

CELEBRATIONS POLICY

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

'Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities.

In early childhood and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shares who children are and who they can become' (EYLF, 2009, p.7).

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

RELATED POLICIES

Anaphylaxis Management Policy Dental Care Policy Enrolment Policy	Family Communication Policy Nutrition Food Safety Policy Multicultural Policy
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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 and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Montessori Children's Centre has a special way of celebrating each child's birthday:

We explain to the children that it takes the Earth one year to travel around the Sun: this is one unit of measurement for time.

Candles are lit to represent the sun and each year since the child's birth. The 'birthday child' holds a globe and walks around the sun and months of the year once and stops; the first birthday has been reached. If a photograph of the 'one year old' is available then we all look at it, we will then mention a special event that happened to the child during that year. This is repeated until the current birthday is reached. The child's milestones and future achievements are discussed.

Montessori Children's Centre does not encourage the bringing in of treats such as cake, sweets or tokens as this can be upsetting for those who don't bring anything to share and also puts pressure on families to do the same.

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:

- 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, p.7); increasing children's understanding of, and respect for, diversity and differences (EYLF, p.13); raising children's self-awareness and confidence, providing for children's holistic development and supporting a positive identity for every child and family (EYLF, p.2).
- Cultural competence is authentically embedded in practices and programs within the service and deliver positive outcomes for children and families
- Special occasions are celebrated in ways that recognise, respect and strengthen children's appreciation of diversity and difference (DEEWR, 2009)
- Religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter are recognised within the service 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 (eg: Mother's & Father's Day)
- Families beliefs about celebrating birthdays is respected within the service
- 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.
- The Service has an '*Events Calendar*' that is used to support such events throughout the year. We ask that families add their celebration to the calendar so Educators can prepare the program.
- Families are encouraged to be involved in the preparation and/or the celebration in the Service.
- Educators remain current with the professional knowledge and skills that support planning for and engaging in culturally inclusive practice.
- Advance planning is 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.
- Our healthy eating policies are reflected when planning for celebrations.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- Seek written approval from the Nominated Supervisor prior to any celebrations where food is provided to children.
- 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 prior to such celebrations.
- 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.
- Notify the community about the celebration e.g. taking photos to display on the Service notice board or displaying children's artwork and drawings about the celebration.
- 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.

SOURCE:

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australia Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2018). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*.

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009).

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2018).

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).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	December 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE	December 2022
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated formatting Added Montessori's method of celebrating birthdays 		
POLICY REVIEWED	January 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	January 24
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of related Education and Care National Regulations additional related polices. 		