

Celebrations Policy

Rituals and traditions strengthen our partnership with children, families and community bringing a sense of belonging to our Service. We believe that celebrations and cultural traditions need to be handled sensitively. Enlightening and cultivating children, families, Educators, staff, students, volunteers and visitors of various celebrations is fundamental to our inclusive program. Both the planning and preparation, and the events themselves, can be a satisfying and pleasurable experience.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice		
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners, and effectiveness as communicators.

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships		
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

PURPOSE

Incorporating celebrations into children's services appropriately, can be used to strengthen the partnership with children and families, creating a feeling of belonging and developing a sense of community amongst families, Educators and children.

Celebrations provide an opportunity for children to develop respect for diverse values and beliefs as they learn about practices which are different to their own. To ensure we are providing an inclusive program and environment, it is imperative to recognise the array of celebrations, both religious and worldly, that take place throughout the year in our community and to have an understanding of, and respect for, cultural diversity in our Service.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, Educators, staff, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

RELATED POLICIES

Educational Program Policy

Anti-Bias & Inclusion Policy

Family Communication Policy

Multicultural Policy

Interactions with Children, Families & Staff Policy

Non-English Speaking Background Policy

IMPLEMENTATION

The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person will ensure:

- To incorporate relevant, culturally based experiences and celebrations within the children's program which address different learning opportunities, including: fostering a sense of belonging and inclusions for every child, family and staff member (EYLF, p.7), increasing children's understanding of, and respect for, diversity and differences (EYLF, p.13), raising children's self-awareness and confidence, providing for children's holistic development and supporting a positive identity for every child and family (EYLF, p.2).
- Religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter are recognised within the Service and reflected in our programs.
- All cultural celebrations that are significant to our families and relevant to our broader community are implemented within the Service.
- Families are aware of the Celebration Policy during their orientation process and kept updated throughout the year via centre correspondence.
- To support our Nutrition & Food Safety Policy, our Service will not provide or serve cake for any child celebrating their birthday. The occasion will be celebrated, however, within the child's room, through the singing of the Happy Birthday Song and the child choosing to wear a special birthday hat, if they desire.
- Educators and staff are aware and will make alternate arrangements if families would prefer that their child does NOT participate in such celebrations.
- If this is the case we will respect the rights and feelings of this child and will provide an alternative experience for them to participate in so that they do not feel that they are being left out.
- The Service has a 'Calendar of Events' that is used to support such events throughout the year. We ask that families add their celebration to the calendar so that Educators and staff can prepare the program.
- Families are encouraged to be involved in the preparation of the event and/or the celebration of the event within the Service.
- Educators and staff remain current with the professional knowledge and skills that support planning for and engaging in culturally inclusive practice.
- Advance planning is adhered to if food or drink is to be provided for children at the Service. Additionally, all parents/guardians must be advised prior to the celebration. This allows for any feedback/concerns from parents/guardians which can then be taken into account as part of the normal planning involved in such activities.
- Safety issues are taken into account prior to the implementation of celebratory experiences.
- Our healthy eating policies are reflected when planning for celebrations.

Educators and staff will:

- Seek written approval from the Nominated Supervisor prior to any celebrations where food is provided to children.
- Ensure the use of candles is carried out with the children's safety in mind and fully supervised. A full risk assessment will be submitted to the Nominated Supervisor prior to such celebrations.
- Ensure each child celebrating their birthday has the option of wearing a special birthday hat and the child's class singing the Happy Birthday song.
- Be aware of cultural tokenism and stereotyping.
- Encourage and support family members to be involved in sharing their customs and celebrations within the Service.
- Ensure children have the agency to make choices about the celebrations they would like to participate in, engaging families to give advice on customs.
- Ensure that children have the resources and time necessary to be able to celebrate effectively.
- Provide young children and toddlers with materials that reflect a significant event or celebration, which they have recently participated.
- Ensure that families who do not wish to be involved in celebrations have an option to not participate.
- Balance family values about receiving gifts and products from their children and Educator's values about avoiding product-based activities by developing creative and meaningful gifts for families.
- Notify the community about the celebration e.g. taking photos to display on the Service notice board, or displaying children's artwork and drawings about the celebration.
- Provide opportunities for children to participate in 'open-ended' celebration activities.
- Provide a flexible program that enables children to have agency about the activities, which they participate.
- Celebrate traditions and customs relevant to children and community.
- Ensure that the same amount of time and energy is dedicated to ALL celebrations.
- Invite Educators, staff and families to share their own personal experiences of celebrations.
- Ensure resources such as picture story-books, images and music are reflective of contemporary celebrations which children can relate.
- Be respectful of all religions and cultural backgrounds.

Sources

- ECA Code of Ethics.
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (2013).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard.
- Staying healthy in childcare. 5th Edition (2013)
- Early Years Learning Framework.
- Revised National Quality Standard.

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
February 2016	New Format created and policy created.	November 2017
August 2017	Minor changes made to policy to ensure children's safety is upheld and we are providing an inclusive environment.	August 2018
October 2017	Updated references to comply with the Revised National Quality Standard.	November 2018