

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM POLICY**WHY?**

Thrive Group Tasmania recognises that childhood is a vital period in children's learning and development. As such, Thrive is committed to providing children with opportunities which maximises their potential and develops a foundation for life long success.

Thrive's philosophy centers on helping create confident children and accordingly, Thrive's relationships, programs and resources are aimed at providing children with resilience and confidence that will continue into their future.

Thrive's ethos aligns well with the principles embodied in the Nationally Approved Learning Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services.

Educational Programs at Thrive will:

- Be informed by Thrive's philosophy and Approved Learning Frameworks
- Be a crucial vehicle in bringing life/giving meaning to Thrive's beliefs and values
- Reflect the local context and unique flavour of individual education and care settings.

WHO?

This policy applies to families, staff and Educators enrolled with, or working in the following Thrive Children's Services:

- Early Learning Services
- Outside School Hours Care Services
- Family Day Care Services

WHAT?***Educational Program***

For the purpose of this Policy an Educational Program is a mix of many threads which create rich learning opportunities for children's learning and development. These threads include all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines, events (planned and unplanned) that occur in a service setting. And are guided by the National Quality standards (www.acecqa.gov.au).

Nationally Approved Learning Frameworks

There are two nationally approved learning frameworks, and these are:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (birth to five years)
- My Time, Our Place – The framework for School Age Care in Australia
- The services also incorporate the key principles of *the Australian Dietary Guidelines, the Infant Feeding Guidelines and the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 Years)*

The ages of children attending each Thrive service will determine which of these two frameworks, or if both frameworks will apply.

Educational Leaders

Thrive will ensure services have a staff person or other suitably qualified and experienced person appointed as an Educational Leader to lead, drive and support the development and delivery of the educational program in each service.

Principles

The below principles underpin Thrive educational programs:

- *Connectedness* – establishing strong, rich relationships with children, families, the community and the natural world is a foundation for children's sense of belonging/wellbeing and a powerful springboard for learning and development
- *Engagement* – embracing children's voices and family views is integral to building a picture of children's abilities, strengths and interests, as well as ensuring programs are meaningful and relevant
- *Inclusion* – respecting and reflecting the diversity of children's family lives is fundamental as is supporting every child's participation in service programs
- *Empowerment* – fostering children's independence, resilience and self-reliance is vital to learning about self, building confidence and enabling children to make choices and decisions that influence their world
- *Play Based Learning* – giving children diverse play opportunities and experiences, facilitates their immersion in learning as they have fun discovering, creating, imagining, questioning, exploring and constructing
- *Critical Reflection* – being prepared to look deeply and critically at work practices – to question, challenge and explore new ideas is crucial to renewing and enriching decisions about the service program and children's learning.

Learning Outcomes

In broad terms, services will strive to support children in becoming confident individuals who have a strong sense of identity and wellbeing; who are connected with and contribute to their world; and who are involved learners and effective communicators.

Assessment

Services will gather meaningful information that depicts children's learning, describes their progress and identifies their strengths, skills and understandings. The learning outcomes will be key reference points against which children's progress can be identified, documented and conveyed to families.

Documentation

All services will document and display the educational program at their premises in a readily accessible place for families, and ensure a copy is available at the venue. Services will also document their assessments of children's progress and learning.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following Policies:

- Interact with Children
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Supervision
- Physical Environment

HOW?

Please refer to the Educational Program Procedure (following this Policy).

WHEN?

Thrive Services will continually:

- Explore how Thrive's philosophy looks and what it means for their individual setting; their program and practices
- Build own knowledge base about relevant learning framework(s) applicable to their settings and use the framework(s) to help inform their programs
- Utilise the expertise and skills of the Educational Leader to support the development and delivery of their programs

- Engage children and families in shaping, enhancing and evaluating the educational program
- Offer a rich tapestry of fun filled, play-based experiences which challenge, inspire and provoke curiosity, creativity, questioning and exploration
- Empower children to become confident, resilient individuals
- Document the service program and display prominently in the service
- Assess and document children's learning
- Reflect on and evaluate the program.

Thrive will provide families, staff and Educators with a copy of this policy to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and obligations.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this policy from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.

All persons covered under the paragraph 'Who' who breach this policy may be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or removal from the workplace or termination of services (workers, other than employees and other persons in the workplace).

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PROCEDURE**HOW?****Staff/Educators will:**

- Be responsive to children i.e. give priority to establishing strong, secure relationships through meaningful interactions and conversations. See Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure.
- Encourage and embrace children's voices – seek their opinions, thoughts and ideas about their own interests, likes and dislikes, and the types of play experiences they would like included in the program. Encourage a sense of shared decision making and help children to feel they are actively involved, can influence what happens, and what happens is meaningful and relevant.
- Respect and honour diversity in all its forms (social, cultural, linguistic and geographic) and develop inclusion strategies to support the broad range of needs, abilities and backgrounds and promote participation of every child in the program i.e. consider equipment, resources and environment set up, and collaboration with other professionals. Also incorporate messages/opportunities in the program for children to learn about similarities and differences and importance of working together.
- Encourage children to make choices and decisions and act independently – celebrate and show enthusiasm for children's efforts and attempts to gain new skills and knowledge; celebrate achievements; give children strategies to make informed decisions about their behaviours.
- Respect children's capacities and rights to initiate and to lead own learning, and be actively involved in evaluating/recording learning e.g. via discussions, show and tell, feedback to larger groups.
- Provide flexible and open ended learning environments – to challenge, inspire, expand children's horizons and provide their thinking, questioning and problem solving.
- Embrace play as a vital vehicle for learning – nurture children's natural curiosity and support their exploration as they engage in a wide range of fun, creative and challenging experiences.
- Support a balance between planned, intentional, deliberate learning experiences and spontaneous experiences initiated by children.
- Create environments which are welcoming, vibrant, creative spaces as this will impact positively on children's learning.
- Use a variety of strategies to extend children's thinking and learning i.e. modelling and demonstrating; explaining; open questioning; shared conversations and problem solving.
- Acknowledge individual needs and ensure the service program reflects the fact that children will take different pathways in their learning.

POLICY VERSION & REVISION INFORMATION:

Policy Authorised by: General Manager
Review Date/s:
Review Date: As required by the GM or as legislation changes

Original Issue: Jul19
Current Version: Mar22Ver1
NOTE: the digital version of this document is the most current version. Printed versions cannot be relied upon for accuracy and are always superseded by a digital copy.

- Capture intentional teaching moments during routine activities and spontaneous play.
- Engage with families on a continual basis – view parents as partners and have a variety of communication methods and tools for seeking their input/feedback. Draw on their expertise/interests as an inherent component of the program. Aim to bridge the gap between home and care and promote smooth, successful transitions and continuity of learning.
- Incorporate the wider community as part of the service program – both in terms of going out and connecting with the local group and services, as well as having the local community 'come in' to the service.
- Monitor the individual development of each child and evaluate the program in relation to Thrive's philosophy.
- Have the program displayed and readily accessible for parents to view.
- Develop individual methods for documenting children's learning i.e. written notes, diary entries, computer records, communication books, photos, child portfolios and learning stories.
- Use a strength based approach to children's play and development.

The Educational Leader will share information and support staff/Educators in developing and implementing their service programs, with a view to furthering staff/Educators own knowledge and skills.

Thrive will organise and/or promote professional development opportunities for staff/Educators in relation to program development and delivery.

These Procedures relate to legislation as detailed in the Educational Program Policy.

BREACH OF THE PROCEDURE

Any breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this procedure from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.