

CELEBRATIONS POLICY

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

‘From before birth children are connected to family, communities, culture and place. Their earliest learning, development and wellbeing takes place through these relationships, particularly with families, who are children’s first and most influential educators. ... Educators understand children may come from diverse backgrounds and acknowledge this in each child’s Belonging, Being and Becoming.’ (EYLF, 2023, p. 6).

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: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS		
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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
90	Medical conditions policy
155	Interactions with children
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

PURPOSE

Incorporating celebrations into children's services 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 services.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor students, volunteers and visitors of Medowie Gumnut Preschool.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure policies and procedures are in place to provide a child safe environment. When providing opportunities for children to celebrate special occasions incorporating food or beverages, consideration must be made to ensure children with medical conditions that can be impacted by food are clearly identified and risk minimisation plans are in place and educators and staff implement these plans.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR-WILL ENSURE:

- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy
- families are aware of this Celebrations Policy
- to incorporate relevant, culturally based experiences and celebrations within the children's program which address different learning opportunities, including: fostering a sense of belonging and inclusions for every child, family, and staff member (EYLF, 2023,p.6); increasing children's understanding of, and respect for, diversity, similarities and differences (EYLF, 2023, p.16); raising children's self-awareness and confidence, providing for children's holistic development and supporting a positive identity for every child and family (EYLF, 2023,p.30).
- cultural responsiveness is evident in everyday practice as educators respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, doing and being as they celebrate the benefits of diversity

- 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 at Medowie Gumnut Preschool and reflected in our programs
- cultural celebrations that are significant to our families and relevant to our broader community are implemented within the service when possible
- stereotypes about particular celebrations/cultural events are not assumed
- families are aware of the *Celebration Policy* during their orientation process and kept updated throughout the year via centre correspondence
- sensitivity to issues such as family composition is respected (e.g.: Mother's & Father's Day)
- families' beliefs about celebrating birthdays are respected within Medowie Gumnut Preschool
- healthy options for birthday celebrations are discussed with families which may include fruit platter, fruit salad, watermelon balls or muffins in preference to a cake
- families discuss cake options with the nominated supervisor/responsible person prior to celebrations
- parents provide ingredients of any cakes brought to Medowie Gumnut Preschool (if store bought, the 'use by' date and ingredients must be clearly labelled)
- families are reminded that we are an '*Allergy Aware*' Service prior to celebrations and food that cannot be brought into the service is clearly identified
- 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 at Medowie Gumnut Preschool
- educators remain current with the professional knowledge and skills that support planning for and engaging in culturally inclusive practice
- they liaise and collaborate 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 and communication with parents/guardians are adhered to if food or drink is provided for children at the Service. 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.
- safety issues are taken into account prior to the implementation of celebratory experiences and risk assessments completed to identify, manage and minimise the risk of harm to children

- all requirements in our Nutritional Food Safety Policy are adhered to when planning for celebrations
- Professional Development is considered as a tool to assist to expand educator's knowledge of cultural awareness and cultural celebrations.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- seek written approval from the nominated supervisor/responsible person prior to any celebrations where food is provided to children
- identify any children with medical conditions that may be impacted by particular foods and if required complete risk minimisations plans/risk assessments to ensure children's safety
- ensure food handling training has been completed (as required)
- ensure the use of candles is carried out with the children's safety in mind and fully supervised. A full risk assessment will be submitted to the nominated supervisor/responsible person prior to such celebrations.
- ensure each child is provided with a separate cupcake (with a candle, if they wish) for the child celebrating their birthday
- be aware of cultural tokenism and stereotyping
- encourage and support family members to be involved in sharing their customs and celebrations with our Service
- 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 that reflect a significant event or celebration, which they have recently participated
- 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 educator's values about avoiding product-based activities by developing creative and meaningful gifts for families
- provide opportunities for children to participate in open-ended celebration activities
- provide a flexible program that enables children to have agency about the activities in 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 storybooks, images, and music are reflective of contemporary celebrations to which children can relate
- be respectful of all religions and cultural backgrounds

- participate in professional development to raise cultural awareness around cultural celebrations.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Celebrations Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCES

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 Australia Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Guide to the National Quality Framework.

Australian Government Department of Education. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022*

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
 Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023).
 Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023).
 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).
[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Sharon Hales	Director	11/11/2024
POLICY REVIEWED	NOVEMBER 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	NOVEMBER 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V10.11.23		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance • updated reference to EYLF, V2.0, 2023 • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • additional information added re: food safety requirements 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	

NOVEMBER 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • minor formatting edits within text • continuous improvement/reflection section added • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' 	NOVEMBER 2023
NOVEMBER 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of related Education and Care National Regulations • additional related polices • reference to risk minimisation plans for medical conditions • sources checked for currency 	NOVEMBER 2022
NOVEMBER 2020	liaising with local Aboriginal educational consultants added healthy options for birthday cakes included sources checked for currency	NOVEMBER 2021
NOVEMBER 2019	Inclusion of EYLF references Updated referencing	NOVEMBER 2020
NOVEMBER 2018	Grammar, punctuation and spelling edited. Wording 'corrected' and sentences reworded. Sources/references alphabetised.	NOVEMBER 2019
OCTOBER 2017	Updated the National Quality Standards references to comply with revised standards.	AUGUST 2018
AUGUST 2017	Minor changes made to policy to ensure children's safety is upheld and we are providing an inclusive environment.	AUGUST 2018
FEBRUARY 2016	New Format created and policy created.	NOVEMBER 2017