



**OUR APPROACH TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Introduction

Northside manages four Early Childhood Centres in the A.C.T located in Civic, Dickson, Turner and Harrison. All Northside Centres operate under the National Quality Framework, and are committed to supporting the Early Learning of young children through high-quality, play-based educational programs and professional practices in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Our Centres work with children from six weeks old to school-age, and are open 51 weeks a year. Each Centre is committed to working closely with children and their families to support every child's early learning and wellbeing.

Northside feels strongly about advocating for the importance of all children's birth right to high-quality early education, and actively works within the local and national community to improve understanding and knowledge of issues affecting children and Early Childhood.

Early Childhood Education can change lives. We know that giving children a love of learning, and supporting wellbeing at an early age can drastically improve the opportunities and life-long outcomes for every child – and in turn, the whole community.



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Commitment to Quality

Our Early Childhood Centres operate under the National Quality Framework. We are strongly committed to continuously improving our work to ensure the best possible outcomes for young children and their families.

We utilise contemporary research and knowledge about how young children learn and develop to provide a modern perspective on Early Learning. As well as supporting fundamental learning around literacy and numeracy, we work closely with each child and their family to support the important skills and competencies they will need for life-long learning: self-regulation, resilience and independence.

Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that we are meeting children's needs for health and safety, as well as learning and wellbeing, at all times. We involve families and early childhood professionals in our policy review process.

We work to meet the highest standard of children's health and safety, including regular training on all Educators' Mandatory Reporting responsibilities in the A.C.T. We have robust internal processes to ensure that all Educators understand their legal, ethical and organisational responsibilities regarding keeping all children safe from harm.

We are committed to not just meeting the minimum standards of compliance with regulatory frameworks, but exceeding them.



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National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is the new, national system that sets standards for Children's Education and Care services. It is designed to improve the quality of children's education and care throughout Australia. Research shows that quality early education early on leads to better health and education outcomes later in life.

The National Quality Framework includes legal requirements that all services must comply with. These include requirements for:

- The number of staff and their qualifications
- Ensuring children's health and safety
- The amount of space at the service and how it is set up
- The quality of learning experiences for children

Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is Australia's Early Childhood curriculum framework, which will guide early childhood Educators in developing quality, early childhood education programs. The framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years, as well as their transition to school.

The EYLF underpins the development of curriculum programs for children that support the strengthening of all children's sense of identity, their connections and contributions to their world, their sense of wellbeing, their confident involvement in learning and their effective communication skills.

We utilise the EYLF to support assessment of children's learning and experiences at each centre, and then to plan for each child's ongoing individual learning.



Preschool Program

Our Early Childhood Education Centres provide a dedicated Preschool Program for children in the year before attending school. These programs are planned and overseen by qualified Early Childhood Teachers.

Our Preschool Programs focus on the most important skills that children need to succeed in school and later life. Research has demonstrated that this includes not just foundational literacy and numeracy skills, but also life-long skills including social, self-regulation and resilience skills.

As with ACT Government Preschools, our Preschool Programs operate under the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF

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Our Preschool Programs operate within the context of each of our Early Childhood Centres, allowing for stronger and more long-term partnerships and collaborations with families to support children's learning and wellbeing. The programs operate five days a week, 51 weeks a year and are implemented as part of the daily curriculum.



Birth – 5 Curriculum

Every child's learning and wellbeing is supported by qualified educators, from the youngest infants to those about to transition to school.

In addition to our Preschool Programs, every room in our Early Childhood Centres plans for children's learning in an individual and group context. In each our Centres we plan for children to develop their social skills with peers of all ages, to adapt and respond to challenges, to become more resilient, to develop their independence skills, and to influence their world through art, music, song and story.

All of our work is underpinned by the Early Years Learning Framework, Australia's national curriculum for educational settings with young children.

Research has consistently demonstrated to importance of the early years on an entire life. We are committed to providing high quality educational programs that support positive outcomes for all children.



Regulatory Compliance

All Early Childhood Centres in Australia are required to meet a number of regulatory and legal frameworks, and at Northside Community Service we have robust systems and process in place that are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure we are compliant in all of those frameworks.

Each Centre undergoes regular internal audits to ensure compliance with the National Care and Education Law and Regulations.

Each Centre undergoes regular self-assessments against the National Quality Standard to ensure that each centre is Meeting or Exceeding and has a plan in place to continuously improve quality.

Northside Community Service works closely with Children's Education and Care Assurance within the ACT Education Directorate on all local regulatory and compliance issues.

All Educators working in Northside Community Service have a current Working with Vulnerable People Card as prescribed by the Office of Regulatory Services, and receive regular internal and external training on their obligations as Mandatory Reporters of child abuse or neglect.

Teachers and Educators

We acknowledge that the quality experienced by children and their families within our Centres can only be delivered by qualified, experienced and professional Early Childhood Teachers and Educators.

At Northside we provide regular and ongoing professional development opportunities for the Teachers and Educators in our Centres, including:

- Monthly seminars with Professor Deborah Harcourt
- Full-day conferences for all educators
- Ongoing on-the-job mentoring and support
- Individual training plans
- Access to high quality training from external providers



Key Policies and Procedures

We are committed to strong and robust governance and operation of our Early Childhood Education Centres. We have a range of policies and procedures that support the day-to-day operations of our centres which have been developed in accordance with the National Quality Framework, the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and local A.C.T. regulatory frameworks.

Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated, incorporating feedback from families and other stakeholders. Policies and procedures are also regularly updated to include any new information from regulatory bodies nationally and in the A.C.T.

A number of key policies are available on our website www.northside.asn.au



Providing Feedback

We acknowledge and value all feedback provided by families regarding our Early Childhood Centres and their educational programs. Collaborative partnerships with families is a key part of the National Quality Framework, and Northside takes our relationships with children and their families very seriously.

We encourage all families to discuss their child's education and wellbeing with their Centre Director, but you can also provide feedback on our website www.northside.asn.au






Northside provides a broad range of quality community programs including:

- Children's services
- Services for older people and people with a disability
- Home support, transport and social programs for seniors
- Support programs for young people and families
- Women's housing and emergency relief
- Social groups
- Venue hire for community activities

Would you or someone you know benefit from the support services we provide at Northside? For more information call **02 6257 2255** or visit our website www.northside.asn.au or earlychildhood@northside.asn.au

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