

Policy

DECD 6658/12

Assessment for learning in DECD early childhood services

Summary

This policy sets out the expectations for early childhood educators and leaders as contained within the National Quality Standard. It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators in DECD preschools in providing evidence of children's progress against the DECD Educational Achievement Standards through the Statement of Learning.

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Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	Education and Early Childhood Services (Regulations and Standards) Act 2011 (9.1)
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) National Quality Standard (2012) Belonging, Being and Becoming The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
Replaces	DECS assessment and Reporting Operational Guidelines for preschools and schools
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Executive Director Responsible (Name/Position/Office)	Trish Strachan, Executive Director, Office for Children and Young People Helen Wildash, Executive Director, Teaching and Learning

	Services, Office for Education
Applies to	All prior to school services where DECD is the approved provider and DECD funded preschools
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REVISION RECORD

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1. TITLE

- **Assessment for Learning in DECD Early Childhood Services Policy**

2. PURPOSE

- The Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) has agreed to implement the National Quality Framework of which *Belonging, Being and Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)* is the curriculum.
- Under the Education and Early Childhood Services (Regulations and Standards) Act 2011 DECD is an approved provider of preschool, integrated services and family day care and is obliged to comply with the National Quality Standard.
- This policy is underpinned by the following objects and principles as outlined in the Education and Early Childhood Services (Regulations and Standards) Act 2011 (9.1)
 ...all children should have access to high quality education and early childhood facilities and services that-
 - (i) Address their developmental needs, and
 - (ii) Maximise their learning and development potential through an appropriate curriculum; and
 - (iii) Support their educational achievement; and
 - (iv) Promote enthusiasm for learning; and
 - (v) Support, promote and contribute to their health, safety and well-being.
- The Education and Care Services National Regulations 4.1, 74 (1) states
 the approved provider must ensure that the following are documented;
 - (a)(i) For a child of preschool age or under, assessment of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program
 - (a)(ii) Assessment of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program
 This will be achieved in DECD preschool services through formative assessments throughout the year culminating in a written Statement of Learning (summative report) for a child and their family when that child leaves the centre.
- This policy sets out the expectations for early childhood educators and leaders as contained within the National Quality Standard.

- It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators in DECD preschools in providing evidence of children’s progress against the DECD Educational Achievement Standards through the Statement of Learning.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all educators and DECD employees delivering and supporting early childhood education and care programs. This is inclusive of DECD preschools, Children’s Centres, and Family Day Care. It also applies to preschool education programs funded for Universal Access through DECD and grant funded non-Government preschools. It applies to assessment for children’s learning as “part of an ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children’s learning.” (EYLF, p17)

4. POLICY DETAIL

4.1. Background

This policy is designed to ensure that:

- each child’s learning and development is maximised through educators’ focussed assessments that provide evidence for planning children’s future experiences
- the expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child’s learning and wellbeing
- educators working in DECD services assess for children’s learning. This includes observing and documenting children’s learning against the EYLF learning outcomes in order to:
 - o plan for further learning with children, families and staff
 - o report to children, parents and colleagues
 - o provide information about children’s learning and development as children transition to school
 - o identify, refer and collaboratively provide intervention for children to support optimal learning and wellbeing
- early childhood educators and support services staff employ contemporary evidence based early childhood assessment practices to effectively assess, document and report about children’s learning as part of their pedagogical practice
- Reception teachers utilise assessment information of children’s prior learning to build relationships and plan for new learning when children begin school
- DECD will meet the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

4.2. Assessment and Reporting practices

4.2.1 Assessment and reporting in DECD early childhood services must focus on:

- articulating the five learning outcomes (EYLF) that provide early childhood educators with key reference points against which children’s learning can be identified, documented and communicated to children, their families, other early childhood professionals and schools
- the EYLF learning outcomes which are; children have a strong sense of identity; children are connected with and contribute to their world; children have a strong sense of wellbeing; children are confident and involved learners; children are effective communicators
- educators using a range of assessment and reporting practices to support children’s learning and provide information for families. Reporting accountability to families includes regular consultation, informal dialogue and written documentation
- promoting quality assessment “that sits inside the curriculum and not only describes learning and development in the early years, but actively constructs and fosters young children’s learning and development.” Carr 2001

4.2.2 In developing assessment and reporting practices educators must take into consideration:

- individuals and groups of children who may require additional support and planning
- those children who will require tailored interventions requiring individualised strategies
- the inclusion of the perspectives of all children and families
- strengths based approaches that honour children’s agency
- the holistic nature of children’s learning and development and the professional judgement of educators
- learning that happens as part of the interactions, experiences and routines that are part of each child’s day
- children’s active involvement in formative assessment processes
- the complexity and richness of children’s learning, interactions, relationships and play experiences.

4.3 Documentation

4.3.1 Ongoing documentation of learning

Documentation of learning must occur throughout a child’s attendance at the service and include the visible records educators collect that allow children, educators and families to discuss, interpret and reflect upon what is happening from their various perspectives. This should include:

- using a variety of processes that respond to the diversity of children and families
- identifying children who may need additional support in order to achieve particular learning outcomes
- supporting the evaluation of the effectiveness of learning opportunities, environments and experiences offered and the approaches taken by educators to enable children’s learning

- practices that are aligned with the national requirements and based on contemporary research
- practices that are inclusive, empowering, consistent and rigorous in line with the intent and content of the Early Years Learning Framework.

4.3.2 Sharing and using the Statement of Learning

- For all DECD preschools and DECD funded preschools this will include a Statement of Learning (summative report) as part of a child's transition to school in order to inform the child's future educators and future learning. The primary audiences for the summative report are the child and their family and their Reception teacher. The Statement of Learning will include the voice of children and families.
- The Statement of Learning (summative report) will be written in a narrative format and describe the child's learning and development during their attendance at preschool. It will incorporate the learning outcomes and the intent and content of Belonging, Being and Becoming.
- The Statement of Learning must include:
 - a summary of the child's learning against the five outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework
 - a summary of the child's learning and development in Numeracy and Literacy
 - any other supporting documentation to inform the child, their family and/or their Reception teacher.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Authority/Responsibility for
Nominated Supervisors	The overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is enacted in their service and that any centre practices and procedures align with the policy.
Early childhood educators	Assessing and documenting children's learning in line with the policy and making information about children's learning accessible to families.
School principals and reception teachers	Use the information provided from the previous setting to plan for children's learning and development in the first years of school.
Support services providing tailored intervention	Provide focused assessments that guide individual children's learning and development in collaboration with families, educators and nominated supervisors and in line with the objectives of the policy.

DECD corporate and partnership leaders	<p>Monitor and support the implementation of the policy at the partnership and site levels.</p> <p>Provide professional development opportunities to support the implementation of the policy and the documentation of best practice in assessment for learning in early childhood services.</p> <p>Monitor trends and research relating to assessment for learning in the early years.</p> <p>Provide resources including professional development and written resources to support the implementation of the policy and ensure best practice in assessment for learning processes.</p>
DECD corporate office business units	<p>Develop policy and programs that reflect the intent of the policy and embed best practice in assessment for learning in the early years based on evidence and contemporary research.</p>

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- The effectiveness of the DECD Assessment for Learning in Early Childhood Policy will be evaluated at the corporate and partnerships levels through the Birth-8 curriculum team and Early Learning Partnerships and Planning.
- A review process will examine the impact of the policy on educators' assessment for learning practices and subsequent outcomes for children based on the EYLF.
- The policy will be reviewed according to the timelines determined in the Policy Framework.

7. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
DECD	Department for Education and Child Development
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Carr, M. (2001). Assessment in early childhood settings: learning stories. London: Paul Chapman.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2009). Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2010). Educators Belonging, Being Becoming
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9. REFERENCES

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- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/inforce/47670dd2-81ce-4aaf-b2a8-f4e77ad836ee/2011-653.pdf>
- National Quality Standard (2012)
<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard>
- Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia Belonging, Being and Becoming
https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/educators_guide_to_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf