

1.1.3

Program Learning Opportunities

All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

Week 4
19.2.2024

Section 1. Meeting (Educators) - Learn what is required for meeting



Law & Regs

There are a lot of Laws and Regulations that cover routines and transitions. They provide many opportunities to extend learning.

Law Section 167 mandates a penalty of **\$10,000** for individuals and **\$50,000** for others for not taking precautions to protect children from harm and hazards. Approved supervisors must ensure safety from any injury risk.

Educators can develop a safety-first culture among children by incorporating lessons on personal safety and identifying hazards into daily activities. For instance, they could organise a "Safety Scavenger Hunt" where children are encouraged to identify potential hazards in their play area and discuss how to make these areas safer.

Regulation 77 imposes a **\$2,000** penalty for failing to implement adequate health, hygiene, and safe food practices, including handling, preparing, and storing food to minimise risks to children.

Educators can organise interactive activities such as a "Hand Washing Lesson" where children learn about germs and the importance of hygiene through fun experiments (e.g., using glitter to represent germs and showing how soap removes them) and songs about handwashing. Additionally, cooking classes can be introduced to teach children about safe food handling and preparation, turning it into a practical life skill lesson.

Regulation 78, **\$2,000** penalty, requires that children have constant access to safe drinking water and are regularly offered appropriate food and beverages.

Educators can facilitate a "Water Taste Test" activity, allowing children to explore the importance of drinking water while also discussing the benefits of hydration. They could also hold a "Healthy Picnic" where children help prepare and pack nutritious snacks, learning about healthy food choices in the process.

Regulation 79 specifies a **\$2,000** penalty for not providing nutritious and adequate food and beverages, considering individual dietary needs, including cultural, religious, or health requirements. Educators can involve children in planning and preparing a multicultural food day, where they learn about and taste foods from different cultures, accommodating various dietary needs.

Regulation 81 has a **\$1,000** penalty for not ensuring children's sleep and rest needs are met, considering their ages, developmental stages, and individual needs.

Educators can create a "Rest Area" in the classroom where children can explore what makes them feel relaxed and comfortable. They can discuss the importance of sleep and rest through storytelling or create a chart of their sleep patterns as a science project, linking it to their energy levels and mood.

Regulation 97, with a **\$2,000** penalty, mandates that emergency and evacuation procedures be rehearsed every 3 months by all present at the service, including documentation of these rehearsals.

Educators can turn emergency drills into an engaging learning experience by creating a role-play activity where children take on roles (e.g., the leader, the helper) during the evacuation drill. This can be followed by a discussion or drawing session where they express what they learned and how they felt, reinforcing the importance of safety and preparedness.

Why is the element important?

Looking at the element in detail - Element 1.1.3, educators must be able to:

- **identify and act** on opportunities to **extend** children's **learning** during planned and spontaneous experiences.
- use **transitions and routines** as learning opportunities – they're just as important

What could potentially go wrong if educators didn't do the above?

Missed Educational Opportunities: One of the primary risks is the missed opportunity for holistic learning. Every interaction and activity in a child's day can contribute to their understanding of the world. Not utilising these moments means children may not develop as fully as they could, missing out on learning that integrates cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

Limited Engagement: Children are naturally curious and learn best when engaged in activities that interest them. If educators do not capitalise on spontaneous moments that capture children's interests, it can lead to disengagement and a lack of motivation to participate in learning activities. This disinterest can affect their enthusiasm for learning in the long term.

Ineffective Use of Time: Transitions and routines take up a significant part of the day in early childhood settings. If these times are not used effectively as learning opportunities, it results in a significant amount of time that is not being used to its full educational potential. This can lead to an inefficient learning environment where children may not receive the full benefit of their time in the programme.

Social and Emotional Development Delays: Social skills, emotional regulation, and the ability to navigate transitions smoothly are crucial aspects of early childhood development. If educators overlook the potential of routines and transitions as moments for teaching these skills, children may experience delays in these areas. This can impact their ability to interact with peers and adults effectively.

Lack of Real-Life Learning: Real-life skills and problem-solving abilities are often taught through spontaneous experiences and the navigation of daily routines. Without taking advantage of these opportunities, children might not develop practical skills and the ability to apply what they learn in real-world situations.

Inadequate Preparation for Future Learning: Early childhood education sets the foundation for lifelong learning. Missing the chance to extend learning during early years can result in children being less prepared for the academic and social challenges of future educational settings. It can affect their transition to

formal schooling and their attitude towards learning in general.

Reduced Individualisation of Learning: Each child is unique, with their own interests, strengths, and areas needing support. Failure to use everyday experiences for learning means that education becomes less tailored to individual children. This can lead to a one-size-fits-all approach that does not meet the needs of every child, potentially leaving some children behind.



You must practice

To address potential challenges arising from unutilised program learning opportunities, every part of the program, including daily routines, is structured to enhance each child's learning opportunities to the fullest.

Missed Educational Opportunities

Strategy: Incorporate learning objectives into all activities, including play. Utilise a simple activity such as building with blocks to discuss concepts of physics (balance, gravity), mathematics (counting, shapes, sizes), and social skills (sharing, negotiating space).

Practice Example: Create an observation checklist for educators to identify children's interests and developmental stages, utilising these observations to plan activities that build on these interests and promote holistic development.

Limited Engagement

Strategy: Base learning activities on children's interests. If a child shows an interest in dinosaurs, integrate this across activities – from reading books about dinosaurs to calculating their sizes and exploring their habitats.

Practice Example: Develop a "curiosity corner" where children can delve into items related to their current interests, equipped with resources such as books, puzzles, and art supplies themed around these interests.

Ineffective Use of Time

Strategy: Make transitions and routines interactive learning opportunities. For example, engage children in a counting game while lining up or discuss the role of hygiene in health while washing hands.

Practice Example: Plan a transition activity that combines movement and learning, such as a "movement story" where children act out parts of a story as they move from one activity or room to another.

Social and Emotional Development Delays

Strategy: Teach social and emotional skills explicitly through role-play and storytelling. Use daily routines to practice these skills, like taking turns during snack time or expressing feelings during group time.

Practice Example: Implement a "feelings check-in" during group time where children can share how they're feeling using a chart or emoji cards, promoting emotional awareness and empathy.

Lack of Real-Life Learning

Strategy: Integrate practical life skills into daily activities, allowing children to participate in tasks such as preparing snacks, setting tables, or caring for classroom plants.

Practice Example: Organise a "mini market" where children practise shopping, using play money to buy ingredients for a cooking project, teaching numeracy, decision-making, and social interactions.

Inadequate Preparation for Future Learning

Strategy: Ensure activities not only focus on current interests and skills but also introduce concepts and skills that prepare children for future learning experiences.

Practice Example: Use project-based learning on topics like space, where children can develop research skills, teamwork, and presentation skills, laying the foundation for more formal educational settings.

Reduced Individualisation of Learning

Strategy: Develop personalised learning plans for each child, considering their interests, strengths, and areas for development. Regularly review and adjust these plans based on ongoing observations and assessments.

Practice Example: Review your portfolio system where children's work, observations, and assessments are collected over time, make sure educators tailor learning experiences more closely to each child's developmental path and interests.

After reading these points, which one(s) do you think you are doing well? Describe your practice in detail so it can go directly into your QIP or SAT (NSW only).

After reading these points, which one(s) do you think you need to work on? Describe how you could improve your practice.