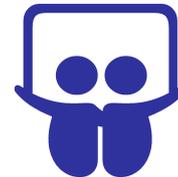


# TALKING QUALITY: REFLECTING ON PRACTICE IN EDUCATION AND CARE



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## Welcome

Welcome to the 2nd edition of Talking Quality for 2019. We plan to distribute this publication three times during 2019 to promote a culture of inquiry and collaboration across the ACT Education and Care sector. It aims to regularly engage stakeholders with the guiding principles of the [National Quality Framework \(NQF\)](#) and connect these with goals for continuous improvement.

### *Guiding Principles of the NQF*

- *The rights and best interests of the child are paramount.*
- *Children are successful, competent and capable learners.*
- *Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the framework.*
- *Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.*
- *The role of parents and families is respected and supported.*
- *Best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services.*

## New Team Members

Please welcome Jessica Tan to the Quality Assurance Team. Jessica



temporarily replaces Jessica Annerley who is currently acting in Brigid Donohoe's position as Assistant Director Quality Assurance. Jessica has experience working as a teacher in both an early childhood centre and school.

Nicole O'Keefe and Cherese Morthorpe are on secondment from the sector to work with the Quality Assurance team and the Risk and Audit team. Nicole and Cherese are experienced educators who have also worked as Directors of children's services. They are all looking forward to visiting your services and meeting you.



## Highlight on Professional Resources

### Online resources to support educator professional development

#### Early Childhood Resource Hub Cultural Competence - Free eLearning

There are several courses available at the Early Childhood Resources Hub professional learning site.

A series of three courses is available that look at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The three courses are sequential, starting with the individual and the development of individual cultural competency. The second course moves to consideration of how to develop culturally competent teaching practices and curriculum. The third course moves on to practical actions that can be used across the entire service.

Click Here to Access: [Early Childhood Resource Hub Professional Learning](#)

#### Early Childhood Australia School Age Care - Free eLearning

Several courses are available specifically for School Age Care. These include:

##### Planning in Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

OSHC educators will deepen their understanding of planning requirements in OSHC, as well as engage in critical reflection to design educational programs that align with the approved learning framework, are child-centred and intentional and based on play and leisure.

##### My Time, Our Place – Framework in School Age Care

A comprehensive module that unpacks the key elements of the nationally approved learning framework 'My Time, Our Place'.

Click Here to Access: [Early Childhood Australia - Outside School Hours Care - Quality Development Program](#)

#### Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority Kahoot Game

Kahoot! is a quiz based learning platform that is free and easy to access. ACECQA has developed a series of Kahoot! quizzes designed to be used individually or in teams as a way to test education and care knowledge, reflect on practice and consider development opportunities. Our Kahoot! Quiz Instructions have everything you need to start accessing the quizzes, specially designed by ACECQA for the children's education and care sector.

Click here to access: [ACECQA - National Quality Framework - Educational Games](#)

## Don't Forget To Register.....

### Education and Care Sector Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday 13 August 2019 **Time:** 9:30am to 12:00pm

**Venue:** Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning,  
51 Fremantle Drive Stirling ACT

**Register:** [Education and Care Sector Meeting Registration](#)



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

# Committing to Continuous Improvement

## New ACECQA Resources

ACECQA has developed a range of new resources to support continuous improvement in education and care services.

The new Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) template now includes the three exceeding themes to support services to reflect on how their practice in each standard reflects these themes.

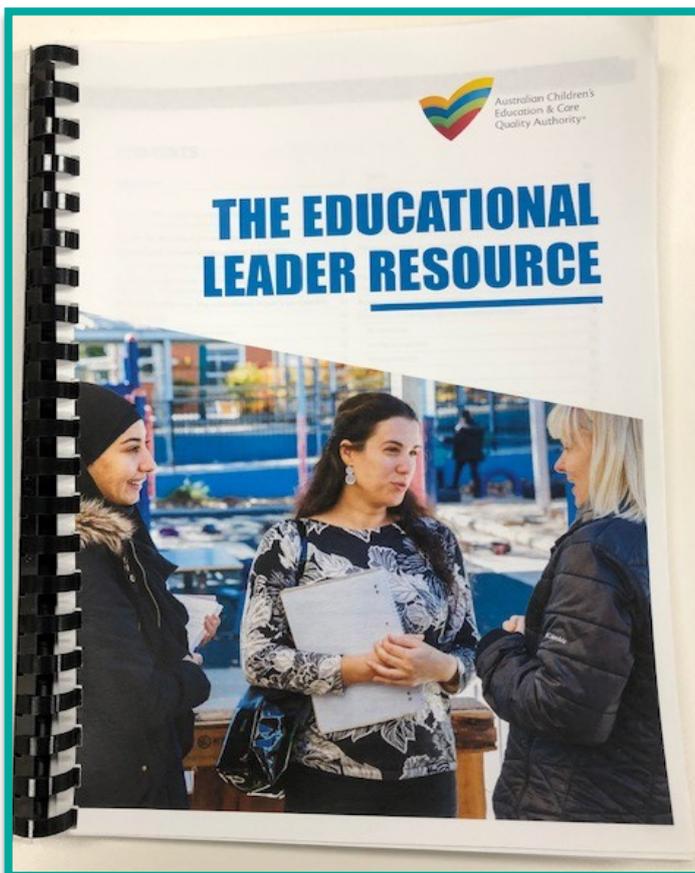
Click Here to Access: [Quality Improvement Plan Template](#)

A new feedback template has separate areas for documenting Meeting practice and practice that reflects the three exceeding themes.

Click Here to Access: [Feedback Template](#)

In response to feedback from the sector, ACECQA has also developed The Educational Leader Resource. This resource is designed to support Educational Leaders in their role. A series of Educational Leader Resource videos are also available on **the ACECQA** website to support services.

Click Here to Access: [The Educational Leader Resource](#)



### Spotlight on Practice

If you want to grow your skill as an educational leader consider joining the ACT Pedagogical Leadership Network.

This network provides a professional practice community for educational leaders.

Information on how to join can be found at -

[ACT Pedagogical Leadership Network](#)



A subcommittee of the ECA ACT Branch

# Critical Conversations

## Thinking and Talking About Body Image

**Research has shown that children begin to develop feelings about their body as early as three years of age.**

Our attitudes towards our own bodies can influence children's perceptions towards their body. Children's negative body image can impact on their self-esteem, social and emotional development, mental health and behaviour.



**So, what can we do to promote positive body image?**

Being mindful and reflective about our conversations around and with children can help us to support the development of positive body image for all children.



### Suggested Links

#### [The early development of body image issues needs our attention](#)

Negative body image and the issues associated with girls being dissatisfied with their bodies are often talked about in relation to teenage girls. It may alarm some to know however that 38 per cent of four-year-old girls want a different body size (Damiano et al., 2015).

Click Here to Access: [The early development of body image issues needs our attention](#)

#### [Supporting Nutrition for Australian Childcare](#)

Researchers at ECU, Perth, Western Australia have developed the exciting new research project, Supporting Nutrition for Australian Childcare (SNAC), providing a new support site for education and care centres and early years educators. This is a place for you to connect with other childcare professionals to share your experiences, ideas and thoughts and to build a network of support. There are many reliable, accurate resources to help you provide a healthy eating environment at your centre - fact sheets, recipes, videos, quizzes. Register now and see what the SNAC website can offer you!

Click Here to Access: [Supporting Nutrition for Australian Childcare](#)

# Embedding Practice

## Making Children's Thinking and Learning Visible

Displays in children's services often contain children's artwork or photos of children engaged in experiences with educators adding signage and descriptions. Adding children's voices can provide a unique insight into what individual children are taking from the experience and highlight avenues to extend their learning.

Documenting children's learning can be time consuming. We need to think creatively about ways we can document children's learning when we are working with them in the learning space. One way to do this is through the use of floor books. Children can be supported to reflect on their own learning with the support of an educator. Photos of children engaged in play can prompt discussion with children that is scribed by an educator alongside the image. Children can help to cut out photos, glue them into the book, share their reflections to be scribed and draw pictures in the floor book. This can then be displayed for children to share their learning with families. It also makes great evidence for showing children's learning over time.

Some children are reluctant to share their thinking with others in a group setting. The think, pair, share routine can support children to become more confident. A question is posed and then some thinking time is provided. Children are then asked to share their thinking with a partner which provides opportunities for respecting the different points of view of others. After this, children can then share their thinking with the group.

When educators scribe children's words as they are spoken, children are supported to develop a range of literacy skills. They gain an understanding that what they say can be written, they carefully watch as the educator models letter formation, writing from left to right and the use of capitals and punctuation. They also gain an understanding that what they have to say is important enough to be written and shared with others.

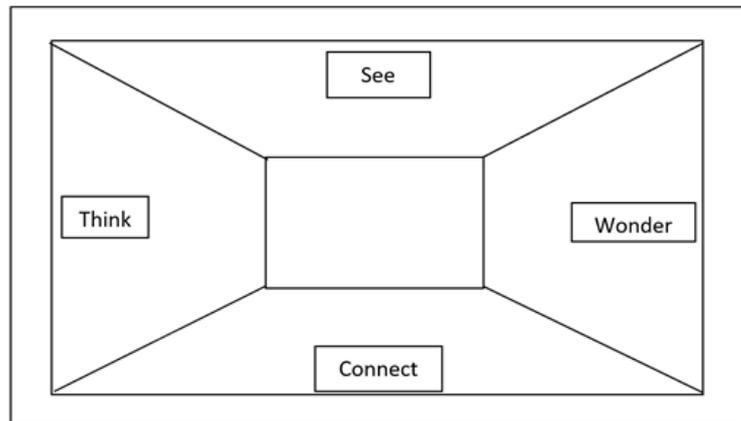


## Making Children's Thinking and Learning Visible continued.....

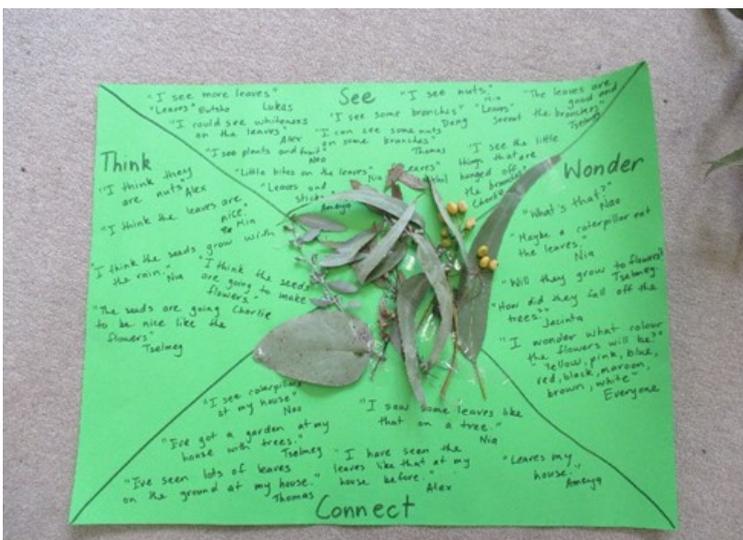
Thinking routines can be simplified for use in education and care settings.

One example of this is the **See, Think, Wonder, Connect** routine.

An image or object is provided for children to view. Children can then share what they see, personal connections, wonderings and what they think.



With older children this can be a group time experience, younger children can share their thinking in small groups or one on one with an educator. If this routine is conducted regularly with children, the growth in their thinking and wondering will become evident.



### Suggested Links

[Visible Thinking](#)

[Project Zero - Visible Thinking](#)

[Guidelines for Documenting Children's Learning](#)

[Why Should Children Lead Their Learning?](#)



### Questions you may like to ask...

- ⇒ How could these strategies extend children's learning in areas of interest?
- ⇒ How could Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives be explored using these thinking routines?

# Engaging with Community

## Arts in the ACT

Blue Gum Community School preschool teachers Subhadra Chapman and Michaeli Hillam's presentation at the 2018 Children's Education and Care Symposium highlighted very positive engagement of children with public art in the ACT community. Subhadra's presentation clearly demonstrated the opportunity for learning in public spaces. The following hyperlinks provide information that may be helpful to educators wishing to take advantage of the Arts opportunities that are available in the community.

### **artsACT**

The Public Art and Infrastructure (ACT Government) website contains a list of the ACT's collection of public artwork and a data base you can use to search the collection search by artist, title, or medium. Click Here to Access: [artsACT - Public Art](#)

### **Burrunju Aboriginal Corporation – Art Gallery**

Click Here to Access: [Burrunju Aboriginal Corporation](#)

### **National Gallery of Australia**

Outdoor experiences include - The Sculpture Garden; The Fern Garden; and The Skyspace.

Click Here to Access: [NGA - Collections - Sculpture Garden](#)

### **ANU Sculpture Walk**

The ANU Sculpture Walk includes a range of well-known outdoor sculptures which are located throughout the University campus.

Click Here to Access:

[ANU - Sculpture Walk](#)



### **Sculptures in Canberra**

This site provides information about 70 different venues that provide access to public art.

Click Here to Access: [Sculptures in Canberra](#)

## Woden Valley Child Care Centre

# Stories from the Sector

## The Art of Teaching in Nature Woden Valley Child Care Centre

Now more than ever we need to connect children to nature. We need to model and embed our promise to the Ngunawal people that we will look after the land the animals and the people.

Woden Valley Child Care Centre has been developing a Nature Pedagogy program that we hope will lay the foundations for what is possible in early childhood education. We are a non for profit, committee managed organisation, established in 1992. Our vision for the future is to “*nurture confident, respectful and responsible citizens of the world*”, in order to do so, we want to provide environments for children within our care to impact, understand and recognise the importance of caring for and respecting the land. This goal, which we recognise as part of our ongoing improvement plan, is being achieved with the addition of the role of Nature Pedagogy Leader in 2017.

As Nature Pedagogy Leader - Gabby Millgate is one of four leaders considered as part of the management and leadership team within the Centre and is employed in full-time non-contact position. The role of the Nature Pedagogy Leader is to lead the educators in providing high quality outdoor nature and risk-based programs. The children are supported to engage in meaningful interactions with the land, animals and plants and the whole community is educated in the importance of sustainable ways of living. If children so wish, they can be involved in composting and preparing garden beds, help to look after the animals like chickens, ducks and frogs, or be involved with tending to the plants, like flowers, grasses or edibles that they are free to pick and eat.

Through our Nature Pedagogy focus there is manifested meaning in *Acknowledgement of Country*. The children understand their promises and responsibilities are real and they relish demonstrating their care, their knowledge and their competence with a hay bale, a shovel or a wheelbarrow. Through our Nature Pedagogy program we have had parents from Zimbabwe, Korea and China share gardening and harvesting methods, how to prepare pumpkin leaves for cooking, seedling and weed management and duck egg delicacies .The parents share their knowledge and we provide the environment for them to grow culturally significant food to share and take home.

By giving our children access to nature, participation in growing food and looking after animals we are giving our children the resources to work in harmony with and value nature.

WVCCC would like to share our Nature Pedagogy story with the community in the hope that the sector will be inspired and expected to make having a Nature Pedagogy Leader installed as best practice.



## The Art of Teaching in Nature continued....

In 2016, the Narragunnawali garden was created as our initial step. Narragunnawali is a dedicated space where children can enjoy the tranquility of the natural environment and engage in meaningful experiences. In this garden you will find our chickens and ducks, garden beds with seasonal vegetables and flowers, compost, platform to relax on, plant nursery and a fire pit. This is a vast improvement on the hot plastic grass, concrete and soft fall environment that fulfilled safety regulations but had no impact on the sense of wellbeing and belonging that the connection with nature provides. In the 2000 droughts, the water restrictions meant that our natural grass areas were all but destroyed and the choice made was to lay swathes of fake grass. We have spent the last 4 years slowly bringing the nature back on top of what was an outdoor environment covered in plastic.

Further along, we created our 'Garden of the Future' out the front of the centre. It was a wonderful way to go beyond the bars of the Service. We grew corn, beans and giant sunflowers to catch the attention of our local community. The children's contributions made people smile as they walked to and from the hospital. It also became a place where parents could pick greens to take home for dinner. Within time, our nature pedagogy has grown and overtook pretty much the whole outdoor area. Just recently we have had white corn and watermelons growing in our top yard, where children could just randomly pick the fruits and vegetables up and eat them on the spot.

Each age group is actively engaged in the seasonal program developed by Miss Gabby. Our nursery children love to engage in their sensory garden, where toddlers enjoy moving hay bays or turning the compost around. The biggest drive for all educators is the observable everyday change in each child, their growing knowledge of how to take care of our land. At 10AM our junior and preschool room, acknowledge the country by promising to look after our land, animals, plants, other people and ourselves.

Over the past 60 years there has been a gradual but continual decline of free outdoor play however, risk and the natural environment are an essential part of children's growth. It gives them opportunities to seek out challenging experiences and manage new situations in a safe and supported way.

We strongly believe that, Early Childhood professionals should share an image of children as unique individuals, who are capable and competent. The Early Year Learning Framework for Australia (2009, p. 12) talks about having high expectations towards children, as well as sees children as confident and involved learners (p. 33). Early exposure allows children to experiment with risk taking and develop their judgmental skills. It is a part of their childhood and one of the paths to belonging, being and becoming. It is our job to give children realistic amount of space to let them discover their own abilities and strengths.

Woden Valley Child Care Centre has come a long way in our journey, however, have more to learn as our environment and knowledge changes. Nature pedagogy is our commitment to the continuous improvement of the early



### References:

Alderson, P. (2000). *Young Children's Rights: Exploring beliefs, principles and practices* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publisher

Australian Government, Department of Education Employment and Workplace (2009). *The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Belonging, Being, Becoming*. ACT : Author

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Available from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

## FAQ -Frequently asked questions

The purpose of this section is for us to try and answer questions that you may have. These would need to be broad so that other services can relate and engage. Specific questions should continue to be directed to authorised officers where contextual advice or guidance may be needed.



### **Regulations 90 and 91 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. Medical action plans, risk minimisation plans and communication plans.**

An important objective of the National Quality Framework is to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children attending education and care services.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require services to have a medical conditions policy in place which must be provided on enrolment to families with children who have a specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical conditions.

The policy must include how medical conditions are managed and how nominated supervisors, staff members and volunteers are informed about the management of medical conditions.

The medical conditions policy must require that parents provide a medical management plan and that the plan must be followed in the event of an incident relating to the child's specific health need.

For children over preschool age, the medical conditions policy must set out details of self-administration of medication if relevant, and the record keeping processes of the self-administration.

A part of the requirement of regulation 90 is to develop individual risk minimisation plans and communication plans in consultation with parents. A risk minimisation plan must ensure that:

- the risks relating to the specific health need are assessed and minimised;
- practices and procedures in relation to safe food handling are developed and implemented;
- practices and procedures in relation to potential allergens are developed and implemented;
- practices and procedures ensuring staff and volunteers are able to identify the child, the medical management plan and location of medication are developed and implemented; and
- practices and procedures in relation to the child attending the service without prescribed medication are developed and implemented.

Communication plans need to advise how staff members and volunteers are kept informed about the medical conditions policy, the medical management plan and the risk minimisation plan for the child. The communication plan must also inform how the child's parents can communicate any changes to the medical management plan and risk minimisation plan.

A communication plan can be incorporated into a well-designed risk minimisation plan. Both risk minimisations plans and communication plans must be specific to the health needs of each child.

For further information refer to :

Guide to the National Quality Framework [4. Operational Requirements](#) - Pages 376—378



If you would like receive this publication at another email address or individual educators would like to sign up to receive this publication please send contact details to [CECA.EducateandInform@act.gov.au](mailto:CECA.EducateandInform@act.gov.au).

General enquiries to Children's Education and Care Assurance can be made to [CECA@act.gov.au](mailto:CECA@act.gov.au).