

SILVERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL OSHCARE – PLANNING FOR OUR CHILDREN

The *Framework for School Age Care* ‘acknowledges time and place as children engage in a range of play and leisure experiences that allow them to feel happy, safe and relaxed; interact with friends and practice social skills; solve problems; try new activities and learn life skills.’ (ACECQA 2011)

During a recent Western Regional Outside School Hours Group (WROSHG) network meeting, services were asked to bring along their reflection journals and discuss how they were incorporating the frameworks and the National Quality Standard (NQS) into their programs. CCC was invited to this network meeting and has asked Silverton Primary School OSHCare to share with OSCAR how they plan for their service.

How do you plan experiences for the children at your service? You use reflective journals to gather information – can you explain this further?

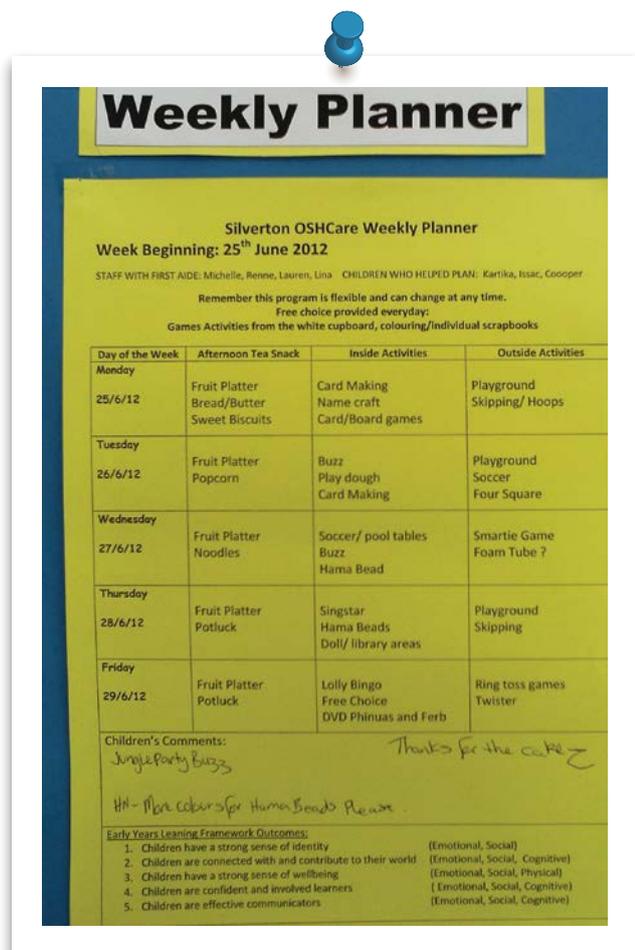
‘At Silverton Primary School OSHCare we use a daily reflection journal – this helps us see what is generally happening within the program on a daily basis. It also provides us with feedback from the children who participate in putting this together. The journal is a place to write down not only the experiences the children are participating in and the learning gained, but also any interests that might arise during the day or during a conversation or discussion.

‘We believe everyone at our service has the right to be heard and has the right to make choices – about self, or as an extension of what he or she wants to do today, at that moment or in the future.’

‘Along with the photos we collect and add to the journal we endeavour to create a well rounded picture of our environment not only for ourselves, but also for parents, friends and family to view. We believe this helps them to feel a part of their children’s day. We also add feedback or comments from families, whether given directly or in passing conversation.’

You mentioned at the network meeting the experience of finger knitting with the children. Can you describe how that came about and how it has developed?

‘On one occasion we had a child who couldn’t decide what she wanted to do at OSHCare. We were thinking about some suggestions when I saw the wool and said, ‘What about finger knitting?’ ‘Oh yes,’ said the child. She sat down and started it off with some assistance. Soon others wanted to join in. We had a group, mainly girls, teaching each other how to finger knit. One girl asked what she could do with it when she got to the end. We brainstormed some ideas together. Some made a necklace or bracelet and the other girls made headbands. One of the prep girls made hers into a woollen heart for her mother. Two girls joined their two strings together and then decided to make the finger knitting as wide as the room. In a few days it was as long as the room.



Day and Date: Monday 14 May 2012

Program Activities: Finger knitting Buzz Cricket
Craves from cupboard

Activities on the day: Library Trains area
Foot table, Buzz, Finger knitting, Library Dolls house



Ella decided to use her finger knitting to make a wool heart for her mother. She was able to choose her own materials. She was able to transfer one craft idea to another context.

Kerika had nothing to do so she decided on finger knitting. She decided to make a bracelet. Later it was extended in to headbands and necklaces. Zena, Kerika, Nadia, Kayiani and Jessica joined in. This created a lot of discussion between the girls. They decided to make the string as long and wide as the room. Later they measured around the room. Became a great experiment. Now 2 girls are working towards a finger knitting dolls.

Library as by all ages tonight especially later in the day. A place for children to relax and share.

Had to change program due to cancellation of Cricket. Asked the children what they wanted to do. Children supported in their choice of activities.

Thoughts of the day: Finger knitting club set up by children
Create discussion as to how to go about creating dolls.

Outcomes, Extensions, Suggestions:
 4-3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another.
 5-3 Children collaborate with others.

Day and Date: Tuesday 15 May 2012

Program Activities: Restaurant/Kitchen soccer/football
Cultural corner Soccer tables

Activities on the day: Cultural corner 2 square in courtyard Uno
Finger knitting Kitchen/restaurant

Thanks to a fantastic poster we found with flags of the world, some of our children had shown interest and started questioning and having conversations. We decided to explore this by encouraging a discovery experience we each started by drawing/colouring the flag of the country we were born in, then we wrote something about that country we either know or found out. We collected items from home that were a part of our cultural backgrounds and that allowed all of us the time to experience some thing new from another country. Ben had such a great time dressing up in the clothing from India and having a go at the dance.

Did you know that it is the year of the dragon? We thought it was awesome that in Chinese New Year they have animals representing their years.



After our cultural food restaurant we explored cultural kitchen in our homes.



There was a great little book that allowed us to learn how to say hello in 500 languages. We were trying to learn how to say hello in 500 languages.



Thoughts of the day: Watching the children go from a simple thought to the next then to the next was great. To witness curiosity is evident when being a part of an experience we have the kitchen wall for the purpose of displaying our flags.

Outcomes, Extensions, Suggestions:
 4-3 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technology and digital media.

'The next week, it was going around the room. They used masking tape to measure it around the walls. We had another conversation about what to do with it now that it was so big. Together we thought we might try making it into a woollen doll.

'So, this simple idea has generated so much interest that it has become an experimental and craft experience for many of the children in our service.'

How do you incorporate the Framework for School Age Care into your planning?

'To make the framework as simple as possible for our needs, we have found that focusing on one or two elements throughout a day helps us to better focus on the children's interest, needs and learning outcomes. By making it that simple, we find that we are able to cover the requirements of the framework and provide the quality we want to encompass within the environment, the experiences and the programming we put together.'

What are some of the techniques you use to gather information on what the children would like to do? Do you have an example of this?

'Some of the techniques we use to gather information on what the children would like to do are of course our reflection journal. All educators have the opportunity to provide a comment or reflection on the day as well as the children's comments and observations. Ensuring that all educators provide input allows us to build a well-rounded view of each day as it happens, along with the relevant documentation.

'The children also have their own opportunity to add written reflections on either something they want to express about their day, or they can reflect on a photo they or the educators have taken. Each child also has their own individual portfolio where we have a collection of observational items such as work samples, anecdotal observations, running records and general worksheets the children have liked completing, such as 'My Family Tree'.

'All of these methods are compiled along with clipboard notes we've used during our whole-group discussions on what we might like to do during a term. Small notes are also collected when an educator might have a 'one-on-one' or small-group discussion. Lately, we have made two notable changes to our program format. We have provided a section on our planning format where we can write the children's names onto the wall-plan. We found this simple step has encouraged more input into setting out the week's program. Secondly, making the wall-plan a visual image for the children has helped to build self-confidence and pride in sharing the responsibility with us.'

Can you explain the subtle changes in the children's behaviour that have occurred this year as you have taken on board the NQS and the FSAC?

'During this year we have been slowly adapting to the FSAC, and by extension so too have the children in our care. There have been a few notable changes, not only within the environment but also with the children – within themselves and with how they now make their 'choices'.

'Evidence of this was seen as one of our educators was clearing the afternoon dishes. She later told us that while observing the whole room she noticed that the groups were made up of unusual pairings and groupings. She explained that the usual friendship groups were different today and even noted that in one particular group there were two children who normally wouldn't interact with each other at all. During our discussion it was also evident that this was unintentional – none of the educators had overtly encouraged the groupings, nor did we purposefully plan this. By sharing this observation with all the other educators, we were able to contextualise what we were seeing with regard to the framework, and how to best incorporate this into a reflection. We could then discuss the learning that had occurred (DEEWR 2011, pp. 37-40; Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators). Our program is changing over time: the subtle differences are seen every day – in every conversation and every interaction – we just need to make sure we are listening.'



What new things are you introducing at your service to continue to engage your children?

'Over this last term we have begun to implement play spaces into our program. We have started using an outdoor area that is an old garden, this has been a fantastic environment to utilise, and it allows the children the freedom to explore a natural space and provides us with an added tactile environment.

'We have started to build indoor play spaces using different resources, from natural to real life materials and tools. One of the most recent was a cultural corner, which has created a lot of discussion amongst not only the children and educators, but families as well. Some of our children had been going home and asking mum and dad where they were born, and what other languages people in their families speak. Some have brought information back and created little A4 posters to hang on our display wall.

'We are so proud of all the hard work and curiosity shown while we have been investigating this interest. It became the kind of experience that allowed all of us to bring an aspect of our individuality and cultural background to the service. We also found that we could continue to 'scaffold' upon it over time.

'Through using the reflection journal and the individual portfolios to document the subtle changes over time, the project has provided us a basis for many of our program extensions over the past several weeks. For example, we ran a 'restaurant' [dramatic play] with a focus on food from different cultures. We have also put the idea forward to the whole group to create a project portfolio using all the knowledge we have gathered and built on over this time.' ►►

Our Planning Cycle

Reflection Journal – Daily Reflections – Weekly Wall Plan – Evaluation
 Individual Portfolios
 Gather Information
 Interview Children
 Implement Program

Community Child Care would like to thank Silverton Primary School OSHC for sharing their planning strategies in this edition of OSCAR.

References

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 2011, *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations*, viewed 7 February 2012 <http://acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources>

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