

# PHILOSOPHY DEVELOPMENT

A written statement of philosophy outlines the principles under which a service operates. It underpins the decisions, policies and daily practices of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators and staff members, and it assists in planning, implementing and evaluating quality experiences for children.

Your service's 'statement of philosophy' should reflect the principles that underpin the National Law, and include an approach to participation and access, equity and inclusion, and the core elements of approved learning frameworks, which include secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; partnerships; high expectations and equity; respect for diversity; and ongoing learning and reflecting practice.

Begin your review by considering the specific needs and features of your local community, and writing down the beliefs, values and attitudes that you think your service encompasses. Then, considering your local community needs and values, and with reference to the values that underpin the National Law, and the approved learning frameworks, identify some key goals that you think your service should aim to achieve.

The following table could be used as a guide to developing the service philosophy:

The statement of philosophy needs to address the following questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is the service there for?</li> <li>In a broad sense, what should the service try to offer children, families, and staff who are involved in the service and the community surrounding it?</li> </ul>
As you review your philosophy, ask yourself how your philosophy does the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guides pedagogy and teaching decisions</li> <li>Guides interactions with children</li> <li>Demonstrates a commitment to full participation of children with additional needs</li> <li>Communicates the service's approach to access and participation</li> <li>Communicates the service's approach to equity and inclusion</li> <li>Communicates who the service is there for</li> <li>Communicates what the service offers children, families and staff, and the community surrounding it</li> <li>Communicates how families can contribute to the development and review of the service's philosophy.</li> </ul>
Does your statement of philosophy reflect the principles that underpin the National Law?	<p>In accordance with the National Law, the following principles apply when making decisions about operating education and care services, working to achieve the National Quality Standard and improve quality outcomes for children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the rights and best interests of the child are paramount</li> <li>children are successful, competent and capable learners</li> <li>the principles of equity, inclusion and diversity underly the National Law</li> <li>Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued</li> <li>the role of parents and families is respected and supported</li> <li>best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services.</li> </ul>
Think about what each of these means to your service delivery and how you can uphold these at a service level.	<p>Core elements of the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School Age Care in Australia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships</li> <li>partnerships</li> <li>high expectations and equity</li> <li>respect for diversity</li> <li>ongoing learning and reflecting practice.</li> </ul> <p>*See pages 12-13 of the EYLF and pages 10-12 in the FSAC for in-depth explanations of principles, and consider using consistent language from this document to incorporate the acknowledgement of the principles into your philosophy.</p>
Does your statement of philosophy reflect the 'practice principles' of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework?	<p>The most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together with children and families to facilitate learning and development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>family-centred practice</li> <li>partnerships with professionals</li> <li>high expectations for every child</li> <li>equity and diversity</li> <li>respectful relationships and responsive engagement</li> <li>integrated teaching and learning approaches</li> <li>assessment for learning and development</li> <li>reflective practice.</li> </ul> <p>*See pages 9-14 of the VEYLF for in-depth explanations of these practice principles, and consider using consistent language from this document to incorporate the acknowledgement of the principles into your philosophy.</p>



The Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has published its *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, which will provide you with information and tools for reflection as you undergo this review (see in particular Element 7.2.1 – A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the service's operations), and can be download from the website [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) > Research & Publications.

In accordance with the Guide to the National Quality Standard, your statement of philosophy provides additional evidence for assessment purposes.

For example:

- assessors may discuss how the service's statement of philosophy guides pedagogy and teaching decisions; how families contribute to the development and review of the service's philosophy, policies and procedures; how the service's statement of philosophy guides interactions with children; how families contribute to the development and review of the service's philosophy, policies and procedures; and the ways in which educators and staff members access copies of the service's statement of philosophy
- assessors may sight the service's approach to access and participation as documented in the statement of philosophy; the service's handbook for new and existing educators and staff members including the statement of philosophy; the service's approach to equity and inclusion documented in the statement of philosophy; information about the service's philosophy, policies and procedures being available and in areas regularly accessed by families; and that the service philosophy, policies and procedures demonstrate a commitment to full participation of children with additional needs.

With all of this in mind, it's important to think about how the document is developed, where it is displayed and how it is accessed. Consider also how your entire staff team might be able to talk about how the statement of philosophy reflects the beliefs, attitudes and values that the service endeavours to encompass.

It's important that your philosophy is developed collaboratively to reflect contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children's play, leisure and learning, and pedagogy, and that it encourages ownership by your education and care community.

## REFERENCES



Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) 2009, *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for all Children from Birth to Eight Years*, State of Victoria, Melbourne.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2009, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2011, *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

Early Childhood Development Steering Committee of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 2009, *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (No. 69, 2010).

*Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (No. 653, 2011). ●