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EDUCATIONAL LEADER

National Law: Section 169

National Regulations: Regulations 118, 148

The National Regulations require the Approved Provider to appoint the Educational Leader in writing, and note this designation in the staff record of the service.

Here are some questions, ideas and strategies to think through with regard to the educational leader.

Why is an Educational Leader important?

The program of education and care within an early childhood setting will be founded in service values and philosophy and will be further supported by policy. An educational leader, through a collaborative process with educators, families and the community will guide the development of the program of learning and education for children. They will also assist with educator growth in reflection and the understanding of children's learning and development.

This role is key to sound practice in the education and care of children – it is a role of great significance and importance.

Should an Educational Leader hold a qualification?

Whilst an Educational Leader is not required to hold a qualification, the role – 'to guide other educators in their planning and reflection, and mentor colleagues in their practices' requires a considerable understanding and experience of learning theory, pedagogy, children's development and the ability to facilitate adult learning.

A qualification and experience would be fundamental to carrying out the role effectively.

How will our service decide who to appoint?

Consider who in the service has:

Suitable qualifications and experience to undertake the role;

An interest in and passion for children's learning and documentation of that learning;

An interest in collaborating with other educators;

Sound communication skills;

A willingness to take on the role.

It will be essential that the role of the Educational Leader is documented and communicated to the designated educator and also to all educators within service.



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How should our Educational Leader be supported in their role?

The Educational Leader will need clear expectations of their role along with time to undertake the collaborative process of guiding and developing the program.

Professional development in a range of forms (workshop sessions, online courses, reading, reflection and inquiry) will be essential for the Educational Leader to remain current and motivated in the role.

Where can our service find professional development suitable for the educational leader?

Professional development suitable for educational leaders is available through Community Early Learning Australia (CELA). For further details, go to: www.cela.org.au

How will the Educational Leader undertake the role?

There will be a range of approaches in undertaking the role and there are some significant steps that include:

- Clearly defining the role and expectations of the leader within your service;
- Reviewing current programs of learning and documentation of that learning;
- Developing approaches to the documentation of programs and children's learning;
- Facilitation of reflective practice.

What are the benefits for the educator who takes on the role of Educational Leader?

Taking on the role of the Educational Leader will have many benefits both professionally and personally. The role has considerable scope for leading practice within the service and having a profound impact on the way educators undertake their roles of teaching and facilitating learning.

This leadership role may allow an educator to specialise in curriculum and learning and engage in deeper learning. It may also be an opportunity to step into a leadership role that leads to other leadership roles in the future.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Insights; Behind Early Childhood Pedagogical Documentation, Alma Fleet, Catherine Patterson, Janet Robertson, 2009

Observing and Planning in early childhood settings: Using a sociocultural approach, Marilyn Fler and Carmel Richardson ECA

Programming and Planning in Early Childhood Settings (4th Edition), Leonie Arthur, Elizabeth Death, Sue Dockett and Sue Farmer, 2008



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