



## Curriculum and Program Planning Policy and Procedures

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National Quality Standard	Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice
EYLF	Outcomes 1-5; Principles 1-5; Practices 1-8; The Three R's

<b>Policy Statement, Aims and Scope</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Rationale and Legislative Background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Strategies and Procedures</b> .....	<b>9</b>
The Heritage Vision and Philosophy.....	9
The Heritage Program Cycle.....	11
Daily Room Flow, Caregiving Routines and Transitions.....	12
The Heritage Learning Environment.....	13
<b>Special Programs at Heritage</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Learning through Play</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Uninterrupted, Child-Led Play.....	16
Loose-parts Play.....	16
<b>Intentional Teaching</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Project and Inquiry-based Learning.....	14
Language and Literacy.....	14
The Arts.....	14
STEAM Education.....	14
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).....	15
Health and Wellbeing.....	15
<b>Learning Spaces and Physical Environments</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Outdoor Learning Environments.....	16
Gulambany on Country Program.....	16
Forest School/Nature Play.....	16
Excursions and Incursions.....	16
<b>Creating an Inclusive Curriculum</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Supporting Cultural Competence.....	18
Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures.....	18
Supporting Children with Additional Needs.....	18
<b>Quality Supervision</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Documentation</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Child Profile Forms.....	20
Day Books and Yearbooks.....	20
Bi-annual Educational Summaries.....	20
Strategic Inclusion Plans.....	20
Parent-Educator Interviews.....	20
Transition Learning and Development Statements.....	20
Information Sharing and Family Involvement.....	21
Training and Professional Development.....	21
Policy Evaluation and Review.....	21
Privacy and Confidentiality.....	22
<b>Related Policies, References and Further Reading</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Version Control and Change History</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Definitions</b> .....	<b>24</b>



## Policy Statement

Research shows that quality early educational programs significantly influence children's development in all areas, reducing the need for interventions later and positively affecting the trajectory of children's lives and life outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Quality early education services provide a supportive learning environment in collaboration with children and families to help children to feel secure, have a sense of control over their actions, be curious, investigate, develop empathy, and explore their understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them.

Under the *Education and Care National Regulations 2011*, the Director and the Educational Leader at Heritage Early Childhood Centre (Heritage) are required to lead the development and implementation of the curriculum (Regulation 118). Both must have advanced qualifications and experience and a thorough understanding of *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)* in order to guide educators in planning and reflection, and to mentor colleagues in implementation practices.

Under the guidance of the Director and Educational Leader, Heritage educators implement up to date pedagogical practices and create a positive environment to maximise children's learning and development towards the five learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework. The Program is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child. Educators gather and interpret information about each child to inform the preparation of the environment and implement experiences that are engaging, meaningful and support each child's holistic development.

### Co-constructing Learning

Historically, the role of the educator saw more structured/teacher led learning environments, however, Heritage recognises that a curriculum developed solely by educators has the potential to inhibit the powerful contributions children can make towards their own education. The Heritage philosophy is to recognise the value of children co-constructing their own learning.

This approach reinforces each child's active participation in their own education, and affirms the principles underlying the Early Years Learning Framework where the intentional teacher looks for opportunities to teach while the intentional learner looks for opportunities to learn throughout the day. In this way, the role of the educator changes from the provider of knowledge to promoting the innate drives in children for independent learning.<sup>2</sup>

### Heritage Educational Values

Heritage educators are dedicated to supporting the five EYLF learning outcomes by:

- Providing children with an educational program that is based on reflective practice, critical analysis and planning.
- Providing an educational program where children can learn through play and are supported to make decisions, problem-solve and build meaningful relationships.
- Recognising children's agency from birth and listening to and respecting children (the pedagogy of listening).
- Valuing and respecting that all children are evolving capacity, lived experiences, points of view and concerns.
- Creating environments for children that support, reflect and promote equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices.
- Supporting the inclusion and participation of every child and their family.
- Ensuring each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities, interests and experiences form the foundation of the curriculum.
- Valuing and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and connections to community and country.
- Involving families in the development and review of educational program and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to: References: Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Reduces Need for Special Education

<sup>2</sup> Refer to: References: Understanding the Roles Educators and Children Play as Intentional Teachers and Intentional Learners within the EYLF; Heritage Philosophy Statement



## Policy Aims

The aim of the Curriculum and Program Planning Policy is to provide guidelines to ensure that the educational program and practice (curriculum) at Heritage Early Childhood Centre:

- Is based on an approved learning framework.
- Meets all legislative requirements.
- Is underpinned by on-going critical reflection and vigilant planning.
- Utilises a diverse range of contemporary pedagogical practices.
- Promotes respectful and meaningful relationships.
- Is created in partnership with families.
- Promotes high expectations and respect for inclusion and equity.
- Promotes each child's agency.
- Is stimulating, engaging and maximises opportunities for each child's learning and development.
- Is documented and available to families.

## Scope

This policy applies to the Management Committee, Director, Room Leaders, Educational Leader, educators, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and all others attending the Heritage programs and activities.

## Rationale

The Heritage Curriculum and Program Planning Policy and related procedures have been developed to comply with the:

- [\*Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009.\*](#)
- [\*Education and Care Services National Law \(ACT\) Act, 2010.\*](#)
- [\*Education and Care Services National Regulations Act 2011.\*](#)
- [\*National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care 2012.\*](#)
- [\*Early Childhood Australia \(ECA\) Code of Ethics.\*](#)
- [\*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.\*](#)
- Heritage Philosophy, Code of Conduct/Ethics and Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy.

## Legislative Background

- The Heritage curriculum is based on *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)*, the approved learning framework underpinned by an applied law system which regulates early childhood learning in Australia.
- The law system comprises the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.
- These documents contain practices and principles that encourage on-going reflection by educators and co-ordinators and provide a thorough understanding of the pedagogy of early childhood curriculum in a contemporary context.

## Belonging, Being and Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

- The EYLF is a guide that provides general goals/outcomes for children's learning and practices that educators and service co-ordinators must use to attain them. It also provides a scaffold to assist early childhood settings to develop their own, more detailed curriculum.
- The aim of the EYLF is to provide an approach to children's learning, including intentional teaching, decision making and an ongoing cycle of observation and assessment to enable all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

Heritage educators must:

- Integrate the **Five EYLF Learning Outcomes and sub-elements** into their educational program. Refer to: Table over-page.



- Utilise the **Five EYLF Principles** to achieve the above outcomes: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; Partnerships; High expectations and equity; Respect for diversity; Ongoing learning and reflective practice.
- Draw upon many rich and **diverse pedagogical practices** outlined in the EYLF to promote the five learning outcomes for children including:
- Dedicate time to reflect, respect and relate (The Three RRRs).
  - **Reflect:** Looking, questioning, reflecting, thinking & acting on the way things are done.
  - **Respect:** Fundamental to wellbeing, respect comes from being acknowledged, understood, empathised with in relationships that have meaning.
  - **Relate:** Secure attachments to trusted caregivers are a prerequisite for healthy wellbeing and create a strong platform for learning.

Refer to: [The Early Years Learning Framework](#)

### The Five EYLF Learning Outcomes and Sub-Elements

EYLF Learning Outcome	EYLF Sub-Elements – Children:
<b>Children have a strong sense of identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel safe, secure, and supported.</li> <li>• Develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.</li> <li>• Develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.</li> <li>• Learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.</li> </ul>
<b>Children are connected with, and contribute to, their world</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.</li> <li>• Respond to diversity with respect.</li> <li>• Become aware of fairness.</li> <li>• Become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Children have a strong sense of wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.</li> <li>• Take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<b>Children are confident and involved learners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.</li> <li>• Develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.</li> <li>• Transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.</li> <li>• Resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials.</li> </ul>
<b>Children are effective communicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.</li> <li>• Engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.</li> <li>• Express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.</li> <li>• Begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.</li> <li>• Use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.</li> </ul>



## The Education and Care National Law and Regulations

Heritage follows Part 4.1 of the National Regulations that outlines the operational requirements for curriculum and practice within early education services. **Refer to:** [National Law and Regulations](#)

<a href="#">National Law Section 168</a>	<p><b>The service must deliver a program to all children that is:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on an approved learning framework and delivered in a manner that accords with the framework.</li> <li>Based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, taking into account the individual differences of each child.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Regulation 168</a>	<p><b>The service must have policies and procedures</b> including in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A code of conduct for staff members, health and safety, excursions and interactions with children.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Regulation 73</a>	<p><b>The educational program must contribute to the following outcomes.</b> Each child will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a strong sense of identity.</li> <li>Be connected with and contribute to his or her world.</li> <li>Have a strong sense of wellbeing.</li> <li>Be a confident and involved learner. Be an effective communicator.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Regulation 74</a>	<p><b>The following must be documented for preschool age or under:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program.</li> <li>Assessments of the child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program.</li> </ul> <p>In preparing the documentation, the service must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time that the child is being educated by the service</li> <li>How the documentation will be used by the educators at the service</li> <li>Preparing the documentation in a way that is readily understandable by the educators at the service and the parents of the child.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Regulation 75</a>	<p><b>Information about the contents and operation of the educational program must be displayed</b> and accessible to parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A copy of the educational program is available on request by parents.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Regulation 76</a>	<p><b>Information must be available to parents about the educational program in relation to their child.</b> Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about the content and operation of the educational program so far as it relates to their child.</li> <li>Information about their child's participation in the program.</li> <li>A copy of documents kept under regulation 74 regarding their child.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Regulation 118</a>	<p>The service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as <b>Educational Leader</b> at the service to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.</p>
<a href="#">Regulation 155</a>	<p>The service must take reasonable steps to ensure that <b>education and care is provided in a way that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages children to express themselves, develop self-reliance and self-esteem, and maintain their dignity and rights.</li> <li>Provides positive guidance towards acceptable behaviour.</li> <li>Respects their cultural/family values.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Regulation 156</a>	<p><b>The service must provide children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships</b> with each other, educators and volunteers at the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The service must consider the size and composition of the groups.</li> </ul>



## National Quality Standard

The National Framework (NQF) operates under the applied law system above and is an agreement between all Australian governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children using early education services.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education. It is linked to the national learning frameworks that recognise children learn from birth and outlines practices that promote children's learning.

- Services are required to consider **Six Principles** when working to achieve the NQS:
  1. The rights of the child are paramount.
  2. Children are successful, competent and capable learners.
  3. Equity, inclusion and diversity.
  4. Valuing Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
  5. The role of parents and families is respected and supported.
  6. High expectations for children, educators and service providers.
- The NQS consists of 7 areas containing standards and elements that early education services are assessed against. Quality Area 1 relates to Educational Program and Practice.
- Elements from all Quality Areas are embedded in the Heritage educational program.

### Quality Area 1 (QA1) Educational Program and Practice

- QA1 aims to enhance children's learning and development by ensuring the curriculum is based on an approved learning framework, reflects contemporary pedagogical theories, promotes children's learning towards broad learning outcomes related to wellbeing and the acquisition of skills for life and learning, and involves on-going critical reflection.

**Refer to:** [The National Quality Standard](#)

## Summary of Key Responsibilities

Role	Responsible for ensuring:
<b>Management Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an up-to-date Curriculum and Program Planning Policy and related Procedures that is easily accessible to families and educators.</li> <li>• There is a process in place to ensure the service policies and procedures are regularly updated to reflect current legislative requirements, <a href="#">government guidelines</a> and best practice recommendations from recognised authorities. <b>Refer to:</b> Policy Development and Review Policy.</li> <li>• The Curriculum and Program Planning Policy clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the Director, educators and Heritage community.</li> <li>• The Director is supported to ensure a suitably qualified Educational Leader is appointed who has the skills, knowledge and attributes to direct the development and implementation of educational program at Heritage and (Regulation 118).</li> </ul>
<b>Director and Educational Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The educational program is stimulating and engaging, enhances children's learning and development, and is based on an approved learning framework (National Law, Section 166).</li> <li>• The developmental needs, interests and experiences, and the individual differences of each child are accommodated in the educational program (National Law Section 166).</li> <li>• The educational program contributes to each child:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developing a strong sense of identity</li> <li>○ Being connected with and contributing to, his or her world</li> <li>○ Having a strong sense of wellbeing</li> <li>○ Being a confident and involved learner</li> <li>○ Being an effective communicator (Regulation 73)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The staff record includes the name of the Educational Leader (Regulation 148).</li> </ul>



- The service philosophy guides educational program and practice.
- Educators work as a team in preparing and implementing the program.
- Information is gathered from families on enrolment regarding each child's needs, interests and family background, treated as confidential, and utilised to provide experiences that interest and extend each child's current development.
- The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
- A balance between indoor and outdoor experiences is planned for with extensive blocks of unstructured time available for uninterrupted, child-initiated play.
- Healthy eating, hygiene and physical activity are embedded in the educational program that reflect current recommendations from respected authorities.<sup>3</sup>
- Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
- Modifications are made in the environment as appropriate to ensure the inclusion of children with additional needs, and professional referrals are made where deemed necessary, with family permission.<sup>4</sup>
- Materials and equipment reflect the cultural diversity and family values that exists in broader society.
- Connections with the local community are embedded in the program.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and connections to community and country are valued and respected.
- Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation.
- Assessments of each child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program are documented (Regulation 74(1)(a)(i)).
- Assessments of each child's progress against the outcomes of the educational program are documented (Regulation 74(1)(a)(ii)).
- Documentation of assessments includes reflection on the period of time the child is at the service, and how documented information will be used by educators at the service (Regulation 74(2)(a)(i)&(ii)).
- Documentation is written in plain language and is easy to understand by both educators and parents/guardians (Regulation 74(2)(b)).
- A copy of the educational program is displayed at the service and accessible to parents/guardians (Regulation 75).
- Parents/guardians are provided with information about the content and implementation of the educational program, their child's participation in the program and documentation relating to assessments or evaluations of their child (Regulation 76).
- The development and evaluation of the educational program is undertaken in collaboration with the Heritage community.
- A copy of the educational program is displayed at the service in a location accessible to parents/guardians.
- Respectful and reciprocal relationships are developed with families and regular communication is established between the service and parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development.
- A variety of techniques are used to critically reflect on all aspects of the curriculum including routines, transitions and experiences.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to: Nutrition and Oral Hygiene Policy; Physical Activity Policy; Hygiene and Infection Control Policy

<sup>4</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy



<b>Educators</b>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working collaboratively with the Educational Leader to implement the educational program and being open to receiving direction and guidance.</li> <li>• Gathering information regarding each child's needs, strengths and interests, and family background, treating this information as confidential and utilising it to provide experiences that interest and extend each child's current development.</li> <li>• Developing warm, respectful and meaningful relationships with children to support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Recognising children's agency and listening to and respecting children.</li> <li>• Planning realistic goals for children based on observation and assessment of individual needs, backgrounds and interests.</li> <li>• Utilising the five EYLF Learning Outcomes to guide planning for children's learning.</li> <li>• Implementing The Heritage Program Cycle (p14) that underpins the educational program, and critically thinking about the process.</li> <li>• Providing experiences that are age appropriate and include both structured and unstructured learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors.</li> <li>• Allowing large blocks of uninterrupted time for uninterrupted child-initiated play, to develop children's creativity and imagination.</li> <li>• Providing experiences that support and develop all curriculum areas including literacy, numeracy, science, visual arts, music, wellbeing and environmental sustainability.</li> <li>• Providing experiences that actively promote and initiate the investigation of ideas, complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesising.</li> <li>• Embedding healthy eating, hygiene and physical activity in the educational program that reflect current recommendations from respected authorities.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• Ensuring each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.</li> <li>• Supporting the development of each child's gross motor skills and fostering the emergence and refinement of fundamental movement skills through a range of intentionally planned and spontaneous active play learning experiences.</li> <li>• Ensuring that all children's experiences are valued with equitable access to resources and opportunities to demonstrate their learning.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Modifying the environment as appropriate to ensure the inclusion of children with additional needs.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• Ensuring materials and equipment reflect the cultural diversity and family values that exists in broader society.</li> <li>• Building connections with the local community, such as through excursions and incursions<sup>9</sup> and understanding that participating in their communities strengthens children's sense of identity and wellbeing</li> <li>• Valuing and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and connections to community and country.</li> <li>• Ensuring the daily routine is flexible to reflect weather conditions, ideas from the children and input from families and educators.</li> <li>• Seeking opportunities within the daily routine and transitions for spontaneous play and experiences.</li> <li>• Being responsive to spontaneous 'teachable moments' to extend children's learning.</li> </ul>
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<sup>5</sup> Refer to: Interactions with Children Policy

<sup>6</sup> Refer to: Nutrition and Oral Hygiene Policy; Physical Activity Policy; Hygiene and Infection Control Policy

<sup>7</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>8</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>9</sup> Refer to: Excursions and Incursions Policy





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to children’s ideas and play, using intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning/critical thinking through open-ended questions and positive interactions, encouragement and feedback.</li> <li>• Viewing children as active participants and decision makers, working with each child’s unique qualities and abilities.</li> <li>• Documenting children’s experiences and their responses to the learning environment including through the Day Books, making children’s learning visible to other educators and families and promoting shared learning and collaboration.</li> <li>• Developing a collaborative partnership with families to ensure consistency, as far as practicable, between home and the service.</li> <li>• Reflecting on children’s learning dispositions, spontaneous play opportunities and teaching strategies in order to identifying any changes that may be needed in the environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading the Day Books and Family Handbook and accessing the For Families section in the <a href="#">Members Area</a> of the Heritage website in order to become familiar with the Heritage policies and educational program.</li> <li>• Pro-actively building good relationships with educators such as through participating in a gradual settling in process or greeting educators on arrival and departure.<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• Keeping educators informed of any changes in their child’s health, wellbeing, needs or routine.</li> <li>• Providing input into the development of the educational program in collaboration with the educators, for example, asking questions about the daily routines and educational program, and making suggestions or contributing their knowledge/skills such as music, art and craft, cooking, languages, drama etc.<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Communicating regularly with the service in relation to their child’s learning and development.</li> <li>• Regularly sending in sharing such as photographs of their child’s weekend activities.</li> <li>• Providing feedback on the bi-annual learning summaries.</li> <li>• Attending the Parent-Educator interviews, held three times a year.</li> </ul>
<b>Students and Regular Volunteers</b>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abiding with the procedures in this policy, the service Philosophy and Heritage Code of Conduct/Ethics.</li> <li>• Reading the Relief Educator Handbook and accessing the information on the Heritage website in the Members Section, to become familiar with the service policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Respecting each child and service’s rights to privacy confidentiality.</li> <li>• Bringing relevant issues and concerns to the attention of both educators and the Director.</li> </ul>

## Strategies and Procedures

### The Heritage Vision and Philosophy Statement

The Heritage Vision and Philosophy Statement (over-page) is the written document which outlines the values, principles and practices that underpin the service’s work and educational program. Based on the EYLF, it evolves according to the beliefs and values that are collectively held by Heritage educators and families and underpins the educational program.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to: Communication and Family Involvement Policy; Enrolment and Graduating Rooms Policy; Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

<sup>11</sup> Refer to: Communication and Family Involvement Policy



### Acknowledgement of Country

**We recognise that teaching & learning have continued to take place on the land on which our Centre stands for many thousands of years. We are honoured to continue this tradition & acknowledge the Ngunawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land**

**Our Mission** is to work together to build a safe, respectful and nurturing environment focused on maximising each child's sense of wellbeing and acquisition of skills for life and learning (*Belonging, Being and Becoming*).

**Our Vision** is to create a warm and inclusive family atmosphere where all educators and families feel inspired to work together in a genuine partnership focused on providing a dynamic learning environment to ensure each child realises their full potential. Regardless of race, gender, age, ability, social status or family structure, our vision is to ensure each child is able to participate in all aspects of the program. We value the different gifts that each child brings to our community and embrace the many world cultures represented at Heritage. We celebrate our multicultural roots for the wealth of knowledge and understanding they bring to our community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and connections to community and country are valued.

**Our Vision for Reconciliation** is to look forward to a day when all Australians celebrate the longstanding and continuing contributions of the First Australians to our nation's shared history and identity. It is important that we, as a country, recognise our true history and the diverse past, present and continuing cultures and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We strive to ensure that we continue to respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in all that we do. We acknowledge that it is a child's right to learn about the Ngunawal Land and the Traditional Custodians and their histories and are committed to reaching out to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people within our community to break down barriers and move forward together. As early childhood educators, we understand that 'from little things big things grow' and that a child's learning journey and reconciliation journey begins here.

### Our Aims

**Respect and Dignity:** We aim to ensure each child is given the opportunity to play, discover and grow in an atmosphere of care and mutual respect where their dignity and rights are preserved at all times.

**Emotional Security:** We aim to build warm, respectful and meaningful relationships between all our children, families and educators in order to create a community of learners which is a support network for all. We know that respect comes from being acknowledged, understood and empathised with in relationships that have meaning, and understand the importance of establishing an emotionally secure foundation based on respect in order to support each child's developing sense of self and empathy for others.

### Our Philosophy

**Holistic and Inclusive Approach:** We take a holistic and inclusive approach to caring for and educating our children and aim to develop each child's understanding of the world in which they live by developing broad based knowledge, skills and attitudes to prepare them for lifelong learning. We aim to develop not only every child's cognitive ability but also their social, physical, linguistic and emotional skills.

**Innate Curiosity and Creativity:** Our philosophy is underpinned by the view that each child is naturally creative, capable and inquisitive. We understand that children are fundamentally motivated to explore and discover the world by actively employing a complex network of abilities, interests and symbolic languages. We know that children 'learn through play' and recognise children's agency from birth.



**Connecting to our Environment:** We understand the importance of connecting children to the natural world in order to develop their respect for maintaining the health and beauty of the environment. We are committed to teaching children to care and respect the land of the local indigenous people and to love all the beauty and freedom it has to offer. We value the pedagogy of outdoor learning and are inspired by the Forest School and Nature Play Theory. We believe this approach is essential for building each child's health and fitness, life skills and resilience and aim to balance safety with the need to explore risks in order to encourage children to make sound supported judgements about risk taking. We believe outdoor education fosters a sense of community and adventure, encourages exploration and inspires creative minds. 'Exploring beyond the fence' is a fundamental part of the Heritage program while the surrounding landscape, Australian culture and consultations with a local Aboriginal Elder strongly influence the design of our indoor and outdoor spaces.

**Self-Reliance:** We believe in encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions and allow them to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem. Our educators actively listen to each child throughout the day in order to genuinely understand their needs and what is important to them and strive to create a natural flow of stimulating activities and quiet times where each child feels safe to seek reassurance.

**Qualified Team of Educators:** We embed ongoing critical reflection in all areas of our practice by building a culture of enquiry and continuous improvement among our educators. We believe in fostering a team approach where all our educators are equally respected and valued for their contribution. We employ highly qualified educators and empower our trainees to continually upgrade their qualifications.

**Differentiated Curriculum:** Our educators view every child as a unique person with their own interests, needs and energy levels. We understand that children mature at different rates and have preferred styles of learning and our educators are trained to provide an enriched, flexible and differentiated curriculum. We understand that children learn best when the program reflects their interests and has meaning for them personally and plan our program based on careful observations of each child's individual knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests. We utilise inquiry and project-based collaborative learning, initiated by children, families, educators or involvement in the wider community to support creative thinking and problem solving. We understand that learning can happen every moment of every day and it is our job to "make the most of every moment."

*"Young children's earliest years are the foundation for their physical and mental health, emotional security, cultural and personal identity and developing competencies."*  
UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

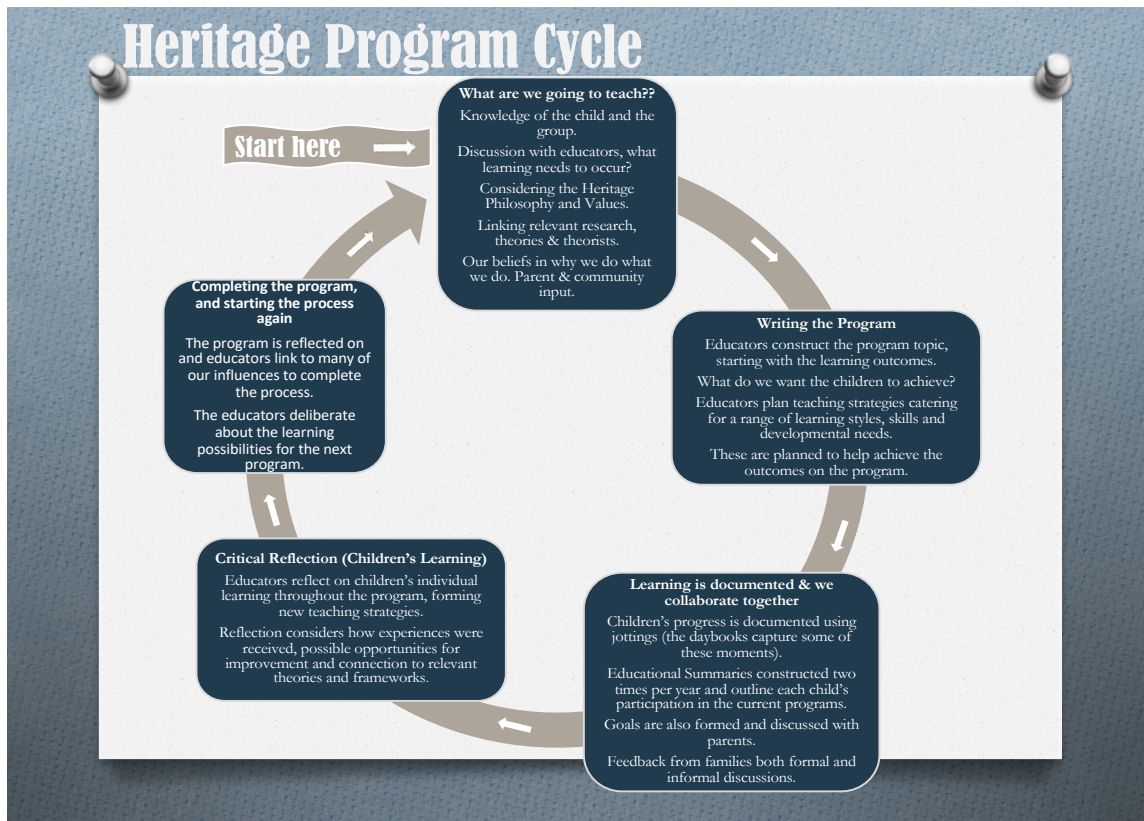
**Our Core Values:** Identity, Respect, Community, Resilience, Contribution

**(Note:** We use Ngunawal instead of Ngunnawal after consultation with Elder Tyrone Bell)

### The Heritage Program Cycle

The Heritage Program cycle (overpage) is developed by the Educational Leader in consultation with the Director, and will:

- Guide educators to design, implement and evaluate a curriculum that reflects the Heritage Philosophy, contemporary early childhood theories and research, and the EYLF.
- Encourage each child to achieve the learning outcomes of the EYLF with 'learning through play' and inquiry-based and project-based learning underpinning the learning process.
- Ensure information about each child is gathered that enables educators to plan effectively for each child's learning and development
- Reflect that children learn best when activities and experiences are interesting and have meaning for them personally.



### Daily Room Flow, Caregiving Routines and Transitions

- Heritage recognises that caregiving routines are important to children's development and learning as they provide a chance to develop rituals that give children a sense of security.
- We aim to create respectful, flexible and calm caregiving routines that are integrated into the everyday flow of our room programs and balanced with learning opportunities.
- We believe in offering children choices about all parts of their day, including caregiving routines, to meet both their mental and physical needs and to help build their individual self-awareness.
- We believe giving children agency around their caregiving routines and learning encourages children's intrinsic motivation to participate.
- Being flexible around the flow of the day for each age group also allows educators to plan for pleasurable and unhurried transitions and to maximise opportunities for learning.

#### Specifically:

- Educators will ensure the flow of the day is flexible to reflect weather conditions, ideas from the children and input from families and educators.
- Educators will ensure cues are taken from children regarding their needs, preferences, individual caregiving routines and choices as to when parts of our day or play periods occur.
- For younger babies, educators will aim to maintain similar caregiving routines to their home environment for consistency of care.
- Educators will use caregiving routines and transition times to interact with the children to build meaningful relationships and as teaching opportunities for self-help skills, healthy eating or for role modelling good hygiene practices etc.



## The Heritage Learning Environment

### Special Programs at Heritage

Heritage educators will include a variety of special programs in the daily room flow, that link with the educational program and support the children to achieve the EYLF outcomes. These may include:

- Music, cooking, yoga, health and wellbeing, dance and physical education sessions. These sessions provide opportunities for children to engage in creative and active play, practice Fundamental Motor Skills and develop healthy habits for life.
- Expertise from subjects including numeracy, literacy, science and the arts.
- Use of the Interactive Whiteboard in the Preschool Room. Note: The IWB is used to support the educational program to facilitate multisensory learning and maximise the learning of pre-schoolers. It is not used for passive, sedentary entertainment.<sup>12</sup>
- Visits to the Heritage library to become familiar with borrowing books, as well as listening to and participating in storytelling.
- Caring for Heritage pets.<sup>13</sup>
- Visits to the ANU Environment Centre fruit and vegetable garden and use of wood fire oven.
- Fostering sustainable thinking through recycling, gardening and respectful interactions with natural spaces, flora and fauna.
- Regular outings around the ANU campus encompassing nature walks, visits to cafes, ovals and workplaces.
- Gulambany On Country outdoor learning program that links with the Heritage Acknowledgement of Country and Forest School/Nature Play.
- Monthly Aboriginal culture sessions with a local community Elder.
- Campfires and outdoor relaxation in the Heritage tent.
- Occasional excursions that are child orientated, linked with the curriculum and EYLF outcomes and assessed for risk such as to the National Museum, Botanic Gardens, Floriade, Bus Wash.<sup>14</sup>
- Visits from and talks by community role models ~~which are linked to the EYLF outcomes~~, eg, wildlife rangers, police officers, fire fighters and health professionals.
- Families sharing their expertise including culture, music, hobbies and professions.
- Mandarin Lessons.
- Community events including Art night, Walk-A-Thon, barbecues, disco parties, information nights, cultural celebrations.

### Learning through Play

- Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that, "all children have the right to play and rest".
- Heritage educators understand that play is the natural way children learn and provides a context for communication and interactions. During play children spontaneously rehearse feelings, regulate emotions, try out ideas and test hypotheses.
- Play nourishes every aspect of a child's development and forms the foundation of the intellectual, social, physical and emotional skills necessary for success in life. *"If the curriculum is too formal and teacher directed children may learn particular skills and knowledge but they may do so at the expense of the motivation to use them"* (EYLF, 2009).
- To achieve deep and substantial learning, Heritage educators will extend learning from children's play by questioning the children, for example, using open-ended questions to challenge their thinking and support their learning during play.

### Child-led Play

- Defined as "the purest form of play - unstructured, self-motivated, imaginative, independent play where children initiate their own games and even invent their own rules." (Dr. David Elkind), decades of research show that it is crucial to physical, intellectual and social-emotional development.

<sup>12</sup> Refer to: Screen Time Policy

<sup>13</sup> Refer to: Pets and Animals Policy

<sup>14</sup> Refer to: Excursions and Incursions Policy



- Educators will ensure extensive blocks of unstructured time is available for uninterrupted child-initiated play.

### *Loose Parts Play*

Educators will:

- Understand that [loose parts play](#) is open-ended, allowing children to decide the purpose of an item, rather than an adult or manufacturer, eg, using a block of wood as a phone, buttons as money, or shells as treasure.
- Ensure children are empowered creatively with the presence of open-ended materials that can be constructed, manipulated and transformed through self-directed play.
- Recognise that natural resources, with their complexity in shapes, textures and colours, are a perfect medium for use in loose parts play as they provide so many possibilities for discovery, inventiveness and creativity.

### **Intentional Teaching**

#### Project and Inquiry-based Learning

- Project-based learning enables educators to support creative thinking and problem solving and allows many opportunities for in-depth enquiry (active learning that begins by posing questions, problems and scenarios).<sup>15</sup>
- Ideas for projects may be initiated by children, families, educators or through involvement with the wider community.
- Educators will encourage children to work collaboratively to gather and investigate information on topics with the emphasis placed on real life issues or problems.

#### Language and Literacy

- Heritage recognises the ability to use language confidently and appropriately impacts on every aspect of a person's life and learning.
- Educators understand the connection between speaking and listening, reading and writing and that initially, reading and writing are dependent on oral language skills.
- Educators understand that young children learn best when information is embedded in meaningful contexts that make sense to them and incorporate literacy learning into daily experiences and transitions.
- Educators will immerse children in oral language and reading experiences, and the focus on language will be made a priority.
- Educators will support children to visit the Heritage Library and become familiar with borrowing books. This is particularly important for those children nearing school age who will participate in similar programs at school.

#### The Arts

- The arts play a central role at Heritage in helping children to be involved in independent decision-making, expressive and aesthetic communication and collaborative learning.
- Educators will create sensory rich learning environments to stimulate curiosity and a sense of wonder.
- Through involvement in visual arts including photography, dance, drama, modelling, singing and making music, children will be given the opportunity to experience learning from multiple perspectives.

#### STEAM Education

- Heritage educators understand that STEAM education incorporates science, technology, engineering and maths plus the arts, ie the humanities, language arts, dance, drama, music, visual arts, design and new media.
- While traditionally STEM education explicitly focuses on scientific concepts, STEAM investigates the same concepts, but does this through enquiry and problem-based learning methods used in the creative process.
- Using the play-based pedagogy, educators will give children the opportunity to investigate, manipulate and experiment with a wide range of resources that develop concepts, skills

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<sup>15</sup> Refer to: Definitions



and dispositions that move beyond historical stereotypes associated with STEM and inspire a new generation of [interdisciplinary creators and innovators](#).

#### Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Heritage recognises Goal 4 Quality Education, Target 4.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which states: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles...” (UNESCO, 2017). The principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are linked to all aspects of the curriculum.

Educators will:

- Prioritise learning ‘in, about and for the environment’.
- Support children to become environmentally responsible by connecting children to the natural world and to their responsibility for maintaining the health and beauty of their early learning centre, the local community and in turn the planet.
- Incorporate sustainable practices such as composting, maintaining the garden and recycling of water into the educational program.
- Extend the learning environment through visits to the ANU Environment Centre.

#### Health and Wellbeing

Heritage recognises the importance of health and emotional and physical wellbeing to maximise children’s development and learning. Educators will:

- Model and reinforce health, wellbeing and hygiene practices with children.
- Ensure healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.<sup>16</sup>
- Plan for and participate in energetic physical activity with children, both planned and spontaneous and include intentional teaching of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS).
- Draw on family and community experiences and expertise to include familiar games and physical activities in play.
- Consider the pace of the day within the context of the community and provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.
- Ensure each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
- Provide a wide range of equipment and materials to encourage children’s fine and gross motor skills.
- Actively support children to learn hygiene routines.<sup>17</sup>
- Promote continuity of children’s personal health and hygiene by sharing ownership of routines and schedules with children, families and the community.
- Engage children in experiences, conversations and routines that promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition.
- Discuss health and safety issues with children and involve them in developing guidelines to keep the environment safe for all.
- Support children to develop emotion self-regulation, empathy and respectful relationships.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Learning Spaces and Physical Environments**

- Heritage values learning spaces for their capacity to promote choices, provide deep involvement and support the development of respectful relationships between individuals and materials.
- Educators will devote time to the design and presentation of aesthetically pleasing and intellectually challenging physical environments that link both the indoor and outdoor spaces and program content.

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<sup>16</sup> Refer to: Physical Activity Policy; Nutrition and Oral Hygiene Policy

<sup>17</sup> Refer to: Hygiene and Infection Control Policy.

<sup>18</sup> Refer to: Interactions with Children Policy; Behaviour Guidance Policy; Pets and Animals Policy



- Educators will ensure learning experiences, routines and resources will be presented to stimulate sensory perception, encourage creative thinking, and enhance opportunities for collaborative learning and connection with the environment.
- Special objects, collections and materials will be used to enhance the environmental awareness of each child and inspire children's imaginative explorations.
- The surrounding landscape, Australian culture and consultations with a local Aboriginal Elder strongly influence the design of our indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Resources, materials and equipment will allow for multiple uses, be sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based and enquiry-based learning.
- Materials from the built and natural world will be carefully selected for their capacity to stimulate open-ended play, sensory perception and imaginative thinking.

#### The Outdoor Learning Environment

- The pedagogy of 'Outdoor Learning' and 'Beyond the Fence' is an integral part of the Heritage educational program and intrinsic to the Heritage Philosophy.
- We are inspired by [Forest School](#) and [Nature Play Theory](#) and believe learning in nature is essential for building each child's health and fitness, life skills and resilience.
- We believe outdoor education fosters a sense of community and adventure, encourages exploration and inspires creative minds.
- Heritage takes a risk-benefit approach to the Outdoor Program, taking into account the developmental need for children to explore risks while also taking into account the potential for actual harm to the children.<sup>19</sup>

#### Outdoor Play Areas

- The Heritage outdoor play areas will be designed to support the development of gross motor skills and knowledge about nature and the environment.
- Opportunities to climb, swing, run, jump, dig and balance will be provided through climbing and perceptual motor equipment and the sandpit is provided for sensory play.<sup>20</sup>
- Educators will ensure that individual abilities are catered for, and safety is discussed with children as part of the educational program.

#### Gulambany on Country Program

- The Heritage Gulambany on Country Program is an important part of our Beyond the Fence Program. We are committed to teaching children to care and respect the land of the local indigenous people and to love all the beauty and freedom it has to offer.
- The name is an Aboriginal word meaning Community and relates to learning outdoors, being community minded and links strongly with our Acknowledgement of Country.

#### Forest School and Nature Play

- Heritage believes that creating a natural outdoor play environment and regular outings into the local natural environment are essential for building each child's health and fitness, life skills, connection with nature and resilience.
- Educators understand that unstructured play outdoors in nature is fundamental to a healthy childhood, and that nature play benefits health, cognitive, social, and emotional development, fostering resilience and creativity.
- Experience in nature as a child also leads to [environmental stewardship](#) later in life.

#### Excursions and Incursions

- According to the EYLF, 'Participating in their communities strengthens children's sense of identity and wellbeing.'
- Educators will ensure excursions and incursions are planned to reflect the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and are thoroughly risk-assessed.<sup>21</sup>
- The Heritage program of excursions may include visits to The National Zoo, Botanic Gardens, Floriade or other yearly events, as well as regular outings on local walks around

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<sup>19</sup> Refer to: Work Health and Safety Policy; Child Safe Environment Policy

<sup>20</sup> Refer to: Physical Activity Policy

<sup>21</sup> Refer to: Excursions and Incursions Policy





the ANU campus to explore nature, cafes, ovals, sculptures, workplaces etc, or to the nearby ANU Environment Centre or National Museum.

- The Heritage program of incursions may include visits to the service and talks by community role models such as emergency services personnel, health professionals, music and dance performers and monthly Aboriginal culture sessions.

### **Creating an Inclusive Curriculum**

The EYLF describes inclusive learning environments as ‘... vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. They cater for different learning capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions.’

Heritage educators will:

- Base their program decisions on what they know about each child’s culture, strengths, needs, interests and abilities, and apply this knowledge in selecting appropriate intentional teaching strategies and appropriate physical learning environments during all planned and spontaneous learning experiences, routines and interactions.
- Utilise teaching and learning strategies that reflect inclusive and multiple ways of expressing knowledge.
- Recognise the value of play as a major avenue of learning for all children, while also recognising that some children may need additional support and assistance in developing and utilising play skills.
- Arrange a balance of small and larger group experiences, both vigorous and quiet, so that all children, at their own levels, can be active and interactive participants.
- Structure learning environments to ensure all children are supported to participate together in a variety of activities, across a range of learning and development areas.
- Create learning environments that include a range of materials and activities where all children can be challenged according to their current capacities, strengths and interests.
- Collaborate with families, colleagues and where appropriate, outside agencies, regarding developing the program and children’s ongoing learning and development.
- Provide opportunities for all children, staff and families to use a variety of forms of communication including languages other than English.
- Reflect the diversity of cultures represented by the broader community.
- Extend children’s knowledge of their own culture as well as other cultures.<sup>22</sup>
- Regularly assess all materials and the physical environment for inclusiveness including ensuring:
  - Images in books provide an everyday, rather than a stereotypical view of other cultures.
  - Dolls and dress-ups represent both males and females and a balance of cultural backgrounds.
  - Paints, crayons and other art materials can be used to represent a variety of skin tones.
  - Children are able to hear music and songs from a range of cultures.
- Intervene where bias occurs to teach children to stand up for themselves and for equity.
- Provide inclusive models when discussing family structure and raise awareness of non-traditional work and gender roles through play and literature.

Areas of focus for learning experiences may include:

- Cultural diversity.
- Language and bilingualism, including non-verbal and written language, and sign language.
- Gender role differences and similarities.
- Family lifestyles.
- Festivities and celebrations.
- Identification and discussion of prejudice and bias experiences.
- The development of critical and analytical thinking.

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to: Curriculum and Program Planning Policy



### Supporting Cultural Competence <sup>23</sup>

Educators will:

- Utilise parental expertise with regard to their culture, religion, background, work and education.
  - Heritage families will be encouraged to share their cultural heritage and family stories with the children.
  - On enrolment, families will be requested to complete a form to express their interest in being involved in cultural activities or whether they have any special interests they would like included in the program.<sup>24</sup>
- Encourage children to explore a diversity of languages, food and religious beliefs.
- Respect and, where appropriate and safe to do so, compromise with families if home practices or family beliefs are in conflict with the practices or values of the Heritage community.
- Recognise that organising one-off 'cultural celebration days' where children are exposed to cultural signs and symbols that they are not exposed to on any other day, limits children's experiences, and singling out a particular culture can actually reinforce stereotypes.
- It is more important to integrate cultural diversity into every aspect of the child's experience so that differences are accepted as "no big deal" and celebrated every day.<sup>25</sup>

### Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures

- Educators will develop a program that promotes an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures.
- As descendants of Australia's original inhabitants, special recognition will be given by Heritage educators to Australia's indigenous cultures.

### Supporting Children with Additional Needs <sup>26</sup>

- The EYLF recognises that, 'Partnerships ... involve educators, families and support professionals working together to explore the learning potential in everyday events, routines and play so that children with additional needs are provided with daily opportunities to learn from active participation and engagement in these experiences ...'
- Heritage recognises that some children or families may need or require special considerations or adaptations to participate fully in early childhood services (recognising not all children with additional needs will require support).

The Director will:

- Identify children who may be disadvantaged, have additional needs, or be at risk of discrimination/exclusion on enrolment.
- Ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs.
- Access the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP) and language services to assist with inclusion as required.
- Access resources, support and professional development to facilitate inclusion of children with additional needs who are ineligible for specific support packages.
- Be aware of the behaviours and underlying characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ensure children with challenging behaviours are observed and appropriate referrals made if ASD is suspected.<sup>27</sup>

Educators will:

- Throughout the first few months of enrolment at Heritage, spend time carefully observing each child and communicating with their family to ensure that a clear picture of their individual growth and development is established.
- Incorporate goals into the weekly educational program for children with additional needs which reflect their needs, strengths and interests.

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<sup>23</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>24</sup> Refer to: Communication and Family Involvement Policy

<sup>25</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>26</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>27</sup> Refer to: Behaviour Guidance Policy



- Create opportunities for all children to engage in daily experiences, and in all dimensions of the curriculum rather than planning alternative or separate experiences for any child.
- Modify the environment and adapt planned activities if required to support the participation and inclusion of children with additional needs.
- Create physical environments that allow children with a disability to:
  - Access and explore indoor and outdoor areas as independently as possible. A child who experiences high levels of anxiety or behavioural issues may need a safe, quiet area to go to when they feel overwhelmed or want time away from the group.
  - Make choices about the resources they access and experiences they participate in.
  - Interact meaningfully with other children and adults.
  - Care for themselves as independently as possible. A child with a communication or learning difficulty may benefit from using visual resources such as pictorial flow charts to help them understand and participate in the day's routines.
  - Experience challenge and take managed risks.
  - Engage with images, books and resources that reflect people with disabilities as active participants in and contributors to communities in a variety of ways.<sup>28</sup>
- Respond to each child's individual circumstances and requirements. For example, a child with a sensory processing disorder may be more comfortable participating in a quiet, planned group movement experience such as yoga than in a boisterous circle game.
- Actively engage all children in conversations that encourage them to question, hypothesise and extend their thinking. Where children have limited social skills because of a disability, educators will think about the best ways to encourage participation in these conversations.
  - They may find it easier to participate in play and learning experiences with a smaller number of children, or in experiences that involve clear boundaries and expectations.
  - A child with a language delay may need educators to support interactions through using visual or signed communication strategies.
- Support children's agency, understanding that children with a disability, like all children, wish to make decisions about experiences they participate in and the directions those experiences take.<sup>29</sup>

### Quality Supervision

- Heritage educators understand the importance of [quality active supervision](#) to the learning outcomes of children and will constantly adapt their supervision strategies to the situation and individual needs of children.
- Room Leaders must ensure they do not stretch educator resources.
- Each experience provided to the children must be assessed to determine if extra vigilant or constant supervision is required and this is included in program plans as required. The assessment will be based on the age and development of each child, the difficulty of the activity and the potential for an accident to occur.<sup>30</sup>

### Documentation

- The documentation and assessment process helps educators to reflect on their own values, beliefs and teaching practices, and to communicate about children's learning with children and their families.
- Heritage follows Part 4.1 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* which sets out the requirements for the documentation of assessments of each child in relation to the curriculum (Regulation 74).

Heritage ensures that:

- Observations are made of each child's developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program.
- Developmental Summaries of each child's progress are made against the outcomes of the educational program.
- The documentation is prepared taking into account the period of time that the child is

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<sup>28</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>29</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>30</sup> Refer to: Supervision Policy, Water Safety Policy, Work Health and Safety Policy; Excursions and Incursions Policy, Pets and Animals Policy



being educated at the service.

- The documentation is clear and readily understandable by the educators at the service and the parents of the child.

Document	Assessment
<b>Child Profile Forms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents children's strengths and interests, home routines and family backgrounds to inform educators so individual needs can be understood and form the basis of the educational program.</li> </ul>
<b>Day Books and Yearbooks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day Books documents the day's activities and each child's interactions with the learning environments. They are sent to parents daily via email and available on the Heritage website.</li> <li>• A Heritage Yearbook is produced annually to capture and celebrate children's learning, activities, walks, class photos and social events.</li> </ul>
<b>Bi-Annual Educational Summaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures each child's complete documentation cycle and links to individual goals, the program and early learning theories and theorists.</li> <li>• Shows how educators cater to each child's individual interests and learning styles in order to maximise their wellbeing and the acquisition of skills for life and learning.</li> <li>• Educators make careful observations of each child utilising hand-written jottings and scaffold children's learning. They share analysis of this learning process and celebrate each child's development with families through an Educational Summary.</li> <li>• The aim is to present a holistic picture to families of their child's emerging interests, strengths, learning styles, attitudes, skills and knowledge.</li> <li>• Particular emphasis is placed on creating an accurate picture of each child, their development and how they are participating in the program and social and physical environments at Heritage.</li> <li>• The educational summary also creates opportunities for educators and families to contribute their goals for children and these ideas are followed up using observations and reflecting upon them in the educational summary to show how development and learning has been scaffolded within the early learning setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Parent-Educator Interview Record</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held three times a year, the interview provides an opportunity for educators and parents to meet to exchange information that focuses on the growth and development of the children. Discussions are guided by the EYLF Learning Outcomes with evidence of children's achievements demonstrated in individual bi-annual learning summaries.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SIP is a document which identifies specific long-term inclusion objectives for children with additional needs.</li> <li>• Guides learning over the upcoming months through reference to the EYLF and details strategies to support each child's learning aspirations (cultural, artistic, social or personal).<sup>31</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Transition Learning and Development Statements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators prepare Transition Learning and Development Statements at the end of the year for all children entering school in the following year.</li> <li>• The statements reflect the five EYLF Learning Outcomes and are designed to provide information for Primary Teachers about individual children. In essence they:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Summarise the strengths of each child's development as they enter school.</li> <li>○ Identify individual approaches to learning, children's interests and preferred learning style.</li> <li>○ Indicate how each child can be supported to continue learning.<sup>32</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>32</sup> Refer to: Transition to School Policy



### Information Sharing and Family Involvement in the Day-to-Day Program

Families can also access information about the Heritage educational program via:

- **The Heritage Family Handbook.** Given to families on enrolment and available in the Members section of the Heritage website.
- **The Heritage Website** at <http://heritageecc.com.au> includes news, daybooks, policies, useful contacts and parenting/library resources in the [Members' section](#).
- **Daily Information/Communication Sheets.** Available for families of infants and toddler, the sheets provide daily information on their child's sleeping, feeding and toileting patterns.
- **Room Program Sheets.** Displayed in each room.
- **Early Years Learning Framework Display.** Available in the Entrance Foyer and explains the foundation of the Heritage curriculum.
- **Emails.** Sent out regularly, families are requested to check emails for information about meetings, special events, excursions and other activities both within and outside Heritage.
- **Parent Information Evenings.** Families are invited to attend seminars presented by early childhood educators/professionals covering a range of early childhood education issues.
- **Newsletters.** Newsletters containing information regarding the management and programs at Heritage are distributed to all families each term via email and uploaded to the website.
- **Family participation in the program.** Heritage understands that enabling families to see first-hand what happens in the program is a valuable way of sharing information, gaining insight and building respect.
  - Families are informed that Heritage has an "open door policy" and are free to visit their child at any time, participate in room activities, excursions or observe the room program in action.
  - **If families wish to come at rest times or busy times such as lunch,** as a courtesy to educators, they are asked to discuss this with their child's Room Leader so they can understand the best way to provide support during these times.
  - Families are asked to consider talking to educators about how they can contribute to the program by sharing special skills in music, art and craft, languages, drama etc.
  - Families are invited to share breakfast, morning or afternoon tea or other special events and activities with their children at the service.<sup>33</sup>
- **Building genuine relationships.** Families are asked to proactively help to establish a genuine relationship with their child's educators. This may be by:
  - Greeting educators at drop off and pick up times and exchanging information about their child's routine, needs and interests and the educational program.
  - Frequently viewing the Day Book emails and asking questions about the daily activities and program.
  - Making suggestions for educators to consider when planning the daily program.
  - Voicing any concerns promptly to educators or the Director.
- **Heritage Quality Survey.** Undertaken annually, the responses are utilised to reflect upon and improve the service and educational program.

### Professional Development

- Professional development opportunities are provided to Heritage educators on a regular basis including training on the latest child development theories, the Early Years Learning Framework, inclusion and equity, and intentional teaching strategies.
- Training materials include ~~DVD's, CDs,~~ online courses and attending professional development sessions at local, national and international settings.

### Policy Evaluation and Review

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the service will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to policy.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required.

<sup>33</sup> Refer to: Communication and Family Involvement Policy



- Encourage families and educators to contribute to the regular review of this policy including an annual review of the Heritage Philosophy Statement.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

- Sensitive and confidential information is kept secure in the main office and observational records are only shared with the child's family and between appropriate Heritage educators when required such as when a child graduates to another room.
- All observational records will be kept on file during a child's enrolment at Heritage and must be archived for by law for 3 years from the final day of attendance by the child.<sup>34</sup>

### Related Policies

Name	Location
Behaviour Guidance Policy	
Child Safe Environment Policy	Heritage Website: Policy and Procedures section in <a href="#">Members' Area</a> .
Communication and Family Involvement Policy	
Code of Conduct/Ethics	
Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy	Policy and Procedures Manual in Main Office, Entrance Foyer and Programming Room.
Enrolment and Graduating Rooms Policy	
Excursions and Incursions Policy	
Interactions with Children Policy	Educator Handbooks, Family Handbook (in Members Area on website).
Nutrition and Oral Hygiene Policy	
Policy Development and Review Policy	
Physical Activity Policy	
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	
Screen Time Policy	
Supervision Policy	
Sustainability Policy	
Transition to School Policy	

### References and Further Reading

**Australian Government: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.** [2010]. [Educators Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.](#)

**Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) Resources:**

- [Developing a Culture of Risky Play](#)
- [Planning and Programming Case Study 1](#)
- [Programs for Children.](#)
- [Developmental Milestones and the EYLF and NQS](#)
- [Unpacking the Planning Cycle Part 1](#)

**The Conversation:** [New research shows quality early childhood education reduces need for later special ed.](#)

**Childcare Centre Desktop. (2021).** *Sample Educational Program Policy.*

<sup>34</sup> Refer to: Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.



**Leggett and Ford. (2013).** *[A Fine Balance: Understanding the Roles Educators and Children Play as Intentional Teachers and Intentional Learners within the Early Years Learning Framework.](#)*

**University of Melbourne Early Learning Centre. (2014).** *Curriculum Development Policy.*

### Useful Websites, Factsheets and Videos for Families

[Letting your Child Lead Play](#)

[Nature Play Canberra:](#)

[Forest School/Bush School](#)

[Understanding the Terms and Descriptions used in Early Childhood Education:](#)

[Girls Toys vs Boys Toys](#)

### Version Control and Change History

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Authors and Amendments
1	October 2001	Management Committee	
2	October 2011	Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters Complete rewrite to reflect new NQS and the EYLF.
3	December 2012	Director	Amendment – removed references to Te Whariki.
4	9 Feb 2016	Management Committee	Authors: Theja Tagune, Educational Leader Julia Charters, Policy Advisor. Re-written to reflect new curriculum planning procedures implemented by Educational Leader.
5	6 July 2017	Director	Six principles added to p3 that apply across all seven quality areas of the NQS. Removed references to individual child portfolios and added new quarterly learning summaries prepared for families by educators of their focus children. Also added information on Heritage Year Book of learning, excursions and photos.
6	7 June 2018	Director	Added Programming Cycle Diagram
7	7 August 2020	Director	Updated Programming Cycle and added Family Handout version as attachment.
8	10 May 2022	Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters Expanded Summary of Key Responsibilities and moved to beginning of policy to aid readability. Updated Legislative Background and inserted relevant hyperlinks. Removed references to Certified Supervisors. Removed Room Routines Table and replaced with section on Room Flow, Caregiving Routines and Transitions, to reflect children's choice and agency in the flow of the day. Included new sections on child-led play, loose parts play, Forest School, nature play, STEAM education, embedding health and wellbeing in the educational program and creating an inclusive curriculum to reflect latest Heritage programs. Replaced the term "free play" with "uninterrupted, child-led play" to better reflect theory. Updated Documentation section to reflect current practice. Updated references and links. Moved Definitions to Appendix 1.



## Appendix 1: Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

**Active learning environment:** Defined in the EYLF as an environment in which children are encouraged to explore and interact with the environment to construct meaning and knowledge through their experiences, social interactions and negotiations with others. Educators play a crucial role by encouraging children to discover deeper meanings and make connections between ideas, concepts, processes and representations.

**Agency:** Being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world.

**Assessment:** The process of gathering and analysing information as evidence about what children know, can do and understand.

**Belonging:** The experience of knowing where and with whom you belong.

**Being:** An understanding that childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world.

**Becoming:** An understanding that children's becoming is shaped by many different events and circumstances.

**Child-led play:** "The purest form of play is unstructured, self-motivated, imaginative, independent kind, where children initiate their own games and even invent their own rules."  
Dr. David Elkind

**Co-construct:** Learning that takes place as children interact with educators and other children as they work together in partnership.

**Critical reflection:** Reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice.

**Curriculum:** All interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development.

**Cultural competence:** The ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

**Dispositions:** Enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to situations, for example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence.

**Documentation:** The range of methods used by educators to gather information about children, to identify and analyse learning and to plan and evaluate the program.

**Each child:** A phrase used in the NQS when an individualised approach is required and educators modify their response to meet the needs of individual children, eg, 'Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture and interests provide the foundation for the program'.

**Enquiry-based learning:** (Also spelled inquiry-based learning in American British English), enquiry-based learning is a form of active learning that starts by posing questions, problems or scenarios. Enquiry based learning is "discovering" the answer and project-based learning is "exploring" the answer.

**Evaluation:** An assessment to determine if goals and aims are being achieved and to provide a focus for further planning.

**Experiences:** The accumulation of knowledge or skills by children resulting from direct participation in routines, play and educational activities, excursions etc.

**Forest School:** A holistic and long-term child-centred learning program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking in a natural setting. Its roots are in Scandinavia where the open-air culture, "friluftsliv" or free air life, is seen as a way of life. The aim is to develop confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in nature.

**Intentional teaching:** Educators are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions related to the education program. It is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because they have 'always been done that way'.

**Inclusion:** Taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes.

**Involvement:** A state of intense, whole-hearted mental activity, characterised by sustained concentration and intrinsic motivation. Highly involved children (and adults) operate at the limit of their capacities, leading to changed ways of responding and understanding leading to deep level learning (adapted from Laevers, 1994).





**Learning:** A natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth, as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development.

**Learning outcome:** A skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families.

**Learning relationships:** Relationships that further children's learning and development. Both adult and child have intent to learn from one another.

**Loose Parts Play:** A type of play that supports invention, divergent thinking, problem solving and offers a sense of wonder to children. They are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways.

**Literacy:** In the early years, literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing.

**Nature Play:** Unstructured play outdoors. Fundamental to a healthy childhood, nature play benefits health, cognitive, social, and emotional development, fostering resilience and creativity. Experience in nature as a child also leads to environmental stewardship later in life.

**Numeracy:** Broadly includes understandings about numbers, patterns, measurement, spatial awareness and data as well as mathematical thinking, reasoning and counting.

**Observations:** The act of making and documenting an observation of a child including their interests, strengths, ideas, discoveries, questions and achievements. Observations can be made based on information gathered from families or by watching and listening to children during day-to-day experiences.

**Pedagogy:** In early childhood this is defined as educator practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching and learning.

**Project Based Learning:** A child-centred pedagogy in which students gain knowledge and skills by working together to investigate and respond to an authentic and engaging problem, or challenge. Enquiry based learning is "discovering" the answer and project-based learning is "exploring" the answer.

**Scaffold:** Educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.

**Texts:** Resources that are read, viewed or listened to and created in order to share meaning. Texts can be print-based, such as books, magazines and posters, or screen-based, eg, internet sites and DVDs or a combination of these.

**Play-based learning:** A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social world as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

**Transitions:** The process of moving between home and childhood settings, between a range of different early childhood settings, or from childhood setting to full-time school.

**Wellbeing:** Wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs including the need for affection, security, social recognition, competence, physical needs and for meaning in life (adapted from Laevers, 1994). It includes happiness, satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience. Children in a state of wellbeing feel like 'fish in water'. They have fun, enjoy each other's company, and feel o.k.