

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

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

Purpose

Incorporating celebrations into children’s centres appropriately, can be used to strengthen the partnership with children and families, creating a feeling of belonging and developing a sense of community amongst families, Educators and children.

Celebrations provide an opportunity for children to develop respect for diverse values and beliefs as they learn about practices which are different to their own. To ensure we are providing an inclusive program and environment, it is imperative to recognise the array of celebrations, both religious and worldly, that take place throughout the year in our community and to have an understanding of, and respect for, cultural diversity in our centre.

Management/Nominated Supervisor/Certified Supervisor will ensure:

- To incorporate relevant, culturally based experiences and celebrations in the children’s program which address different learning opportunities which include: fostering a sense of belonging and inclusions for every child, family and staff member (EYLF, p.7), increasing children’s understanding of, and respect for, diversity and differences (EYLF, p.13), Raising children’s self-awareness and confidence, providing for children’s holistic development and supporting a positive identity for every child and family (EYLF, p.2)
- Cultural celebrations that are significant to our families and relevant to our broader community are implemented within the centre when possible.
- Cultural competence is authentically embedded in practices and programs within the centre and deliver positive outcomes for children and families
- Families are aware of the Celebration Policy during their orientation process and kept updated throughout the year via centre correspondence.
- Special occasions are celebrated in ways that recognise, respect and strengthen children’s appreciation of diversity and difference
- Religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter are recognised within the centre and reflected in our programs.
- Stereotypes about particular celebrations/cultural events are not assumed
- Families’ beliefs about celebrating birthdays is respected within the centre
- Families discuss cake options with the nominated supervisor prior to celebrations
- Families are reminded that we are an ‘Allergy Aware’ centre prior to celebrations and food that cannot be brought into the centre is clearly identified.
- The Centre has an ‘Events Calendar’ that is used to support such events throughout the year. We ask that families add their celebration to the calendar so educators can prepare the program.
- They liaise with our local Aboriginal educational consultative group to provide advice on relevant cultural celebrations and correct protocols to be followed (e.g. NADIOC Week, Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week)



- Advance planning is adhered to if food or drink is provided for children at the Centre. Additionally, all parents must be advised prior to the celebration. This allows for any feedback / concerns from parents which can then be taken into account as part of the normal planning involved in such activities.
- Sensitivity to issues such as family composition is respected (eg: Mother's & Father's Day)
- If a cake is required for a child's birthday it is recommended that an ice cream cake be provided as this reduces the major cross-contamination allergy risks associated with most other cakes (nuts, eggs).
- Educators are aware and make alternate arrangements if families would prefer that their child does NOT participate in such celebrations.
- If this is the case we will respect the rights and feelings of this child and will provide an alternative experience for them to participate in so that they do not feel that they are being left out.
- Families are encouraged to be involved in the preparation and/or the celebration in the Centre
- Educators remain current with the professional knowledge and skills that support planning for and engaging in culturally inclusive practice
- Safety issues are taken into account prior to the implementation of celebratory experiences.
- Our healthy eating policies are reflected when planning for celebrations.

Educators will:

- Ensure the use of candles is carried out with the children's safety in mind and fully supervised.
- Ensure the child celebrating their birthday has a separate piece of cake (with a candle, if they wish) and the large cake that can be cut and shared with the other children
- Be aware of cultural tokenism and stereotyping
- Encourage and supporting family members to be involved in sharing their customs and celebrations with your centre
- Ensure children have the agency to make choices about the celebrations they would like to participate in engaging families to give advice on customs
- Ensure that children have the resources and time necessary to be able to celebrate effectively
- Provide young children and toddlers with materials which reflect a significant event or celebration which they have recently participated in.
- Ensure that families who do not wish to be involved in celebrations have an option to not participate
- Balance family values about receiving gifts and products from their children and Educators values about avoiding product based activities by developing creative and meaningful gifts for families
- Notify the community about the celebration e.g. taking photos to display on the centre notice board, or displaying children's artwork and drawings about the celebration
- Provide opportunities for children to participate in 'open ended' celebration activities
- Provide a flexible program which enables children to have agency about the activities which they participate
- Celebrate traditions and customs relevant to children and community
- Ensure that the same amount of time and energy is dedicated to ALL celebrations
- Invite Educators and families to share their own personal experiences of celebrations
- Ensure resources such as picture story books, images and music are reflective of contemporary celebrations which children can relate.
- Be respectful of all religions and cultural backgrounds.

Source: Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Australia Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2018). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*. Australian Government. Department of Education, Skills and Employment. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. (2009). Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009). Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016). Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018). [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011). Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020). Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2018). National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *5th Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* Revised National Quality Standard (2018).

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National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice		
1.1.1	Approved Learning Framework	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
Quality Area 6: Partnership with families		
6.1.2	Parent Views are Respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child’s learning and wellbeing
Early Years Learning Framework		
Learning Outcome 2 - Children are connected with and contribute to their world		
2.1	Children respond to diversity with respect	
2.2	Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing	
Learning Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of identity		
3.2	Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing	