

STAFF 'WELLNESS PROGRAM' POLICY

Rationale and Policy Considerations

According to the World Health Organisation, adults spend approximately one third of their lives at work. Our work in Early Childhood Education requires sustained high physical, mental and emotional effort to complete our job. A range of workplace determinants can have a negative or positive impact on the health and wellbeing of an employee. Within our Service, we are committed to promoting a positive work environment where the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees is acknowledged and supported.

Wellness is more than just an active process of becoming aware of and learning to make healthy choices for our mental, physical and social needs to ensure our body is maintained and works efficiently. Wellness is "about our overall state of wellbeing that enables us to live and function at our best." (Queensland Government, 2019, Healthier. Happier. Workplaces).

Philosophy

We believe in providing a healthy workplace that values and enhances the health and wellbeing of our employees. Promoting wellbeing can help prevent stress and create a positive working environment where individuals and organisations thrive. 'A healthier workplace means everyone wins.' (Queensland Government, 2019, Healthier. Happier. Workplace).

Legislation and Government Requirements

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (SA)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Privacy Act (1988) Commonwealth
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Prospect Early Education and Care's EBA signed May 2016

National Quality Framework

Education and Care Services National Regulations

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age (Nov 2010)

Elements 4.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2

Strategies for Policy implementation

As our employees care for and educate children, it is essential to support them with the right tools and resources to make healthier choices to improve their own health and wellbeing. Employees who remain healthy increase productivity, enhance the workplace culture, and embody the healthy behaviours we convey to children on a daily basis. We believe in using the workplace for improving and maintaining good health.

Our Service is committed to developing a shared vision to improve the health and wellbeing of our employees. We believe the development of a *Wellness Program* may build an awareness of a healthy culture within our organisation and motivate and engage all employees to be involved in improving their own health and wellbeing.

Wellness Program

Our work in Early Childhood Education requires sustained high physical, mental and emotional effort to complete our job. Such sustained work demands can have an impact on the wellbeing of employees. A Wellness Program may help individual employees overcome specific health-related issues. Our Service will encourage employees to create a shared vision to develop a Wellness Program that reflects and addresses the needs of our current staff and creates a wellness culture. Management and staff will co-develop a policy and procedures that supports the health and wellbeing of employees.

Components of a Wellness Program may include:

Environmental wellness:

- Finding satisfaction within the work environment
- Ensuring the work environment and relationships are comfortable and supportive
- Recognising opportunities that lead to new skills and acting on those opportunities
- Working to ensure the stability and longevity of the natural environment

Emotional wellness:

- Keeping a positive attitude
- Being sensitive to your feelings and the feelings of others
- Learning to cope with stress
- Being realistic about your expectations and time
- Taking responsibility for your own behaviour
- Dealing with your personal and financial issues realistically
- Viewing challenges as an opportunity
- Being able to work independently
- Being able to work within a team, and knowing you can ask for help

Spiritual wellness:

- Being open to different cultures and religions
- Participating in community projects
- Defining personal values and ethics
- Participating in spiritual activities
- Caring about the welfare of others

Social wellness:

- Being comfortable with and liking yourself as a person
- Interacting with people of varying ages, backgrounds, genders, race, lifestyle, etc.
- Communicating your feelings
- Developing friendships
- Engaging in social activities
- Balancing your time to include both work and life

Intellectual wellness:

- Learning because you want to, not because you have been told to
- Completing required tasks
- Learning through professional development, including, readings, discussions, workshops, training, etc.
- Observing what is around you
- Listening
- Staying current with early childhood knowledge
- Questioning
- Exposing yourself to new experiences

Physical wellness:

- Exercising regularly
- Eating properly
- Getting regular check-ups
- Avoiding the use of tobacco and illicit drugs

Management will:

- demonstrate commitment to ongoing collaboration and engagement to create a workplace Wellness Program
- consult with employees to ensure workplace strategies meet the needs of the workplace
- support employee's participation in the Wellness Program
- foster mentoring and development pathways for employees. This may include providing programming time, mentoring sessions, professional development opportunities, capacity building, and supporting wellbeing initiatives.
- provide a workplace environment and systems that are supportive of employee wellness
- provide opportunities for employees to participate in wellness activities
- acknowledge stressful situations for employees, both at work and at home
- recognise that an employee's health is determined by several factors, both work and non-work related
- regularly provide employees with information about the importance of health and wellness (newsletters, brochures, readings, etc.)
- ensure employees take their required breaks (e.g. morning tea, lunch)
- provide access to support agencies, including counselling services
- encourage employees to support colleagues during difficult situations

Educators will:

- work within the Service's procedure and policies implemented to address workplace wellness
- be respectful, caring and inclusive of all colleagues
- utilise each other's strengths regardless of qualification and experience
- commit to further contributions to ongoing collaborative engagement to evaluate and enhance the Wellness Program
- participate in the Wellness Program
- communicate their wellness with management

Resources for staff:

Beyond Blue- online and phone mental health support. 1300 22 4636 <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>
Beyou- provides educators with knowledge, resources and strategies for helping children and young people achieve their best possible mental health <https://beyou.edu.au/>
Head to Health- Australian Government Department of Health Digital mental health resources for all your needs. <https://headtohealth.gov.au/>
Headspace- A meditation app to assist with stress management, sleep and self-care <https://www.headspace.com/>
Smiling Mind- Free mindfulness meditation app to help you look after your mental health and manage stress and daily challenges <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>
Ted Talks- explore the latest thinking on how to build a better learning community for educators, families and children. <https://www.ted.com/talks>

Links to other policies

Grievance Policy (staff)

Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy

In-Service and Staff Development Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Work Place Health and Safety Policy

Other Source

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

Be You (2018): <https://beyou.edu.au>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2020).

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (Cth).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Cth).

World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications