

The BEPS OSHC Curriculum Policy

Policy Statement & Commitments

Brunswick East Primary School Outside School Hours Care (BEPS OSHC Service) is committed to nurturing and extending each child's social, physical, emotional, intellectual and cognitive development in a child-friendly, inclusive supportive and fun environment.

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, and Standard 1.1 of the *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care* requires that a program is delivered to all children being educated and cared for by BEPS OSHC Service, that:

- is based on an approved learning framework
- is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework
- is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child
- is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child.

BEPS OSHC Service promotes the Council of Australian Governments vision that *all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation*, though our program decision making which is guided by the ***Framework for School Age Care in Australia; My Time, Our Place***.

BEPS OSHC Service also promotes the Victorian Government's vision that *every young Victorian thrives, learns and grows to enjoy a productive, rewarding and fulfilling life, while contributing to their local and global communities* though its program decision-making, which is influenced by the ***Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework***.

BEPS OSHC Service believes that planning is an integral part of the service, and encourages all stakeholders (children, families, and staff) to be involved in curriculum decision-making and program development. The OSHC Coordinator is committed to ensuring that educators implement a program that provides opportunities for children and families to participate in program planning. Educators at BEPS OSHC Service work in partnership with children, families and other professionals to:

- plan effectively for children's learning and wellbeing
- communicate with families about children's development and wellbeing
- evaluate children's progress towards achieving intended outcomes
- identify children who may need additional support
- evaluate the effectiveness of the education and care environment at BEPS OSHC Service and the experiences offered, and the approached taken by educators to achieve the best learning and developmental outcomes for each child
- reflect on their own professional practice and relationships with children and families and use this knowledge to improve the effectiveness of the program and teaching strategies.

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Definitions

Curriculum – All the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development.

Intentional Teaching – Involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have ‘always’ been done that way.

Pedagogy – The holistic nature of an early childhood educator’s professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning.

Procedures

BEPS OSHC Service will offer a flexible and balanced program offering both structured and unstructured activities and experiences, which will respond to children’s interests, needs and stages of development. The program will be developed in collaboration with children, families and staff.

Program planning information is determined collaboratively between educators working with the children and overseen by the Coordinator. The program plan is on display in the sign/in out area, and families may access their child’s learning records on request.

- Programs will be challenging and engaging for all children.
- Families and educators consult when planning the program.
- Consideration is made of the cultural and religious beliefs of children and families.
- Equality is promoted in the program for all children.
- A range of methods are used to discover more about children including observations, anecdotal records, checklists, samples of work, documentation of projects, running records, discussions with families, photos, video and cassette tapes.
- Resource agencies are accessed to support the inclusion of children into the program.
- Children’s strengths and current skills are considered and built on in the program.
- Program plans ensure that both planned and incidental learning opportunities are catered for.

Assessment for Wellbeing, Learning and Development

Assessment is designed to discover what children know and understand, based on what they make, write, draw, say and do. The educational experience of children is evaluated in relation to achievements, incidental experiences and outcomes of objectives set, with a focus on wellbeing, learning and development.

- All educators at BEPS OSHC are responsible for working cooperatively to monitor the individual development of each child within their care.

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- All of the educators at BEPS OSHC are responsible for and evaluating learning programs in relation to:
 - the approved learning frameworks – the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, and the Framework for School Age Care in Australia
 - BEPS OSHC’s Statement of Philosophy and Code of Professional Conduct
 - individual children’s learning and development.
- A range of methods are used to discover more about children including observations, anecdotal records, checklists, samples of work, documentation of projects, running records, discussions with families, photos and video recording will be used.

BEPS OSHC’s Educational Program in Action

The educational program is child centred and allows children to experience a variety of materials and pursue their own interests. The educational program is flexible and may change due to weather, time of day, as the year progresses, and also to encompass spontaneous events that may occur.

- Children at BEPS OSHC Service have access to a range of areas across the school grounds outside of school hours including a dedicated OSHC room, art room, school hall, all outside areas, the pit area and the school kitchen. The range of facilities expands as the service grows for compliance with legislative space requirements.
- BEPS OSHC Service provides a range of equipment and toys for all children to play with regardless of gender. Both boys and girls are encouraged to explore a full range of experiences and emotions.
- Educators offer appropriate choices to children, talk to them about the choices available, and help them to decide what to do if needed. There will always be alternatives when a child does not wish to participate in a particular activity, or chooses to initiate their own experiences and play.
- Children will be challenged and encouraged to take ‘safe’ risks in order to:
 - develop their problem solving skills
 - build resilience, confidence and social competence
 - extend their strength, fitness levels and coordination through physically challenging activities
 - learn about taking safe risks by raising their consciousness of risks and the consequences of particular actions or choices.
- Educators will ensure the supervision of children in line with the supervision strategies employed by BEPS OSHC Service, and ensure that the supervision is appropriate to each child’s stage of development and protects their safety and wellbeing at all times.
- Educators at BEPS OSHC Service join in the children’s play, appreciate their attempts to acquire new skills, and encourage them to try new experiences.
- Children are regularly reminded of safety procedures for play equipment.

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- Educators use children’s real life experiences to engage children in learning opportunities. Families are encouraged to share their cultural traditions, customs and beliefs with educators so that children’s rights to have their cultural identities acknowledged and valued can be supported
- Educators monitor noise levels in the environment and adjust activities with children to ensure noise levels are appropriate and do not interfere with purposeful play or activity.

Collaborating with Children

Effective programming also takes into account feedback and observations from all BEPS OSHC Service’s stakeholders, most importantly, from the children themselves. Educators employ a range of methods to involve children and gain information about their skills, knowledge, attitudes, interests, and developmental level in order to plan effectively.

Children’s feedback is sought by:

- informal conversations with the children
- observations and conversations with the children
- daily meetings to plan and discuss what the children want to seek feedback
- surveys and questionnaires
- suggestion box
- running activities
- questions on enrolment forms
- being directly and actively involved in all the Service’s practices
- daily reflections, by seeking their feedback on activities done.

Collaborating with Families

Each family’s input, suggestions, and feedback about the program is always welcome, and BEPS OSHC Service will always respect the extent to which families wish to be involved. Families are also encouraged to discuss their child’s development with the educators; however, to ensure a confidential environment, and to avoid disrupting child-to-educator ratios, families are encouraged to pre-arrange a time to do this.

- During enrolment at BEPS OSHC Service, families are asked to complete information sheets about their child’s abilities and behaviours, to assist educators to assess the children’s current developmental level, and establish suitable routines for the child
- Educators will initiate and facilitate regular on-going communication with families concerning their child’s participation. Families are informed promptly and sensitively of any issues or concerns in regard to their child. Recorded information will be available for discussion.
- Families are encouraged to have input into program development especially in relation to their own child’s participation, and in sharing aspects of their culture, skills and any interesting experiences.

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Curriculum Decision-making

BEPS OSHC Service’s philosophy provides an important framework within which programming decisions are made, and BEPS OSHC Service’s Code of Professional Conduct, including Early Childhood Australia’s Code of Ethics, further guides decision-making practices to ensure that wellbeing of children is paramount.

- Educational programs will be balanced and varied, and will be flexible enough to allow for spontaneity and the unexpected, including: indoor and outdoor learning experiences; quiet and active times; individual, small group and large group times; time for individual educator-to-child interaction; and children’s individual and group interests, including activities that are physical, creative, exploratory, dramatic, musical, cognitive and involve construction.
- Educators will provide individual holistic programs that are responsive to children’s lives, interests and learning styles, and promote each child’s social, cultural, physical, emotional, intellectual, language and creative potential, and meet individual children’s play and relaxation needs.
- Experiences will be provided through a range of mediums, including music, visual, arts, movement, sports, language, literature, drama, maths, technology, science, health, safety, natural environment, equity and cultures.
- Educators will use observations of children’s participation, set up a learning environment that stimulates children’s natural curiosity, encourage children to be actively involved in their own learning and decision making, and use the partnerships they have developed with families to enhance and individualise programs for children.
- Programs, evaluations, and observations of children are recorded in written form and through taking photos and videos. The children’s program is displayed in the OSHC room, and educators evaluate the program and revise objectives for the children on a regular basis.

Educational Leadership

A key aspect of their role of the Educational Leader is to create an inspirational vision for children’s learning and curriculum collaboratively, motivate other educators to achieve the very best learning outcomes for young children.

- The BEPS OSHC Management Sub-committee, through consultation with the Coordinator and Service educators will designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator as an educational leader for BEPS OSHC Service, as required by the National Law.
- The designated Educational Leader details are documented in the Staff Record, which is kept in the administration office.
- The designated Educational Leader support educators at BEPS OSHC Service to design and implement educational programs.
- All educators interested in this position are encouraged to discuss this with the Coordinator and will be encouraged present their skills and intentions to the BEPS OSHC Management Sub-Committee.
- Educational leadership is included as an agenda item at all staff meetings.

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- Educational Leaders will be allocated time each fortnight to meet away from the children’s program to plan consistent strategies to motivate staff and strategies for the children’s program, and focus on the responsibilities of educational leadership.

As part of continuous improvement, the educational leader considers what strategies are needed to improve the educational program at BEPS OSHC Service, which includes:

- leading and being a part of reflective practice discussions about practice and implementing the learning frameworks
- mentoring other educators at BEPS OSHC Service by leading and demonstrating quality practices
- discussing routines and how to make them more effective learning experiences
- observing children and educators interactions, and making suggestions on how to improve interactions and intentional teaching
- talking for families about educational programs
- working with other early childhood professionals such as maternal and child health (MCH) nurses and early childhood intervention specialists
- considering how the program could be linked to the community by working with other community services
- establishing systems across BEPS OSHC Service to ensure there is continuity of learning
- assisting with documenting children’s learning and how these assessments can inform curriculum decision-making.

Environmental Education

Educators at BEPS OSHC Service involve the children in the planning and decision-making of environmentally focused improvements. BEPS OSHC Service encourages environmental awareness and provides relevant experiences and materials to enhance children’s understanding of these issues.

- BEPS OSHC Service is part of the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative, which is a partnership of the Australian Government and state and territory governments, and seeks to support schools and their communities to become sustainable.
- All refuse is recycled in a systematic way in separately organised and coloured bins for recycling: paper/cardboard; organic matter for the kitchen vegie gardens; recyclable plastic for recycling and mixed recyclables for landfill. BEPS OSHC Service also has solar power systems and water tanks.
- Children are educated about environmental protection and conservation to encourage them to adopt sustainable practices that they carry on through life.
- Educators are encourage and supported in environmental practices so that they become appropriate role models for children and families.
- Curriculum decision-making practices of educators consider how children develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things.
- BEPS OSHC Service provides an outdoor space that allows children to explore and experience the natural environment, which includes adequate shaded areas to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

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- Children’s environmental awareness is encouraged through everyday experiences, and specific activities or excursions.
- Recyclable and reclaimed materials are used at all available opportunities.
- Children are provided with experiences that utilise and encourage creativity and exploration of natural materials where possible.
- The educators and children keep the OSHC area clean of all rubbish and dispose of all items in an environmentally sustainable way, through the appropriate resources available.
- Educators adopt intentional teaching methods during informal opportunities to educate children about their social and environmental responsibilities.
- When considering purchases for the service, educators are supported to choose environmentally friendly products where possible.
- Unused food scraps are composted as appropriate.

Health and Safety Education

Educators at BEPS OSHC take an active approach in educating the children on health and safety issues. This includes activities such as:

- hygiene practices such as hand washing, nose blowing, coughing and sneezing, teeth brushing
- fire safety, including matches and lighters, and what to do in the event of a fire
- community safety and neighbourhood programs including traffic, strangers and waste
- accident and injury prevention, and protective behaviours.

BEPS OSHC Service liaises with other community groups, such as the Police and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, to obtain materials and information on health and safety issues.

Inclusion of all Children

The BEPS OSHC Service is committed to the care of all children and believes in the rights of children. All programs are inclusive of all children.

- The children’s program offers a wide balance of activities and experiences, ensuring flexibility and providing for child-initiated activities.
- Experiences and activities are adapted to meet the needs of individual children, and, in particular, program planning focuses on strengths and interests, and ways to extend and challenge existing skills for all children.
- Inclusion and professional support agencies will be utilised (in consultation with the family) to maximise the inclusion of children into the service and where children require additional support and resources. In this instance, an Inclusion Support Facilitator may work with the educators to provide ongoing inclusive practice support.
- Educators consult with families on an ongoing basis to ensure that the needs of the child are being met.

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- Educators will promote and encourage inclusion and diversity.

Outdoor Play and Recreation

The National Heart Foundation suggests that physical activity has been shown to help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and bone disease. It has also been shown to improve mental health, self-esteem and body image, particularly in children and adolescents. BEPS OSHC Service encourages all children to participate in outdoor play and recreational activities on a daily basis.

- Outdoor equipment is appropriate to the developmental levels of the children it is catering for.
- Children have access to materials and equipment that can be used in a range of ways to provide challenge and problem-solving experiences along with physical development.
- Both passive and active experiences are provided outdoors.
- Group and solitary experiences are provided for in the outdoor space.
- The outdoor curriculum focuses on all areas of children’s development.
- Energetic play is encouraged while outdoors.
- Ball games, obstacle courses and other large muscle experiences are offered outdoors.
- Children are invited to bring activities that they typically engage with indoors, such as drawing or craft, to the outdoor space.

Overview of Staff Responsibilities

The educators employed at BEPS OSHC Service are responsible for ensuring that:

- Overall planning for the Service involving the children and families occurs
- The weekly program is documented and made available via the Family Noticeboard and through the school newsletter.
- Children are encouraged to respect individual differences and respond by providing play experiences that recognise the importance of peer group relationships.
- Child-centred programs are conducted where children have ample opportunity to do things on their own, to accept appropriate responsibility and to use their free time creatively.
- Children are offered both active and quiet experiences and areas within the indoor and outdoor program.
- Children are provided with choices in their play and recreation.
- Planning is undertaken for both individuals and the whole group.
- Children are provided with opportunities to work on and complete individual and group projects over a period of time.

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- Activities and experiences provided are developed to suit the age and developmental ranges of all children attending the service, and altered where appropriate to ensure all children are able to participate fully.
- Children are provided with opportunities for independent and self-directed play.

Program Planning Time (Non-contact)

The OSHC Coordinator is paid 1.5 hour per week of non-contact time for program planning. All staff are paid for three (3) hours per fortnight to attend the team program planning meeting. It is expected that staff will spend time planning the program, evaluating past activities, and addressing needs and issues.

The following Australian and Victorian Government publications are available at BEPS OSHC Service in the administration office area for educators to refer to in developing strategies to implement the frameworks:

- National Quality Framework Resource Kit
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Transition: A positive Start to School Resource Kit
- My Time, Our Place, the Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- The Educator’s Guide to the Framework for School Age Care in Australia.

Service Evaluation

BEPS OSHC Service believes continual assessment and evaluation by the committee, parents and families, children and educators is integral part of program planning.

- The Coordinator has the responsibility of ensuring that children and parents are surveyed regularly to ensure the program offered reflects their needs and interests.
- A variety of survey techniques will be used with children, and may include informal discussion, pre-enrolment surveys, suggestion box, younger children drawing what they like in the program, written surveys, and children’s interest checklist.
- Educators will regularly evaluate activities, the curriculum (including excursions and incursions), and the Service as a whole, informally during program hours and at staff meetings.
- The BEPS OSHC Service Management Sub-committee acts to ensure that families and service educators work collaboratively towards continuous improvement via service evaluation, including suggestion boxes, parent surveys, informal discussion, and formal discussion at parent and committee meetings.

Videos, Television, Computers and Electronic Games

BEPS OSHC Service is an extension of home and children’s leisure time. The Service endeavours to reflect children’s interests; therefore, activities such as videos, television, computers, and electronic games will be offered in a balanced program of activities.

- The amount of time children can participate in screen experiences (television, video and films,

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computers and electronic games) will be limited.

- Staff and children will decide together the amount of time these experiences will be limited to as a part of program development.
- The content of programs and games is appropriate for all the children present and does not contain any physical or verbal violence or ridicule. These activities are limited to C and G ratings. Any PG-rated content will be assessed by the service and parents for appropriateness.

Items from Home

BEPS OSHC Service recognises that children sometimes bring their own toys to school; however, children are responsible for these toys while at the service.

- BEPS OSHC Service will not accept responsibility for toys and equipment brought into the service by children attending. Educators do not always have the provisions to ‘mind’ special items, and the BEPS insurance policy will not cover lost or damages items. For this reason, children are encouraged to keep items brought from home in their bags.
- Families are made aware of the impact of war toys have on young children and that such toys are not encouraged at BEPS. Children will be asked to keep any toy deemed to be a war toy in their bag while attending the service.

Sources & Legislative References

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2010, *My Time, Our Place, the Framework for School Age Care in Australia*, Barton.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2009, *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: For all children from birth to eight years*, Melbourne.

Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority 2010, *Guide to the National Law and National Regulations*, Barwon, pp. 85-86 www.acecqa.gov.au

Early Childhood Australia 2012, *Educational Leader National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program Newsletter 33*, www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/NQS_PLP_E-News_letter_No33.pdf

National Professional Support Coordinator Alliance 2012, *Getting started with policies for the NQF: Policies in Practice template – Educational Programs*, www.pscalliance.org.au

Australian Government Department of the Environment, *Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative*. www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/education/aussi

National Heart Foundation of Australia, Victoria Division 2004, *Eat Smart Play Smart*, West Melbourne, ISBN 0-9580943-2-2

<i>Education & Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic) – Sections 168</i>
<i>Education & Care Services National Regulations (2011) – Regulations 73-76</i>
<i>National Quality Standard – Element 1.1 & 1.2</i>
<i>My Time, Our Place, the Framework for School Age Care in Australia</i>

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