Learning Activity for Chapter 2

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

III. Use Effective Work Practices

When working in an education and care setting, you will notice that all the activities/experiences are not just there to entertain the children. The activities are set up to meet the requirements of the program. As you will be a vital part of this plan, it is important that you use your time effectively to achieve quality outcomes.

Here are some things to remember:

Strive to ensure that your work is of the highest quality and standard possible.	**As you complete your work tasks, identify possible improvements and suggest your ideas to your supervisor.**
Take responsibility immediately and honestly for any mistakes done.	**Suggest solutions to a problem, even if you are not directly involved.**

There are a number of small things that you can integrate into your daily work plan that shows you are always striving to achieve quality outcomes. These can include:

- Negotiate and agree upon work goals and plans and request slightly more complex tasks once you have mastered current tasks.

- Immediately ask questions or seek guidance if difficulties arise in achieving allocated tasks.

- Always complete tasks within designated time frames and according to workplace instructions.

- Always complete workplace documentation related to your work activities and/or reports promptly and fully.

- Use tools, equipment and technology efficiently and safely to complete work tasks.

- Regularly communicate the progress of tasks to your supervisor.

- Identify factors that may affect quality outcomes that are beyond your control, such as inclement weather, inadequate resources, technology/equipment breakdowns.

3.1 Plan and Organise Daily Work Activities to Achieve Required Outcomes Within Scope of Responsibility

In order to fully contribute to the centre's achievement of their goals and quality outcomes, it is necessary for you to have a daily or weekly planner. This will ensure that you are aware of what you need to do, how you are going to do it and when you are going to do it.

There are many tools and resources available to assist you in planning your time effectively, such as:

- Activity logs
- To-do-lists
- Action programs
- Personal Goals Lists
- Priority Lists

You could even use a diary or calendar to plan your daily and weekly tasks.

Organising daily routine tasks have the following effects:

- You can identify tasks and arrange them in a logical sequence for completion.
- You can be punctual and become able to complete activities in an accurate and timely manner.

3.2 Act Promptly on Instructions and Follow Procedures Relevant to the Task

When you work efficiently and productively, it helps the whole team and contributes to the smooth running of the centre. Your ability to act promptly on instructions and to follow standard procedures affects others.

Following procedures correctly is important. There is a right way of doing things and a reason why procedures have been designed the way they are. Trouble and accidents may occur if procedures are not followed correctly. If you believe there is a more efficient way for something to be done, discuss it with your supervisor.

Every centre should have a daily or weekly schedule of routine tasks for each employee and some form of written, verbal or pictorial work instructions for each task.

An example of work instruction is provided in the table below:

Categories	Description	Example
Task	Describe the task or activity	Clean floor
Equipment/ Tools	Are there any equipment/ tools required?	Brooms, brushes, bin, mop, bucket, cleaning chemicals
PPE	Any safety equipment required?	Safety signage, plastic gloves
Risk Analysis	What are the safety risks?	Slips, falls, chemical, spillage, contamination, lifting
Required Training/ Prerequisites	What training is needed to complete the job	Location of the equipment, mixing chemicals
Required Support	Does the job require teamwork and why?	Communicate to colleagues and clients that where the floor is wet, that chemicals are being used, and where the safety area is.

Good planning is essential to effective performance, regardless of your job role. Remember to follow the PDCA cycle, which stands for:

| Plan | Do | Check | Act |

Always remember that you are part of a team, and the actions of every individual will impact on the team as a whole. Quite simply, the way you work affects everyone else.

Think about how you would feel if you worked with someone who has the following qualities or does the following things:

- Disorganised

- Late

- Does not bring or use the correct tools, equipment or safety gear

- Leaves the workplace in a mess

- Cannot be contacted

- Does not finish within designated timeframes and makes everyone wait for them.

If you do the same in the workplace, how do you think your co-workers will react or feel?

3.3 Identify and Clearly Communicate to Supervisor When Additional Support is Needed

It is very important to ask for assistance or clarification if you are uncertain of what is required of you. It is always best to first discuss the task with the colleague who initially gave you the task or information in order to ensure that you fully understand.

Serious mistakes can happen if help and clarification are not obtained. It is essential to ensure that you fully understand the task, especially when dealing with young children as any errors made could be hazardous and even life-threatening in extreme cases.

For instance, if a child has a medical condition, and it is treated incorrectly, there could be severe consequences. It is best to seek assistance from appropriate authorities and clarify any medical condition beforehand.

Vague instructions can contribute to an increase in Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) hazards and accidents. In order to maintain a safe environment, it is imperative that any doubts or confusion are clarified with authorised personnel.

It is vital that any problems or complications are conveyed to a supervisor or manager so that the task can be further clarified or passed on to another staff member to complete. Rather than leaving the task incomplete, it is always better to communicate any problems you are having and pass it on if necessary.

If you cannot complete a particular task due to lack of training, then it is important that you are trained in that particular area, by an experienced member of staff. This means the task will then be carried out correctly in the future.

Clearly communicate to your supervisor or appropriate person, the need for additional support to improve performance. Communicating need for support also evaluates how a situation can be handled. For instance, can a task be done by just one person, or does it require at least two persons to accomplish?

Requests for additional support may be communicated in a variety of ways, depending on the particular workplace protocols and procedures. These may include:

- verbal exchanges
- during meetings
- in writing according to organisation practices

3.4 Prioritise and Complete Competing Tasks Within Designated Timeframes

Operating efficiently means:

- You take the time to plan on a regular basis.

- You prioritise work according to the business needs.

- You handle interruptions and avoid being distracted by irrelevant tasks or irrelevant detail.

- You make full use of all available and appropriate technology/equipment.

- You ensure tasks are performed in a safe manner.

Begin by setting goals to give you direction. Goals keep you focused and motivated and increase your chances of achieving things.

The key is to follow the SMART goal-setting formula and set tasks that are specific, measurable, attainable, but realistic and timely. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely:

Specific
- The goals you set must be clear.

Measureable
- If you can't measure it, you can't do it.

Achievable
- A goal/outcome should be a challenge, but still reachable.

Realistic
- A goal/outcome must be doable.

Timely
- A goal/outcome should have a timeframe.

Next Steps

1. Define your goal – remember the SMART formula.

2. Set Sub-Goals – Break up your larger goal into sub-goals (or steps) is important to staying motivated, larger goals may take a long time to achieve. Sub-goals help you recognise achievement and celebrate when you have made progress. Each sub-goal you achieve is a step in the right direction.

3. Work through a plan of action – write down your goals, and keep them in mind and in sight as much as possible (write a list and put it on a board). Stick to time frames and deadlines.
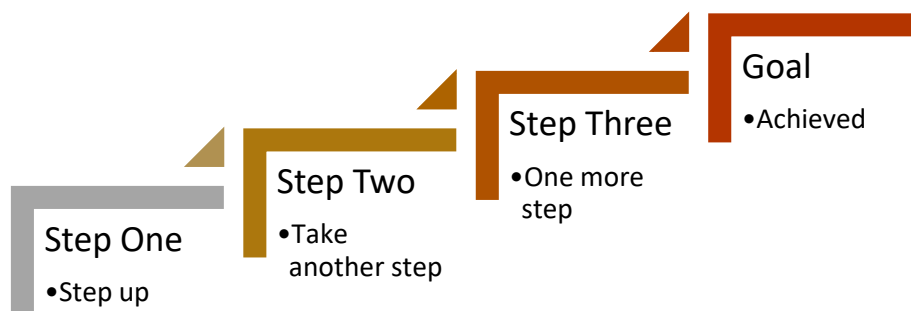
One tool that can be very effective in achieving goals is the Action Plan. To create your own action plan, follow these steps:

1. List everything you need to complete to achieve a specific goal.

2. Trim your list by getting rid of unachievable points on your list to keep it realistic.

3. Give everything on your list a priority – code them from A to F.

4. Group them into 3 categories

   ▪ Category 1- Next Actions: these are small tasks that you take to move forward, such as everyday tasks to perform in a small amount of time.

   ▪ Category 2 – Group Actions: These are tasks that rely on others, or you can give to others to complete.

   ▪ Category 3 – Goal Actions: for each goal, you will have a group of tasks that need to be performed to move it forward. If you are stuck, place a task on your Next Action list.

Here are some tips in achieving your action plan:

- If you can do it now and it only takes a minute, do it immediately.

- Make the decision to get your tasks done; if you complete your tasks then you can achieve your goals.

- Keep your Next Actions below 10 items; if there are any more, you will get bogged down.

- If something is on your Next Action list then complete it; otherwise, move it onto a different category to be done later.

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Plan and organise your daily work activities so that you can be punctual and complete activities in an accurate and timely manner.

2. When you act promptly on instructions and follow procedures, you help the whole team and contribute to the smooth running of the service.

3. Ask for additional support from your supervisor when needed.

4. Use the SMART formula to set realistic and achievable goals.

5. Prioritise tasks by arranging them in a logical sequence for completion and complete them within designated timeframes.

Learning Activity for Chapter 3

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

IV. Work Collaboratively

Collaboration is a fundamental part of providing quality education and care for children and their families. Educators work together to share knowledge and transfer skills and to identify areas for development or improvements to practice. Educators and families can work together to achieve the outcomes of National Quality Area 6 (working in partnership). Collaborative practice allows families and educators to identify support needs, enable smoother transition, and have diverse needs respected and addressed.

There are specific interpersonal and communication skills that can assist you in working collaboratively in a positive and effective way in the workplace. The development of these skills will enable you to enjoy your work more and to become a valued member of the team, which in turn allows you to participate effectively in the work environment.

4.1 Identify and Use Opportunities to Share and Seek Information to Maximise Cooperation and the Quality of Daily Work Outcomes

Information may be both shared and sought from others through informal conversations and more formal channels such as meetings, interviews and workshops.

The ability to cooperate and work effectively as a member of a team is essential in achieving desired outcomes.

Effective cooperation involves dedication and being enthusiastic when undertaking workplace tasks and responsibilities. Maintaining good relationships is also vital, as well as accepting feedback and constructive criticism from your peers.

Effective cooperation also involves communicating honestly. When voicing your opinion, it must not be at the expense of others. It is important to consider other people's feelings when stating your own views.

In order to be an effective team player, you must strive to ensure that the needs of all people are being met. You must also be conscious of attitudes and actions that may damage relationships. Effective communication and self-monitoring are the keys to building a successful working relationship with your fellow colleagues.

Well-balanced working relationships are built by ensuring you are always courteous and respectful of others.

Use Open and Closed Questioning

Open and closed questions are great to use when seeking information or feedback from others.

Open questioning can be effective as it allows the person answering to give more information. They allow the person to consider their answer more than they would when answering a closed question. Open questioning is useful when you want a conversation to continue.

Closed questioning should be used when there is generally only one answer, or you need confirmation or approval/permission or clarification. Closed questioning is useful when you do not need superfluous information.

4.2 Use Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication That Demonstrates Respect for Individual Differences and Work Roles

An ideal place to start is through communicating courteously. Being courteous demonstrates respect. This idea is based on recognising the rights of all team members to convey their opinions and beliefs. In order to avoid interfering with courteous communication, it is essential that you also learn to identify the barriers to communication.

Workplace communication is dependent on its purpose, the situation and the relationships of staff members. However, there are several strategies you can use to achieve courteous communication.

Empathy

The term empathy relates to being mindful of other people's feelings, viewpoints, opinions and beliefs and taking these into consideration when interacting with them. Being empathetic is crucial to building successful, productive relationships.

It is imperative that Early Childhood Education and Care centre staff have the ability to communicate effectively, in order to be successful in both their work and personal life. Empathy and trust are necessary factors in maintaining effective work and personal relationships.

Establishing trust and rapport is a key factor in the empathy process. Practical 'adult' discussions can be achieved by building up trust and rapport with people.

Effective relationships are developed by showing empathy and building trust. Trust is gained through effective listening and understanding, even if you may have a differing opinion or viewpoint. Trust also involves being non-judgemental.

Obtaining a solid understanding of how another person is feeling and what they want to accomplish is a helpful focus to keep in mind when listening to someone else.

Voice Tonality
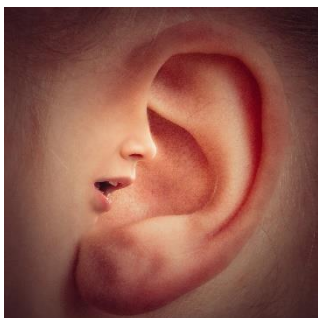
The tone of your voice is important when communicating with others. A voice that stays at the same pitch can be monotonous, and therefore lead to the listener 'zoning out' or being disinterested. The listener may also not be able to judge your feelings or emotions when you are speaking in a monotone. The tone of your voice should convey confidence and authority, yet also respect. Changing pitch, speed, volume and so on allows you to keep listeners engaged in what you are saying.

Verbal Cues

Verbal cues are used to prompt the listener to respond to what has been said or do something. These may be questions, statements or instructions.

These may be direct or indirect verbal cues. Direct verbal cues are those that are clearly articulated while indirect verbal cues are less obvious.

Below are some examples of direct and indirect verbal cues:

Direct verbal cues	Indirect verbal cues
• Please give that to me. • Please leave that here.	• Does anyone know if... • I wonder if we can still make it...

Body Language

Non-verbal communication is commonly called body language. You might observe the following examples of positive body language during conversations as part of effective communication:

- Arms uncrossed shows that you are open to the discussion and will encourage the other person to continue. It shows that you are not defensive and are taking on board what is being said.

- A genuine smile puts the other person at ease and shows that you are happy with the conversation, are agreeable etc.

- Nodding shows you are listening and engaged in the discussion and encourages the person to continue.

- Eye contact must be used sensitively as some cultures can find it intimidating or rude. However, where eye contact is appropriate, it shows you are interested in the person and not being distracted by what is going on around you.

- Sitting upright or showing a relaxed posture indicates to the other person that you are not feeling defensive or other negative emotions.

- Leaning towards the speaker conveys interest and engagement and encourages the person to continue.

- Using open gestures shows you are not defensive and are willing to engage.

- Respecting the personal space of the speaker ensures they do not feel intimidated or pressured into saying or doing something they do not want to do. As per eye contact, personal space needs to be considered from a cultural perspective. There is a fine line between being too close and being too far away (which may indicate a lack of interest or wanting to end the conversation).

- Mirroring the other person's positive body language is a way of putting the other person at ease, building rapport and showing your willingness to contribute to the discussion.

The following are examples of negative body language and are not conducive to effective communication:

- Lack of eye contact may not always be a sign of negative body language (it can be a cultural custom or may be a sign of the person lacking confidence, introversion or shyness). However, in many cases, it will signify that the listener is not paying attention or has no respect for the person speaking. This can lead to conflict, a lack of trust and inhibit rapport.

- Pursed lips can show that the listener is holding back their emotions or not saying what they really want to say. It can also represent disapproval or annoyance and can lead to conflict or the person not being honest.

- Rubbing the temple with fingers is often something people do when they have a headache. In a conversation, it can show that the listener is feeling 'pained', annoyed or bored by what the speaker is saying. The speaker may feel disrespected, and they may give up on the conversation, or it may lead to conflict.

- The body turned away from the speaker can show a lack of interest or that you are not comfortable around the other person. This can lead to an ability to develop rapport and a lack of trust. The speaker may then feel disrespected or uncomfortable.

- Placing hand or fingers over mouth can mean that you are trying to stop yourself from speaking (either from jumping in and interrupting or from arguing or disagreeing). This can put the other speaker off because it is clear there is a problem, and you want to speak or disagree.

- Yawning shows a lack of interest, disengagement and boredom. This is disrespectful to the speaker and shows that they are not listening. This can cause the speaker to end the conversation.

- Crossed arms can show defensiveness or that you do not want to be involved in the discussion. This can lead to tension or conflict.

- Slouching shows that you may be bored and lack interest or motivation. The speaker could lose confidence and not bother communicating everything they want to.

- Shrugging can show a lack of commitment or ability to take action or desire to respond to the other person. Shrugging can be dismissive, a sign of trying to avoid answering because they are unable to or may lie.

- Looking at their phone, watch or a clock in the room shows boredom and wanting the conversation to end. It may, however, also mean the person needs to keep an eye on the time due to a meeting or other commitment. Therefore, it cannot always be taken as a negative but often will be if this has not been made clear at the beginning of the discussion. The other person may rush to conclude their side of the conversation and may in fact, not communicate everything they wanted to.

- Rubbing hands over the face can show annoyance, frustration, tiredness, disbelief, or that the person is trying to keep their temper. This can put the speaker off and lead to conflict.

- Staring into space or at something else in the environment (such as out a window) shows a lack of interest or boredom. This can make the speaker feel disrespected, that their opinion doesn't matter, or that the other person has already made up their mind and what they are saying is irrelevant. This can lead to the other person not listening to the conversation and miscommunication, frustration and potential conflict could occur.

- Scribbling on a piece of paper can show boredom or lack of interest. This can be off-putting for the speaker because they may lose confidence or may start to focus on trying to see what the other person is writing or doodling.

- Fidgeting with clothing or objects is another sign of boredom or lack of interest. However, some people fidget without realising it and may still be quite engaged. Observing other cues such as facial expressions and the way they are responding will provide further guidance as to whether this is actually a negative approach.

Every day, you communicate with people using verbal and non-verbal communication. You need to be aware of how these may be interpreted by the people around you. Being able to use verbal and non-verbal communication can help you demonstrate respect and in turn create and harmonious working environment.

4.3 Communicate Information in a Manner That is Clear, and Confirm Understanding of Other Party

The point of communication is to understand and be understood. For this to happen, ensure that your communication style is clear and check that the information you are sharing has been understood by the other person. Remember that information may be shared with colleagues either verbally or in writing.

Techniques for effectively communicating information verbally include:

- Speak clearly, do not speak too fast or too slow.

- Give other people time to take in what you have said before continuing on with further information.

- Ask for confirmation.

- Consider pitch, tone and volume of voice.

- Show confidence.

- Make sure you have communicated everything accurately.

Some techniques for communicating clearly and effectively in writing include:

- Proofread the content for spelling or grammatical errors.

- Only include facts or the relevant information that needs to be communicated.

- Avoid ambiguity.

- Consider any possible language barriers.

- If writing by hand, making sure the writing is legible.

- Use plain English.

4.4 Listen to Requests, Clarify Meaning and Respond Appropriately

Listening is perhaps the most important communication skill of all. Effective listening is difficult for a lot of people. It can be tempting to interrupt and talk over the top of other people in order to convey their own stories and ideas.

In becoming an effective listener, it is essential to work on this and wait until the other person has finished speaking before you offer your own opinions.

Everyone likes being listened to and understood. However, a lot of people do not listen properly; they just wait for their turn to speak, so they can get their point across, without really listening to what the other person has to say.

Even polished public speakers such as politicians will stumble if they do not use appropriate listening skills. To be an effective listener, remember the following things:

- Stop talking; don't interrupt, and focus on listening.

- Remove distractions; don't shuffle papers, look out the window or do similar things.

- Maintain eye contact (where culturally appropriate).

- Empathise.

- Ask the speaker questions and repeat what they have said to make certain that you understand exactly what they are saying.

- Be patient.

- Avoid personal prejudice.

Active Listening

Examples of active listening techniques that contribute to effective communication in early childhood education and care setting include:

- Nodding as the person speaks shows that you are listening and engaged in the conversation, that you understand what they are saying, and it encourages the person to continue.

- Leaning towards the other person conveys interest and engagement. This encourages them to continue.

- Avoiding distractions shows that you are respecting the speaker and have given them your full attention. This stops the speaker from becoming frustrated and avoids a potential conflict situation because you have either not listened to what has been said or the speaker believes you are not listening.

- Giving all parties time to think about what has been said means that everyone has time to absorb the messages and intent behind the conversation. It also allows people to have time to use other strategies such as paraphrasing, asking for clarification etc. Time to think and absorb can help avoid miscommunication and conflict.

- Not interrupting is a way of showing respect to the speaker and giving them the opportunity to put forth their opinions, thoughts and messages. Interruption can lead to frustration, annoyance and potential conflict – especially if the interruption shows the other person has not listened.

- Tilting your head shows you are being attentive to the listener and often is a sign that you are considering what is being said. With other facial expressions, it can also give the speaker cues about whether their message is being understood, considered, agreed with, or disregarded etc.

- Eye contact needs to be used sensitively, as not all cultures believe that eye contact is positive or polite. When culturally appropriate, eye contact shows you are not being distracted. Using eye contact with other positive facial expressions will generally avoid the speaker feeling intimidated.

- Paraphrasing or summarising shows that you have listened carefully to what the speaker said, and you have understood the core concept of the message they are communicating. This helps to avoid confusion or miscommunication, as the speaker can confirm if you understood and correct you as necessary.

- Ensuring discussions are held in a quiet/private place means that both parties can focus on each other and their message without distractions or outside interference (such as others interrupting and putting forth their opinions). It also allows each party to feel comfortable that they can express their feelings in private, especially if the discussion is of a sensitive nature. Privacy will often allow the person to feel comfortable enough to speak openly and honestly.

- Hearing the emotion or message behind the words means that you can show empathy and understanding to the speaker. The speaker will feel more comfortable and encouraged to speak freely if they know their feelings and emotions are being respected.

- Observing the non-verbal cues of the person speaking allows you to identify whether the speaker's words are actually consistent with how they are feeling. This allows you to ask further questions to draw out the speaker's honest feelings or thoughts. Non-verbal cues are also important to observe when there may be barriers to communication, such as language barriers, disability, etc. Non-verbal cues are also important to observe as they can indicate that the conversation may take a turn towards conflict or the speaker may abruptly end the conversation.

When clarifying the meaning of something, here are some other things you need to remember:

- Be sensitive – When a person has given you doubtful information, this may not be deliberate. Always consider why a person may have said something. Is it truly what they believe? Is it based on their culture, their beliefs? Be sensitive and refrain from negating someone's experiences.

- Be open-minded – Clarifying information does not have to be an argument. People have different opinion can easily misunderstand a conversation. Be open to what they have to say.

- Speak clearly – When you are the one clarifying something, be aware of your tone of voice and the clarify of your words. Do not use jargons and do not murmur.

Some questioning techniques and their examples are included below:

- Use open-ended questions to gain more perspective and details.

    o How did you feel about it?

    o What was the effect of that on the children?

- Close-ended questions may also be used for clarification.

    o Do you agree with this process?

    o They have always done it, right?

- Lead the conversation to an answer using leading questions.

    o This way is more efficient, right? (look for agreement)

    o How early do you think this can be implemented? (add an assumption)

   o Would you rather do we stick to this or the new one? (provide options)

As a professional, there are certain expectations when it comes to how you must act. Responding appropriately is a must. Here are some of the things you need to remember:

- Be polite – People tend to react positively to others when you respond to them politely. Do not use cuss words or offensive language.

- Maintain appropriate eye contact – Eye contact is important to let the person you are talking to know that you are listening.

- Take a pause – When responding to someone, take a second to think about what you are going to say.

Remember the verbal and non-verbal communication techniques outlined in Subchapter 4.2. These techniques may also be applied when listening to requests, clarifying meaning and responding appropriately.

4.5 Exchange Information Clearly in a Timely Manner and Within Confidentiality Procedures

When you work in a childcare setting, you find out a lot of information about children and their families. For example, you may view private information including family's addresses and phone numbers or hear sensitive information about families' private situations including divorces, illnesses or financial problems. We all have the right to keep this information private; therefore, this information needs to be handled very carefully and with sensitivity.
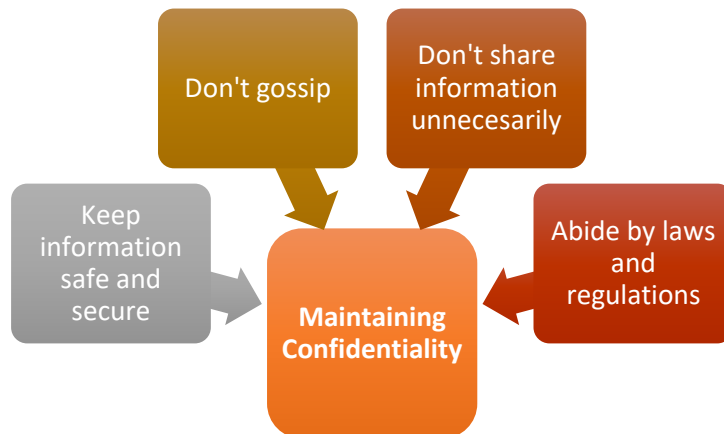
1. *Keep yourself informed of the laws and regulations regarding the handling of personal information.*

   Personal records need to be kept confidential and not communicated, directly or indirectly, to an unauthorised person.

2. *Do not share information with people who do not need it.*

   Information should only be shared with authorised people who need it to make decisions regarding the care and welfare of a specific child.

3. *Keep written information in a safe and secure place.*

   All personal should be kept in a secure location for example, a locker, filing cabinet or secure area.

4. *Do not gossip.*

   Share the information in a concise and factual manner with the people who need to be informed. For example, say "Johnny's parents wanted me to let you know they have separated, and she would like it if we could give him some extra attention and be understanding that this will be a difficult time for him and his family." It is unprofessional and inappropriate to gossip about a child or their family. For example, do not say, "Did you hear Johnny's parents are separating? What do you think happened?"

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

Addressing concerns about children can be challenging. Maintaining professional boundaries is very important.

Consider the following:

Information Confidentiality	Privacy

Information Confidentiality

When a family or other secondary source provides you with information, it is essential that you handle it confidentially. Confidentiality applies to all types of shared information and may include details held on enrolment forms, developmental information or day-to-day information shared at drop-off and pick-up times.

To maintain confidentiality, you must never leave any documentation where others can access it, such as on benchtops, in staff rooms or in your car. It must be stored appropriately (for example, in a lockable filing cabinet) where access is restricted to authorised people.

The information you gather, record and work with must be available to parents at their request, and their permission must be obtained before any records or information is shared with any person outside your service.

Relationships grow through respect and trust. Making and sharing judgments with others not only breaches confidentiality but is also unprofessional and may compromise your relationship with families and children. For example, if you overstep these boundaries by involving yourself in casual conversation about a family or child, it can be damaging to your reputation and may even cost you your job.

The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics provides guidance regarding confidentiality and your responsibilities to families, children, colleagues, communities, students, employers and yourself.

When you are interpreting documentation and other records about children, you need to identify specific information to help you plan appropriate experiences for the child or group of children.

Privacy

When dealing with children's records, be sure to act in accordance with privacy laws, particularly the Privacy Act 1988. The Privacy Act 1988 outlines 13 Australian Privacy Principles that service providers must observe when handling personal and sensitive information of people.

Under this legislation:

- In relation to privacy:
    - Individual must have access to their records when reasonable and practicable.
    - Individual must be given access to their records in the manner requested.

- In relation to confidentiality:
    - Information about the child must be kept confidential.
    - Information about the child is only given to authorised individuals.

In order to exchange information clearly recall the discussion in Subchapter 4.3 about clarifying meaning and responding appropriately. You may also use the techniques below:

- Paraphrase information – To make sure you got someone's point correctly, repeat what they said in your own words.

- Be straightforward – Do not include irrelevant information. Directly point out what you have to say.

- Mind your tone – Clearly may also refer to the tone of your voice. Speaking too softly or too loudly can disrupt a conversation. Make sure that the person you are exchanging information with is able to hear and understand you.

In a work environment, being timely is a must. Everyone has their own roles and responsibilities that may be affected by your own schedule. Your work should be done within specified timeframe as mandated by the organisation's policies and procedures. Below are some things you may do to be timely:

- Review specific schedules – Make sure that you are aware of when an information is needed. Check the dates and respond within that timeframe.

- Communicate and respond within work hours – It is very unlikely that people will respond to you on their day off or over the weekend. Always consider shift hours and day offs. Communicate and respond during shift as much as possible.

4.6 Use Oral Communication Skills to Prevent, Diffuse and Resolve Conflict Situations

A disagreement between two people (or groups of people) where one or more of them believe they will be disadvantaged is generally defined as a conflict situation.

Using effective communication techniques and interacting with honesty, respect and empathy can prevent most conflict situations. Conflict usually happens due to misunderstanding and miscommunication. Once both sides really listen and gain an understanding of the opposing point of view, a solution becomes possible.

In most cases, conflict situations can be dealt with immediately, at the interpersonal level, by reacting to and managing it in a positive way.

The best way to deal with conflict is to report it to your supervisor. the other is to try and ensure that the workplace does not contribute to the worsening of it.

However, if it is a serious or ongoing conflict or if you feel that it cannot be resolved quickly to everyone's satisfaction, it is best to report the issue to your supervisor. In the long run, the supervisor needs to know what is going on amongst the staff as well as with the children and their families. Such issues usually need to be documented for future reference, and the supervisor will do this.

It is helpful to be aware of:

when to report,

who to report to,

how to report,

why report, and

when not to report and why not.

It is important to find out the process and policies in the centre where you work that deal with this and follow them.

Your service Grievance Procedures will possibly be similar to the ones at Sparkling Stars.

Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre

Access and review Sparkling Stars' grievance procedures for committee, parents and staff through the links below:

Grievance Procedures – Committee

Grievance Procedures – Parents

Grievance Procedures – Staff

(username: newusername   password: new password)

Conflict Mapping Process

The first important step in finding a resolution to a conflict is to work out what the conflict is about. Before working on finding a solution, everyone involved needs to be clear and in agreement as to what the conflict is about. This can often be a difficult process if the conflict has been on-going for some time, and/or if it has become a major issue. One way of identifying the issues is to use a 'conflict map'. This is used to develop a bigger picture, so that the real issues are more evident.

A sample of a conflict map is provided on the next page.

What is the conflict?	What are some ways the conflict could be resolved?	Why does this conflict occur?
• • • •	• • • •	• • • •

This map identifies the underlying problems of those involved and looks more closely at the following:

- needs

- feelings

- fears

- anxieties

Start by:

- listing the people in the conflict

- identifying their needs, feelings and fears

Only the needs and fears which are relevant to the conflict should be considered, and the process should be done without taking sides.

There may be a number of different possible solutions as long as the needs and feelings of those involved are respected. Often, the key to finding a solution is to understand the differing needs behind the conflict.

The end goal should be to achieve a win-win solution, where everyone feels like they have won, and their essential needs have been met. This may involve some negotiation and compromise from all parties.

Conflict Resolution Techniques

The following effective communication techniques can be useful to de-escalate or defuse a conflict situation.

- Remain calm – This means that you are avoiding letting your emotions take over. In turn, the other person may calm down as well because they do not have anything to 'feed off'. Remaining calm is professional and allows you to listen and focus on the main issue/s at hand.

- Consider your own body language and non-verbal cues – This is important because the other person will often react to the slightest facial expression or movement. For example, they may find certain actions intimidating or aggressive, may look for eye rolls, sighing and other negative cues or expression that they can use to bolster their argument. For example, they may see an eye roll as being disrespectful and making fun of them and their feelings or thoughts. Also, consider the other person's body language and cues to predict how the other person is going to react and take appropriate action. For example, you may be able to see that they are calming down, or alternatively, they are escalating, and it is time to end the discussion.

- Listen actively – This means that you are showing respect for the person's feelings, thoughts and opinions. Use this in conjunction with positive facial expressions and body language to calm the situation.

- Ask questions to understand the other person's perspective – This shows that you are listening to them, want to understand them and working towards a solution.

- Avoid blaming or verbally attacking the other person as this will escalate the conflict quickly – Keep the discussion neutral and take away the emotion to assist in defusing the conflict. It also shows professionalism and the ability to keep the discussion focused on the issue/s.

- Allow the other person to speak without interruption – This will make them feel their issues are valued, and they are being listened to. Interrupting will only increase negative feelings and can escalate the conflict quickly.

- Clearly explain your perspective – This ensures that you and the other person can work towards understanding each other and why the conflict occurred. This can help in negotiating a mutually acceptable outcome.

- Don't talk down to the other person – This shows respect and your commitment to dealing with the conflict, as well as taking the other person seriously.

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Collaboration is a fundamental part of providing quality education and care for children and their families.

2. Educators work in partnership with families and other professionals according to the Early Childhood Education and Care Code of Ethics.

3. The ability to cooperate, share information and work effectively as a member of a team is essential in achieving desired outcomes.

4. Use verbal and non-verbal communication techniques, such as empathy, voice tonality, verbal cues, open and closed questioning, body language and active listening to communicate effectively and demonstrate respect.

5. Communicate information clearly, both verbally and in written form, and confirm understanding.

6. Maintain confidentiality procedures when exchanging information.

7. Use oral communication skills to prevent, defuse and resolve conflict situations.

Learning Activity for Chapter 4

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

V. Develop Personal Professional Practice

As an early childhood educator, you need to develop your personal professional practices and maintain them. These are your preferred styles, strategies and methods of teaching and care for children. Developing these practices helps you continuously improve on your teaching practices, making you more competent and flexible as an educator. It also helps you have a deeper understanding of your role as a part of children's development. To help you develop personal professional practices, this chapter will discuss:

- Investigating theories and contemporary research relating to early childhood

- Reflecting on personal values and beliefs in relation to early childhood and how these align with theories and contemporary research

- Establishing a personal professional philosophy in relation to early childhood

- Recognising the role of the early childhood educator in advocating for children and the sector

5.1 Explore Theories and Contemporary Research Relating to Early Childhood

Theories are ideas or concepts that try to explain or predict. The theories and research on early childhood revolve on understanding the several aspects of child development and learning, including:

- Emotional

- Psychological

- Cognitive (Mental)

- Physical

- Language

- Social

Having knowledge on the different theories and research on early childhood development will benefit those in the early childhood education as these theories help in preparing workers and educators on how to approach the children in their care based on the different aspects mentioned. Thus, it is crucial for you to explore and review the different theories and contemporary research on early childhood. You need to have foundational knowledge of child developmental theories and early childhood learning.

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) cites five general theories that concerns a child's learning and development, which will be discussed further:

Developmental Theories

Socio-Cultural Theories

Socio-Behavioural Theories

Critical Theories

Post-Structuralist Theories
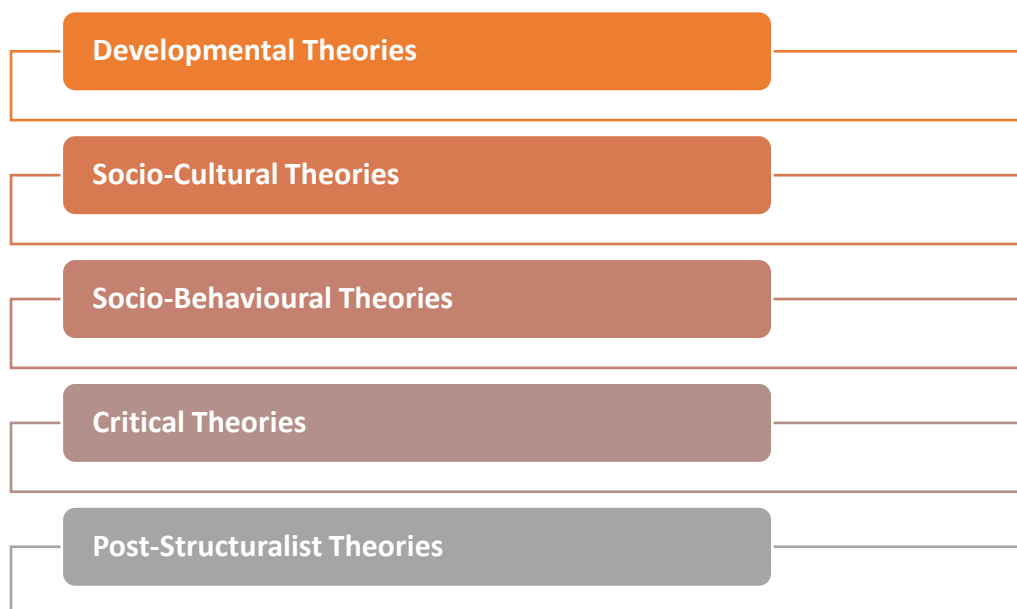
Developmental Theories

Developmental theories on early childhood focuses on describing and understanding the several processes of change in the children's learning and development over time. These theories generally discuss the existence of a predictable pattern of child development and learning. A prominent view of developmental theories is that child development is made of various separate stages with different set of behaviours observed per stage. Some of the theories related to this notion include:

- Planes of Development (Maria Montessori)

- Seven-year Periods (Rudolf Steiner)

- Stages of Moral Development (Lawrence Kohlberg)

- Stages of Personal and Social Development (Erik Erikson)

- Stage Theory (Jean Piaget)

Developmental theories place importance in the child as an individual, and that there are behaviours that are deemed normal and acting out of the normal behaviour, in a sense, will label a child abnormal or lack in development. Thus, this kind of view drew criticism to modern theorists, saying that development is assumed universal, meaning there is only a particular set of behaviour expected from a child. This also sets back the children as they are not viewed in a social, cultural and political aspects, and are seen only as lacking.

In considering the developmental theories, remember that early childhood education and care sector prefer the traditional view than the modern view of the theories.

Socio-Cultural Theories

Socio-cultural theories are concerned with how a social environment affect the development of a child. This puts a child's learning in the context of the surrounding social units, such as the family, the community and society. This means that children may have different set of behaviours and practices depending on the child's community and how the community influences learning and development, mainly through culture and traditions. Popular socio-cultural theorists include **Lev Vygotsky** and **Barbara Rogoff**.

The socio-cultural view presents two recurring aspects:

- **Fundamentally Cultural** – where the educators are cultural influencers, helping children learn and develop customs and practices of their social circle.

- **Zone of Proximal Development –** where children cannot learn by themselves, yet can and will learn with guidance of a person more knowledgeable (e.g. adults, peers) through social interaction

Socio-Behaviourist Theories

Socio-behavioural theories deals with the role of social experiences in shaping children's behaviour. These theories focus more on the learning ability of a child rather than the development itself.

The theories also focus on the educator as an important influencer of behaviour to children, and those educators decide on what to learn, depending on the children's behaviour and response. The theories rely on motivators (rewards and reinforcements) to teach the right behaviour to the children.

Socio-behaviourist theories can be split into two approaches:

1. **Classical Behaviourism (Pavlov)** – involves using of external stimuli to alter a pre-existing behaviour or reaction or produce a new one.

2. **Social Learning Theory (Bandura)** – explains the importance of observing other people's behaviours, attitudes and emotional responses and incorporating them into their own behaviour.

Critical Theories

Critical theories involve challenging the assumptions on the knowledge and understanding, and how they are used in early childhood development and learning. Aptly named, the theories give a critical perspective on the current curriculum for early learning for children. The theories encourage educators to question and evaluate what they are teaching, to make sure they are still relevant and valuable to the children.

The kind of thinking critical theories promotes give opportunities to revise and create new ways of teaching that can encompass a wider aspect of society, as opposed to some issues of racial or cultural differences.

Post-Structuralist Theories

Post-structuralist theories teach that there are numerous ways of children's learning and development, as opposed to a single way of learning. This means that educators can create multiple methods of learning and development and is highly dependent on the children's reaction and attitude, while still reinforcing correct social behaviour. These theories view children as able to influence their lives through social interaction and modelling.

5.2 Reflect on Personal Values and Beliefs in Relation to Early Childhood and How These Align with Theories and Contemporary Research

After investigating the theories and contemporary research related to early childhood, you need to consider if some, or all, of the theories are in harmony with your personal values and beliefs. This is done through reflecting your values and beliefs related to early childhood.

5.2.1 What is Reflection?

"Reflective practice is a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. Its intention is to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning. As professionals, early childhood educators examine what happens in their settings and reflect on what they might change.

Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. Educators often frame their reflective practice within a set of overarching questions, developing more specific questions for particular areas of enquiry."

Sourced from Belonging, Being, Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, used under CC BY 4.0. Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority

Reflective practices are methods of evaluation and learning from situations, issues or concerns that occur in the workplace, the childcare service. Reflections serve as a way for educators and childcare workers to analyse the experiences and incidents that has happened or can happen. In turn, reflecting on these helps create or revise better decisions and actions, for the benefit of the educator, students/children and the childcare services.

Benefits of Reflecting

Reflective practices provide educators means of refining and improving their professional practices to be an effective teacher to their students.

Meaningful Reflection

A reflection is considered meaningful if it promotes continuous improvement on the educator's decisions and actions. Meaningful reflection needs a strong commitment to regularly think back and analyse the various circumstances that occurs or may occur in caring for children. For your reflection to be meaningful, you need to have the right attitudes on and attributes of reflective practices.

Attitudes on Reflective Practices

John Dewey described three main attitudes that form the basis of reflective practice:

- **Open-mindedness** – a willingness to consider new evidence as it occurs and to admit the possibility of error. It involves being open to other points of view, appreciating that there are many ways of looking at a particular situation or event, and staying open to changing one's own viewpoint. Part of open-mindedness is being able to let go of needing to be right or wanting to win.

- **Responsibility** – the careful consideration of the consequences of one's actions, especially as they affect students. It is the willingness to acknowledge that whatever one chooses to do (such as decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, organisation, and management) will affect the lives of students in both foreseen and unforeseen ways.

- **Wholeheartedness** – a commitment to seek every opportunity to learn and a belief that one can always learn something new.

5.2.2 The Reflection Process

Although the process of reflection may vary from person to person, typically the process of reflection includes:

- **Awareness** – This means an event that has happened, or is anticipated to happen, may prompt an individual to think deeply about the event. This can be a negative or positive experience and can be a range of experience, from acquiring new knowledge to unpredicted incidents.

- **Critical Analysis** – It involves reviewing the event to gain a better and deeper understanding. This is usually done through asking thought-provoking questions, either alone or with a group to discover how to handle the situation at the best interest of the children.

- **Taking Action** – After analysing the event, appropriate action should be decided to either improve good practices or alter bad practices. Planning the action needed to be taken with the children and their parents can help pick out the best course of action.

- **Review and Assess** – When action steps are done or in progress, assessment should be done in order to verify if the action or its outcome is effective. You should document the results and ask the opinion of those affected.

To guide you in doing your own reflection about childcare in relation to the theories and research on early childhood development, you should use the essential modes of reflection. The modes of reflection are different methods of reflection that fosters:

- **Reflection-in-action** – Taking note of thinking and actions as they are occurring and making immediate adjustments as events unfold. Re-evaluation occurs on the spot.

- **Reflection-on-action** – Looking back on and learning from experience or action that happened in order to affect future action. Reflecting after an event is probably the most frequently used form of reflection.

- **Reflection-for-action** – Analysing practices with the purpose of taking action to change. It includes both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. This type of reflection is proactive in nature. Often called 'closing the gap' reflection, it focuses on closing the gap between what is and what might be.

- **Reflection-within** – Inquiring about personal purposes, intentions and feelings. Teachers might question what is working well, what's keeping them from taking action, what's keeping their perspective limited, or why they reacted in a particular way. This is very similar to self-reflection.

5.3 Establish a Personal Professional Philosophy in Relation to Early Childhood

A personal teaching philosophy is a series of statements that defines your goals and beliefs as an early childhood educator. This is your main communication tool of your vision as well as your approach on learning and teaching for children. Ideally, your teaching philosophy should also be aligned with your organisation's philosophy and is the looked at by parents, as well.

Creating a personal professional philosophy helps you identify your own strengths and teaching styles. Making a written philosophy helps you check and reflect on yourself if you are still committed to the philosophy you have set yourself.

There are no strict standards in making a personal philosophy since it really varies from person to person. Given that it is you that the philosophy will represent, you should highlight the values, skills and views that you have as an early childhood educator. Note that a personal philosophy does not need to be overly formal in nature. What is important is that you are able to portray yourself honestly and respectfully as an educator.

To help you create a personal philosophy, consider the following steps:

1. **Define the role of an early childhood educator.**

   Explain your ideas and views on the role of a teacher to young children You may include statements on your role regarding responsibilities and achievements they have. Also, include your hopes and expectations of children in general, as you can be assigned to different classes or age range and not have a specific class in mind.

2. **Discuss the role of the children as your students.**

   Discuss your notion of children as a learner, as well as your approach on teaching them. Include specific details such as learning activities for different kinds of students.

3. **Address special needs, different learning styles and diversity in the classroom.**

   Most likely, you will be handling children with various behaviours and personalities, as well as diverse backgrounds. You may also be dealing with children who need special attention. Add your specific practices and strategies on how to handle the needs of all students.

4. **Establish your approach in teaching.**

   Discuss your different teaching styles as well as your approaches to teaching. Be careful to not criticise the approach of other teacher, focus on how you can help children learn effectively and comfortably.

5. **Describe classroom and conflict management.**

   With handling children constantly, you are bound to encounter children in conflict. You should discuss on how to deal with behavioural issues and how to reinforce good morals and conduct to children. Include your approach in correcting children's behaviour and the reason for your approach.

6. **Incorporate the children's family.**

   Discuss on how you will include parents and other caregivers in your learning practices. You should add in how the parents can be actively involved in teaching their children. Also state how you will be establishing and maintain communication to the parents and caregivers.

Essentially, how you described children will be the core of how you deal with them, teach them and interact with them as an educator. There can be equal opportunities of teaching and learning with the way you view children in your educational philosophy.

5.3.1 Educator's Health and Well-being

One crucial aspect of a personal philosophy is your health and well-being. When you as an educator have a strong sense of wellbeing, you are better equipped to:

- be responsive to every child;

- develop rich, respectful relationships with each child;

- encourage children to explore their environment and engage in play and learning;

- develop a deeper understanding of each child, promoting their ability to plan extensions of children's learning and development;

- support children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, work through differences, engage in new experiences, and take on challenges in play and learning; and

- promote the importance of health and wellbeing to children and their families.

You should place great importance in your health and well-being so that you can perform your role better in the child education and care industry. There are three specific areas you should take into consideration:

Physical Health – This is related to the functioning of your physical body. Doing healthy physical activities can promote lasting health benefits. You should have regular physical activities as these will help you improve your quality of work, especially since children will rely on you constantly.

Mental Health – Mental health is a state of wellbeing where people can meet their learning potential. As an educator, taking care of your mental health is essential to provide services need in childcare and education. Aside from personal benefits, possessing good mental health will help you plan, decide and act upon your motives and practices objectively and rationally.

Social and Emotional Well-Being – These aspects include your feelings, behaviour, relationships, goals and personal strengths. Keeping these in check makes for a level-headed and emotionally balanced educator in the workplace.

Remember, caring for yourself greatly benefits the children in your care. You are also helping the children teach the importance of health and wellbeing. Therefore, incorporating how you prioritise health and wellbeing in your philosophy will aid you further identify your skills and practices in childcare and education.

5.4 Recognise the Role of the Early Childhood Educator in Advocating for Children and the Sector

An early childhood educator's role constantly involves children; it should be apparent that an early childhood educator should represent and advocate for children. Educators have an obligation to promote the well-being and development of children. Furthermore, educators should include the children's families as well. Acting in the interest of the children shows your professionalism as well as your dedication to the children and the industry.

As part of the early childhood education and care sector, you are also expected to represent the sector. This means you should act in the interest of the industry. As your actions affect the view of other people, you should conduct yourself accordingly as to not tarnish how other people view educators in general.

As an educator, part of your teaching practice should be advocating for the children and the sector. To do so, you should consider the following, based on the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics:

In relation to communities:

- Learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning, development and well-being.

- Collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families.

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

- Promote the value of children's contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities.

- Work to promote increased appreciation of the importance of childhood including how children learn and develop, in order to inform programs and systems of assessment that benefit children.

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

In early childhood services:

- Provide a quality experience for all young children you work with.

- 'Ensure the dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times'. (NQS Element 5.2.3).

- Work in partnership with parents and 'help families access services' (NQS Quality Area 6).

- Work with the community to improve children's developmental outcomes (NQS Quality Area 6).

- Continually look to improve your skills and knowledge to act in the best interests of children.

- In particular, develop your leadership capabilities as a professional.

In the public:

- Always act ethically in advocacy for young children.

- Promote child-friendly communities and advocate for universal access to a range of high-quality early childhood and school age care programs for all children (link to NQS Element 6.3.4).

- Join early childhood networks to keep informed and collaborate in shared advocacy.

- Actively and respectfully engage on social media by sharing posts and keeping others informed.

- Participate and provide feedback to consultations with children's interests in mind as paramount consideration.

- Engage with mainstream media e.g. through letters to the editor.

- Participate and support campaigns for children's rights and interests.

- Actively engage (respectfully) with local public and elected officials on children's interests.

As an educator, you can be the voice for children's needs. You have a direct perspective on what can help them and how educators may improve their practice. Do not be afraid to share your ideas and focus on how all of these acts will promote the development and well-being of children.

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Investigating theories and research related to early childhood helps you gain key knowledge in child learning and development.

2. Reflection is a great tool for evaluating and learning from various situations that occurred or may occur and aid you in improving your practices.

3. Create a personal professional philosophy to help you identify and commit to your motivations, values and practices in child education and care.

4. As an educator, you represent the children as a whole, as well as the child education and care sector, and acting in their interest shows your dedication and professionalism.

Learning Activity for Chapter 5

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

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