Professional Development Policy

Purpose

To provide a policy that assists in the ongoing professional development and growth as a learning community through staff at John Street.

Objective

To implement a process for determining relevant and effective professional development opportunities, and reviewing and updating professional development plans based on an evaluation of staff’s professional strengths, interests and goals.

Definitions

Professional Development is a term that means different things to different people. Workshops, conferences, in-services, training sessions, and formal study often spring to mind. While these indeed can be some of the activities associated with professional development, so too are the in-depth discussions, problem solving, sharing of ideas and reflecting critically on experiences that take place within staff teams (DEEWR 2009, p.6)

Scope of Policy

The Professional Development Staff Policy applies to all staff working at John Street.

Policy Statement

ECA Code of Ethics (2006) suggests that that in relation to being a professional, educators will see themselves as learners who undertakes reflection, critical self-study, continuing professional development and engages with contemporary theory and practice (ECA 2006, VII.2). This principle
supports educators at John Street as active learners and promotes educational leadership. A commitment to this professional responsibility assists educators at John Street to employ the collaborative, effective and reflective practice principles for learning and development outlined in the Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework, and the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, to support children in achieving outcomes which support their learning and wellbeing.

Working with young children and families is complex and challenging work. Current research in the field of brain science and the developments in theoretical perspectives and approached to early childhood education are rapidly expanding the knowledge and theory base that we can draw on to guide our practice.

Professional Development Training is organised for each staff member individually in line with the outcome of their annual performance appraisal to enhance the development of their skills and assist the service to reach its objectives. These outcomes recorded formulate a professional development plan for individual staff members.

Professional Development Training is organised annually for the staff team in line with the Centre’s goals for teaching and learning, through the yearly professional development plan, to support achieving John Street community learning goals.

“Effective leadership contributes to quality education and care for children by promoting a positive organisational culture and building a professional learning community, which involves continually questioning how to improve teaching methods and strengthen relationships with children and families as well as establishing high expectations for the educators and children’s learning” (Adapted from Draft Guide to the National Quality Standard, 2009, p. 124)

Procedures

- All staff will be provided with professional development on child protection, and responsiveness to children with additional needs.
- John Street will provide all new staff with support to develop a commitment to ongoing learning within a supportive work context, by which skilful mentoring and leadership from more experiences staff is provided.
- All staff shall have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge through the provision of training opportunities, whether this is in the form of external training courses, internal in-service sessions or visits to other centres.
- The Centre Director shall make available information about relevant training sessions. Staff are expected to attend at least three (3) external training sessions per year.
• The Centre Director will ensure the allocation of an amount of money at the beginning of each financial year for the provision of relief staff, so as to free staff for training during the year.

• Relief staff will be utilised for staff to attend professional development sessions.

• The Centre Director in collaboration with the staff will plan and maintain staff professional development plans to reflect the needs and interests of the centre and staff.

• Staff are encouraged to identify their own needs and pursue areas that will further their personal and professional development. They are also encouraged to attend appropriate in-service programs and share information gained at these with other staff members.

• A yearly professional development plan for the Centre, taking into account the Centre’s aims and objectives, will be developed at the beginning of each year to identify the learning goals of the John Street community, and will evaluated during the course of the year.

• A staff resource file will be developed and maintained. This will include evidence of participation by the Centre Director, educators and staff members in professional development activities to update their knowledge and skills.

• One day each year is set aside for a staff professional development day, decided upon by the Board and the Centre Director. Adequate notice is given to all families to enable them to organise alternative care for the day. No child care is available on this day but it is charged as normal.

Responsibility

*Updating and maintaining educators’ knowledge is a joint responsibility of educators, co-ordinators, the Centre Director and the Board, and includes a range of professional development strategies that challenge and extend current thinking.* (QA 4, p. 111 – continuous learning)

John Street staff have a responsibility to ensure that they seek approval to attend professional development sessions via the Centre Director. Evaluations are to be completed for all in-house training held within at John Street to determine its relevance and effectiveness, and any training attended off site will be reported to the team at the next staff meeting regarding the content and relevance of the training attended.

The Centre Director has a responsibility to ensure that budgeted financial amounts are available to provide relevant training to Centre staff. The Centre Director will record the type of training completed by staff (e.g. first aid, manual handling etc), and pass on relevant material in regards to training opportunities available for John Street staff.

The Board, through the Centre Director, is responsible for ensuring the professional development of John Street staff members, including the Centre Director.
General Information

Typically the range of professional development opportunities provided will occur as either in-service training such as staff meetings, child free days, and mandatory training sessions; and external provisions such as conferences, hubs and networking, further education and involvement in projects. John Street understands that for professional development opportunities to have a positive impact to staff professional responsibilities, they need to be effective, relevant, and responsive to the principles of adult learning.

*Practice Potentials* (2008), a research report of a national study that explores the significance of professional development and support in contributing to quality outcomes for children in childcare centres in receipt of Australian government funding, identifies features of effective professional development as:

- The extension of the professional development program over a period of time;
- The involvement of staff in assessing their own learning;
- The creation of opportunities for staff to apply new knowledge and skills in their own work setting;
- The creation of opportunities for staff to have a trusted ‘other’ to discuss developing practice.

John Street staff have identified some types of training that may be appropriate for different positions at the centre within the staff team. This table is by no means exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training deemed appropriate for staff undertaking a management role includes but is not limited to:</th>
<th>Training deemed appropriate for direct service staff includes but is not limited to:</th>
<th>Training deemed appropriate for cooks/chefs/kitchen staff includes but is not limited to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Budgeting and financial management</td>
<td>Planning for groups and individuals</td>
<td>Safe food handling</td>
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<td>Developing effective rosters</td>
<td>Staff – parent effective communication</td>
<td>Nutrition for under 5’s</td>
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<td>Business planning</td>
<td>Parent – staff interviews</td>
<td>Budgeting and menu planning</td>
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<td>Policy development</td>
<td>Appropriate experiences to provide for children</td>
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<td>Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace</td>
<td>Behaviour guidance</td>
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<td>National Quality Framework and planning for continuous improvement</td>
<td>Planning for outdoor play</td>
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<td>Setting up the environment</td>
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Multi-skilling

- All staff shall have the opportunity to experience each of the rooms operating at John Street, across age groups. This shall be achieved via the rotation of staff at the beginning of each calendar year. Staff rotation may occur at other times of the year when deemed necessary.

- Individual needs will be considered when rotation occurs but the final decision should not hinder other staff members from the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge.

- Continuity of care for the children will be the primary consideration when moving staff to different rooms. Where possible, one person familiar to the children will remain in the room.

- All staff members shall have the opportunity to undertake higher duties, giving them greater access to skills development.

- The Director shall ensure that any programming sessions maximise the exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences among staff and that all efforts are made to invite outside professionals, where necessary or desirable, to further support staff development.

Legislative Provisions

DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2011-2012

Section 6.6 What are my services responsibilities to educators?

Education and Care Services National Law Act – Sections 163 & 169

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:

| r.125 | Application of Division 4 |
| r.126 | Centre-based services – general educator qualifications |
| r.136 | First Aid Qualifications |
| r.137 | Approval of Qualifications |
| r.138 | Application for qualification to be assess for inclusion on the list of approved qualifications |
| r.139 | Application for determination of equivalent qualification |
| r.140 | Application for determination of an equivalent qualification |
| r.141 | Additional information for application for determination of equivalent qualification |
| r.142 | Translation of documents |
| r.143 | Certification of documents |
| r.145 | Staff record |
| r.146 | Nominated Supervisor |
| r.147 | Staff members |
| r.148 | Educational leader |
| r.149 | Volunteers and Students |
| r.150 | Responsible person |
| r.151 | Record of educators working directly with children |
National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care

**Standard 4.1** Staffing arrangements enhance children’s learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing

**Standard 4.2** Educators, coordinators and staff members are respectful and ethical

**Standard 7.1** Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community

**Standard 7.2** There is a commitment to continuous improvement

Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

**Principles** Ongoing learning and Reflective Practice

**Practices** Holistic approaches; Intentional Teaching; Continuity of learning and transitions

**Outcomes** 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

Sources


Related John Street Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

**Policies** Philosophy; Equal Opportunity Employment & Protection Against Discrimination; Children of Educators; Code of Professional Conduct; Communication with Families; Educator Review & Performance Appraisal; Expectations of Educators; Program Planning; Recruitment & Retention of Educators; Wages & Conditions of Employment; Determining the Responsible Person Present; Excursions, Routine Outings & In-House Activities; Behaviour Guidance;

**Appendices** Position descriptions; Confidentiality Agreement; Educator Orientation Checklist; Doctors Clearance Form; Hazard Report; Performance Review Template; Professional Development Plan Template; Pregnant Employee Medical Information Sheet; Interview Questions; Fair Work Statement
Authorisation & Review

The Board, through the Centre Director, will ensure that professional development opportunities for educators are based on an evaluation of staff’s professional strengths, interests and goals, and assist John Street in working towards objectives for the growth as a learning community in providing quality education and care for children and families.

The review and development of policies and procedures will be completed by the Grants and Policy sub-committee of the Board, in collaboration with the Centre Director.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, John Street will ensure that families of children enrolled at John Street are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have a significant impact on John Street’s provision of education and care to any child enrolled at John Street, or a family’s ability to utilise John Street; or the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

To ensure that that John Street is compliant, and maintains collaborative approaches with the community, John Street will notify all families of children enrolled at least 14 days before making ANY policy change, unless this time period would pose risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child enrolled at John Street, in which case John Street will act to adjust any policies and/or procedures to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children, and will notify families as soon as practicable after making the necessary change(s).

The Board authorises this policy and welcomes the opportunity to discuss any aspect with stakeholders. We appreciate your support while we strive to provide a quality education and care service for children and families in our community.

Date approved: -------------------------------------
Signed: -------------------------------------

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<tr>
<th>Date Reviewed</th>
<th>Details of Change</th>
<th>Date of next Review</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>August 2011</td>
<td></td>
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<td>February 2012</td>
<td>Complete redevelopment</td>
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