

CELEBRATIONS POLICY

Rituals and traditions strengthen our partnership with children, families and community bringing a sense of belonging to our Vacation Care Service. We believe that celebrations and cultural traditions need to be handled sensitively. The value in educating children, families and Educators are fundamental to our inclusive program. Both the planning and preparation, and the events themselves, can be a satisfying and pleasurable experience. In school age care, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging.

‘Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children’s interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shares who children are and who they can become’ (EYLF, 2009, p.7).

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 and 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.

RELATED POLICIES

Anaphylaxis Management Policy Dental Health Policy Diabetes Management Policy	Family Communication Policy Nutrition Food Safety Policy
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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, staff, management and visitors of the Vacation Care Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:

- they value the cultural and social contexts of children and their families (MYOP, p.13).
- they respond to children's expertise, cultural traditions (MTOF, p.13).
- religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter are recognised within the Service and reflected in our programs
- educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences. This is evident in everyday practice when educators demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their own cultural competence in a two-way process with children, families and communities (MYOP, p.15).
- 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
- healthy options for birthday celebrations are discussed with families which may include fruit platter, fruit salad, watermelon balls or muffins in preference to a cake
- families discuss cake options with the nominated supervisor prior to celebrations
- if a cake is required for a child's birthday it is recommended that cupcakes be provided as this reduces the major cross-contamination allergy risks associated with most other cakes (nuts, eggs) and are more hygienic for educators to manage

- parents provide ingredients of any cakes brought to the service (if store bought, the 'use by' date must be clearly labelled)
- families are reminded that we are 'Allergy Aware' service prior to celebrations and food that cannot be brought into the Vacation Care Service is clearly identified
- educators are aware and 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
- families are encouraged to be involved in the preparation and/or the celebration in the Service
- educators remain current with the professional knowledge and skills that support planning for and engaging in culturally inclusive practice
- they liaise with our local Aboriginal educational consultative group to provide advice on relevant cultural celebrations and correct protocols to be followed (e.g. NADIOC Week, Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week)
- advance planning is adhered to if food or drink is provided for children at the Service. Additionally, all parents must be advised prior to the celebration. This allows for any feedback / concerns from parents which can then be considered as part of the normal planning involved in such activities.
- safety issues are considered prior to the implementation of celebratory experiences.
- our *Nutritional Food Safety Policy* is reflected when planning for celebrations.

EDUCATORS 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 is provided with a separate cupcake (with a candle, if they wish) for the child celebrating their birthday
- be aware of cultural tokenism and stereotyping
- encourage and support family members to be involved in sharing their customs and celebrations with our Service
- sensitivity to issues such as family composition is respected (eg: Mother's & Father's Day)
- 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

- 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 in 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 and families to share their own personal experiences of celebrations
- ensure resources such as picture storybooks, images, and music are reflective of contemporary celebrations to which children can relate
- be respectful of all religions and cultural backgrounds.

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australia Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2018). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*.

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. *My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia*. (2011).

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). 5th *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED: DECEMBER 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE: DECEMBER 2021
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