

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK?

In December 2007, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that the Australian and state and territory governments would work in partnership on a National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care. A key element of the National Quality Agenda is Australia's first national Early Years Learning Framework.

The Early Years Learning Framework is a national curriculum framework which will ensure quality and consistency in the delivery of early childhood education programs across all early childhood settings. It will cover birth to five years and support transition to formal schooling.

The Framework will be an important tool to help professionals and parents achieve the best learning and developmental outcomes for children. It will also provide direction in relation to quality early childhood education for children and will significantly complement universal access to preschool.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes which enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. It has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children's learning providing the most stimulus for brain development. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development. The release of the Early Years Learning Framework is the first phase in the implementation of the Australian Government's National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and child care. COAG has also endorsed the release of a Regulation Impact Statement which contains options for further reforms to quality. Consultation with families and the sector will be held on these options in July and August 2009.

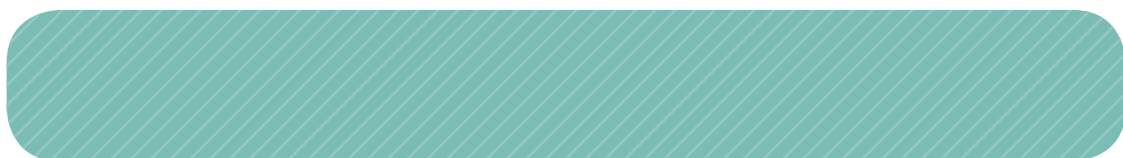
HOW WAS THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED AND WHAT CONSULTATIONS WERE UNDERTAKEN?

The Framework has been developed by a consortium of early childhood experts led by Charles Sturt University, in collaboration with the Australian and state and territory governments. The Early Years Learning Framework has been developed with substantial input from the early childhood sector and early childhood academics. The extensive consultation process has included two national symposiums, national public consultation forums, focus groups, an online forum and case-study trials.

HOW WILL THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK FIT WITH STATE AND TERRITORY FRAMEWORKS?

Most states and territories are currently using state-based early childhood curriculum framework documents. These jurisdictions are currently considering how the national Early Years Learning Framework will be used within their jurisdiction in relation to their state-based frameworks. It can be used as an overarching document, replace, complement or supplement existing documents.

The Early Years Learning Framework will be incorporated into the National Quality Standard and it is expected that early childhood settings will need to provide evidence of their use of the Early Years Learning Framework in designing and delivering their early learning programs.



WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK?

Various documents will be available to support the application of the Early Years Learning Framework. A Families' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework has been developed and is available at www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood. An Educators' Guide for early childhood practitioners, which will explain and interpret the Early Years Learning Framework, is being developed in consultation with the sector and is anticipated for release in October 2009. Further work is planned to ensure that Indigenous children will receive culturally inclusive early learning.

The Australian and state and territory governments are working together to develop a range of support strategies for early childhood settings to implement the new Early Years Learning Framework. Further details will be available soon at www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood.

WHEN WILL THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK BE IMPLEMENTED?

The Early Years Learning Framework is now available for educators and service operators to draw upon in developing their early learning programs. It will be progressively implemented by each state and territory.

HOW WILL THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK LINK WITH THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS CURRICULUM WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDER DEVELOPMENT?

As the Early Years Learning Framework covers early childhood education from birth to five years and transition to formal schooling, the National Schools Curriculum provides the opportunity to ensure seamless transition and continuity of learning across different stages of learning.

