

1. Policy Statement

St Nicholas Early Education will provide a curriculum and educational program that is centered on play-based learning, influencing children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. It is the aim of St Nicholas to provide an integrated curriculum that promotes holistic practices which are developmentally appropriate, and supportive of children's different learning capabilities and styles. Through play, children at St. Nicholas will develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching, and investigating, with regard to themselves and their world.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to ensure:

- the educational program includes spontaneous and planned experiences based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child.
- children at St Nicholas are viewed as active participants in the development of the program and are provided with opportunities to document their own learning.
- regulatory requirements under the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law are met.

3. Procedure Direction

Step	Detail
Approaches to programming	• Children learn and acquire knowledge when experiences are meaningful - based on their strengths, interests and rights and arise from their thoughts and ideas. • Children will be co-constructors of their learning as they actively engage in hands-on concrete experiences, manipulation, investigation, and exploration of their immediate environment. • Children will be viewed as active, strong, confident, and competent individuals full of intelligence and capable of having their own ideas and opinions and making independent learning choices. • The curriculum will reflect the principles, practices, and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia and the My Time Our Place (MTO) Framework for School Age children, • Inclusive curriculum practices will be implemented which create continuity between home and St Nicholas services, fostering a sense of belonging for individual children and families, enriching the St Nicholas community as a whole. • All St Nicholas programs will be play-based

	- No stencils or workbooks for children will be used in St Nicholas services. <i>The exception is in OOSH services where children may request some colouring in activities or colouring in is used as a de-escalation strategy for a child.</i> - Programs will be child led and educator framed and incorporate scaffolding and extension of children's knowledge and skills
Educator practices	St Nicholas Educators will: - be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities, learning capabilities and styles - provide child-initiated and educator framed experiences which are flexible, hands on, stimulating, meaningful and encompass freedom of choice and encouragement of problem solving - provide a learning environment that is aesthetically pleasing, stimulating to the senses, prompting curiosity and wonder - provide opportunities to heighten children's dispositions for learning and sense of agency - ensure the program reflects the social and cultural contexts of children, families and communities through the sharing of cultures, ideas, knowledge, strengths and differences – exploring cultural competence - ensure the program is guided by the St Nicholas Philosophy and each service specific philosophy. - provide developmentally appropriate resources to challenge and extend children's strengths, needs and interests - ensure the program is supportive of each child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs – being holistic in nature - support children's learning through intentional teaching techniques such as demonstrating, modelling, open questioning, explaining, and scaffolding - engage in reflective practice using philosophies, knowledge of child development, theoretical frameworks, experiences, and context to support decision making about children's learning - work in partnership with children and families to create a program that provides meaningful learning experiences where children's opinions and ideas are respected and incorporated - be supported and mentored by the appointed educational leader.
Observations	- Observations of children are used to capture an event or behaviour that relates to a child's experience and learning. - Observations provide opportunity to evaluate and extend the child's experience as an individual or in a group.

	• Individual observations are not required in OOSH services; however, the educational program must reflect the interests, needs, ideas and abilities of all children. • Journal books are utilised to capture group learning and highlight the how and why behind all planned experiences on the program. • Observations can be recorded through jottings, learning stories, examples of children's work i.e. art work or drawings; project work/webs, journal books, photos and individual child portfolios/profiles • Observations can be either a short commentary or a running anecdote over a period of time inclusive of one or more participants • Are a record that can encompass the whole circumstance including lead up events and outcomes • Observations are used to recognise the whole child and record his/her development for the purpose of monitoring progress, understanding the level of the child's interests, his/her needs and relating the child's daily events whilst in care • An informal discussion between colleagues, children and families can also contribute to an observations. • Children are provided with opportunities to contribute to the observations of the events in their environment through access to writing, drawing implements and the camera.
Observations in EE	For a child attending 4 to 5 days per week: ○ A fully documented planning cycle is completed across 8 weeks ○ Observations need to be evident in program planning For a child attending 1 to 2 days per week ○ A fully documented planning cycle is completed across 10 weeks ○ Observations need to be evident in program planning • In both cases individual children would also be represented across the program outside the specific observation. • It is the responsibility of all Educators to undertake observations of children, under the guidance if the Room Leader
Observations in OOSH	• Each child attending OOSH will have a fully documented planning cycle once per term, which is one observation that interconnects with one follow-up experience • This could be individual or group • Observations need to be evident in program planning

	It is the responsibility of all Educators to undertake observations of children, under the guidance of the Educational Leader
Documentation	- A variety of documentation styles will be used to capture a picture of the whole child as he/she participates in a learning experience. This documentation is used as part of a child's assessment of their learning journey - Children's documentation is accessible for Parents to view at any time. - Programs must be completed on St Nicholas approved templates. This could be either paper or via OWNA. - Programs in OOSH must be posted to families each Monday via the OWNA platform. - OOSH teams will discuss observations, programs and critical reflections in Tool Box talks, which must be documented - Programs in all St Nicholas services must be printed and on display as required under Regulation 75, and made available to families on request. - All documentation will reflect either the EYLF or MTOP Planning Cycle as below.
Critical reflection	Critical reflection is a process which involves close examination of all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. St Nicholas services will use critical reflection to: - enhance our professional practice, - strengthen educational programs, - identify areas for improvement, - inform all decision making across our services. Critical reflection can take many different forms. This may include:

	• Informal daily conversations between staff, families and children • Leadership Team meetings • Staff Meetings and documented Staff Meeting Minutes • Scrapbooks or journals (both individual or in group/teams) • Use of reflective questioning to guide critical reflection • Children being involved in decision making through implementation of a Children's Council or Yarning Circle • Journal books • Data collected from Parent/Family feedback forms
Programming time	• Educational Leaders will be allocated out-of-ratio programming time, dependent on the size of the service – children and Educator team • Educational Leaders must be able to show evidence of mentoring Room Leaders and Educators in goal setting and skill building
Transition to School (EE)	Our transition to school program will endeavour to: • Provide opportunities to become familiar with the school routine and environment fostering confident preparation for the transition. • Discuss all aspects of a school day with the children, exploring books, pictures and opportunities dramatic role play. • Prepare social stories depicting the school environment, classroom teachers and the basic routine of the kindergarten classroom to develop the children's understanding of what is expected of them at school. • Provide opportunities for children to engage in small and large group experiences, encouraging listening and turn taking skills in preparation for being a member of a Kindergarten class. • Organise daily routines, transitions and play based experiences with intentional opportunities for children to listen and follow multi-step directions. • Support children to develop appropriate negotiation and conflict resolution skills through daily routines and socially interactive play. Modelling phrases in respectful conversations to scaffold skill development. • Provide opportunities for children to develop confidence in sharing their thoughts/ideas with teachers and peers, encouraging open discussions and shared stories in small and large groups. • Encourage independence and self-help skills, such as putting on shoes and socks and putting away lunch boxes (where applicable), throughout all play experiences and routine activities. • Engage children in functional, play-based early literacy experiences to develop pre-reading and pre-writing abilities.

	- Engage children in functional, play-based early numeracy experiences (concepts of size, weight, height, counting, patterning, etc.). Provide families with information about transition to school indicators and what they can do to support their child to be ready for school. - Discuss considerations for children's transition to school with families, offering dedicated time through meetings and verbal communications, responsive to individual need. - Hold a school transition information meeting for families, where a members of the local public and elective school community will be invited to share the school's view on essential skills to begin school and how families can help their child to prepare for the transition. - Liaise with school Learning Support Officer and classroom teachers, if needed, to ensure a smooth transition for children with additional needs. - Plan and implement curriculum informed programs which support children's autonomy and sense of agency. Fostering a secure sense of self and resilient disposition, empowering each child to transition to their school environment with confidence. - Complete online Department of Education <i>Transition to School Statements</i> for every child.
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4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Nominated Supervisor	- Ensure sufficient resources are available to children and that learning environments are appropriate and well maintained - Ensure the programs is on display and accessible to families - Allocate time for the Educational Leader to plan and document children's learning, and mentor educators - Allocate time for educators to plan and document children's learning - Ensure all educators have time to engage in critical reflection with colleagues, including the Educational Leader - Ensure all aspects of the program and it's delivery meet the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law
Educational Leader	- Maintain current knowledge of contemporary pedagogy and practice approaches - Ensure programs are based on the Early Years Learning Framework or My Time, Our Place school age framework - Ensure observations of children and subsequent planning, evaluation and reflections are up to date, and recorded accurately

St Nicholas	Name of policy: Program and Practice	Page 6
Issue Date: July 2026	Review Date: July 2028	Document Owner: Executive Director, St Nicholas

	• Provide advice and guidance to educators in relation to contemporary pedagogy and the program • Promote resources and information that ensure practices are high quality, meet the National Quality Standards and are informed by evidence.
Educators	• Delivering the program in accordance with this Policy and Procedure • Following the direction of the Educational Leader for specific activities • Documenting children's participation in the program via individual or group observations • Provide opportunities to share children's learning and development with families • Guide and extend children's learning • Build effective relationships with families to ensure programs are informed by family and community context

5. Related Documents

Policies and Procedures

- Educational Leader Procedure
- Supervision Policy and Procedure
- Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy and Procedure

Legislation

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\) - NSW Legislation](#)
Regulations: 73, 74, 75, 76, 118, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 148, 177
- [Children \(Education and Care Services\) National Law \(NSW\) No 104a of 2010 - NSW Legislation](#)
Sections: 168

Other References

Guide to the National Quality Standard. ACECQA

National Quality Standard

- QA 1.1 Program
- QA 1.2 Practice
- QA 1.3 Assessment and planning

St Nicholas	Name of policy: Program and Practice	Page 7
Issue Date: July 2026	Review Date: July 2028	Document Owner: Executive Director, St Nicholas

- QA 4.2.2 Professional standards
- QA 5.2.1 Collaborative Learning
- QA 6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- QA 7.1.1 Service philosophy and purpose
- QA 7.2.2 Educational Leadership

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Staff	A St Nicholas team member whose primary role is not working directly with children, including cooks, support office team members, administration team members, support workers, volunteers
Early Education	St Nicholas service providing education and care to children aged 0 – 5 years
OOSH	St Nicholas service providing education and care to school aged children

7. Document Review

- 7.1. This Policy will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegations change, technology change or at least every 3 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.

St Nicholas	Name of policy: Program and Practice	Page 8
Issue Date: July 2026	Review Date: July 2028	Document Owner: Executive Director, St Nicholas