MT HAWTHORN OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

Educational Program

Policy Statement:

The Centre will provide a program that is developmentally appropriate to the needs of the children attending the Centre. It will stimulate and provide for the development of each child's social, physical, emotional and intellectual potential, including language skills and creativity, without substituting for the care they receive from their parents/guardians.

Procedures:

The Educational Officer and Educators (staff members) will be responsible for the development of a program, evaluation, reflection, of activities and learning stories that might arise from these developmentally appropriate activities for the enrolled children. It should meet their play, recreation and relaxation needs, and reflects the philosophy and goals of the service.

Children will be asked for their input into the program to ensure it is suited to each child’s skills, interests and cultural needs. The voice of the OSCA children is imperative and needs to be embedded in our philosophy.

Staff will be provided with opportunities to further their professional development and skills in childcare practices.

The program will be balanced, varied and flexible enough to allow for spontaneity and the unexpected. It will provide for indoor/outdoor learning experiences; quiet/active times; individual/small group/large group times; time for individual staff/child interaction; children's individual and group interests - including physical, creative, exploratory, dramatic, cognitive, and activities involving construction.

Programs will be displayed in a position where parents/guardians and children are able to see them and then discuss any aspect of the program with staff. A copy of the Vacation Care Program will be given to each family. Parents/Guardians will be encouraged to have input into program development. The extent to which parents wish to be involved will be respected.

Copies of written programs will be kept for 3 months in accordance with Regulation 52(2)(c), Children & Community Services (Outside School Hours) Regulations 2006.
Programs will not contain religious teachings for children unless all religious cultures are represented and are part of a multicultural format.

Programs will reflect the cultural differences of all families using the service. The Centre will celebrate special events with the children that reflect the cultural heritage and ethnic origins of children attending the service. Staff will work together with families to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of learning experiences for children.

The Centre will provide a variety of equipment and toys for all children to play with regardless of gender - boys and girls will both be encouraged to explore a full range of experiences and emotions.

The play and learning program will be child focussed and will allow children to experience a variety of materials, pursue their own interests, and achieve success. There will always be a range of activities a child may choose from and alternatives when a child does not wish to participate in a particular activity, or chooses to initiate their own experiences and play.

Staff will ensure children's supervision is appropriate to their stage of development and protects their safety and wellbeing at all times. Staff will join in the children's play and encourage them to try new challenges as appropriate. Children will be regularly reminded of safety procedures for play equipment.

Educators will be supportive and encouraging, and communicate with children in a friendly, positive and respectful manner. They will actively seek to build and maintain trusting relationships with each child in their care and encourage the individual needs, talents, abilities and contributions of all children. When communicating with children Educators will ensure they are at the child's eye level. Children will never be singled out or made to feel inadequate at any time.

Staff encourage children to communicate their own ideas in a respectful and courteous way, and will respond appropriately to children’s non-verbal cues.

The program is adjusted to respond to spontaneous play, children’s interests, changes in the weather, visitors to the centre etc.

Staff are to monitor noise levels in the environment and adjust activities with children to ensure noise levels are appropriate and do not interfere with purposeful play.

All staff will be responsible for working co-operatively to assess the needs of the children. They will evaluate programs in relation to the stated philosophy and goals together with children's and families’ input and feedback. Staff will work with children’s ideas to negotiate experiences that can be implemented within the resources of the program.

Staff will initiate and facilitate regular on-going communication with parents concerning their child. Families are informed promptly and sensitively of any issues or concerns regarding their child. Recorded information will be available for discussion.

When children attend the Centre the needs of both parents and children will be respected. Children may have had little previous experience of multi-age groupings. Some younger children, in particular, may need time to settle and feel secure within the service. Centre staff are experienced in encouraging children to feel at home and make new friends, and will ensure
that children of all ages will treat each other with respect. The enrolling parent may telephone the Centre during the time their child is attending for reassurance that their child has settled in, or may visit the child at the premises at any reasonable time. Staff will discuss the child’s emotional needs with the parent as issues arise.

As each child arrives at the Centre they will be greeted by a staff member.

Routines will be built around the regular events of the day ie. arrival, checking daily activities list & program, attendance records taken, snacks/drinks, hand washing, lunch break (Vacation Care), and departure. The routines will take into account the developmental needs of individual children, children’s attendance patterns, climate and physical environment, the numbers and ages of children within a given group, children with special needs, new children entering the group and parent expectations.

Staff ensures routines provide opportunities for positive one to one interactions with children, and a time when they can get to know more about the child’s likes, dislikes, interests, joys, fears etc.

Flexibility is built into routines so that children’s involvement in activities, and any special needs, is accommodated.

For group activities the following will be considered:

- available indoor and outdoor space
- staff experience
- staffing levels and required staff: child ratio
- number and ages of children
- children’s developmental level
- group dynamics
- continuity of care
- children’s individual needs
- type of learning experience or play activity
- children’s social/emotional skill level
- family’s cultural/social backgrounds

Whole group and small group meetings will be held regularly for children to have input into programming ideas, future plans for the Centre, problem solving, establishing and reviewing Centre rules, equipment ideas etc. These meetings will be for a maximum of 10-15 minutes. Staff will encourage everyone to have their say, to respect others’ opinions and to listen to new ideas. Children’s ideas and concerns will be acted upon through the implementation of agreed changes or discussions about different views or feelings.

Sources:

Early Childhood Australia website – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

OSHCQA Quality Practices Guide – Principles: 1.1, 1.3, 2.2; 3.1; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4

Children & Community Services (Outside School Hours Care) Regulations 2006 – Regulations: 24; 52; 56; 65

Department for Community Development Factsheets – www.community.wa.gov.au
NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Education and Care Services National Regulations – Reg 75(g)(l); 81(2); 82; 83; 84; 85; 86; 87; 169; 170; 180

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Nov 2010) – Element 1.1.1; Element 1.1.2; Element 1.2.1; Element 1.2.2; Element 1.2.3; Element 1.2.4; Element 2.1.2; Element 2.2.2; Element 2.3.1; Element 3.1.1; Element 3.1.3; Element 3.1.4; Element 3.2.1; Element 3.2.2; Element 4.1.1; Element 4.2.1; Element 4.2.2; Element 4.3.3; Element 5.1.2; Element 5.2.1; Element 5.2.2; Element 6.1.2; Element 6.2.1; Element 6.3.2; Element 7.2.2

Early Years Learning Framework for Australia – Principles: 1. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; 2. Partnerships; 3. High expectations and equity; 5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice – Practice: Holistic approaches; Responsiveness to children; Learning through play; Intentional teaching; Learning environments; Assessment for learning – Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Framework for School Age Care in Australia – Principles: 1. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; 2. Partnerships; 3. High expectations and equity; 5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice – Practice: Holistic approaches; Collaboration with children; Learning through play; Intentionality; Environments; Evaluation for wellbeing and learning – Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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