

Contents

Before you begin	iv
Topic 1 Researching new policy initiatives	1
1A Evaluating existing policies	3
1B Evaluating current policy trends and their impact	11
1C Completing research and consultation	14
1D Facilitating open and constructive discussion about policy issues	22
Summary	24
Learning checkpoint 1: Researching new policy initiatives	25
Topic 2 Drafting policies	27
2A Selecting and using policy formats and structures	29
2B Drafting policies	33
2C Articulating policy requirements	38
2D Developing plans for policy resourcing, implementation and review	40
Summary	42
Learning checkpoint 2: Drafting policies	43
Topic 3 Testing draft policies	45
3A Developing and implementing consultation mechanisms for draft policies	47
3B Identifying policy implementation issues with stakeholders	54
3C Modifying draft policies	57
3D Giving sufficient notice to those affected by policy changes	59
Summary	61
Learning checkpoint 3: Testing draft policies	62
Topic 4 Developing policy proposals	65
4A Preparing policy materials for stakeholders	67
4B Presenting policy proposals to decision-makers	70
4C Seeking and gaining formal approval	73
Summary	74
Learning checkpoint 4: Developing policy proposals	75
Topic 5 Implementing and reviewing policies	77
5A Developing a policy implementation plan	79
5B Promotion and dissemination of policy information	82
5C Implementing an evaluation plan	86
5D Reviewing policies	89
5E Obtaining and responding to stakeholder feedback	92
Summary	96
Learning checkpoint 5: Implementing and reviewing policies	97

In relation to community and society, I will:

- ▶ learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing
- ▶ collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families
- ▶ use research and practice-based evidence to advocate for a society where all children have access to quality education and care
- ▶ promote the value of children's contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities
- ▶ work to promote increased appreciation of the importance of childhood, including how children learn and develop, in order to inform programs and systems of assessment that benefit children
- ▶ advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

In relation to the profession, I will:

- ▶ base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whom I work
- ▶ take responsibility for articulating my professional values, knowledge and practice and the positive contribution our profession makes to society
- ▶ engage in critical reflection and ongoing professional learning, and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession
- ▶ work within the scope of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications
- ▶ encourage qualities and practices of ethical leadership within the profession
- ▶ model quality practice and provide constructive feedback and assessment for students as aspiring professionals
- ▶ mentor new graduates by supporting their induction into the profession
- ▶ advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care.

Sourec: The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics extract is reprinted with permission (www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

Duty of care

Under health and safety legislation, employers have a duty of care to maintain a healthy and safe work environment. This means that employers are legally obliged to ensure workers are able to carry out work safely and without risk to their health.

This legislation also places responsibility on workers. To help avoid incidents, workers need to read all service policies and ask questions if they are unsure of their role.

Duty of care also exists under common law where individuals may have a responsibility for the wellbeing of other people.

Policies and procedures need to reflect the duty of care requirements that people should adhere to in the workplace. Here are some examples of duty of care for employers and educators.

1B Evaluating current policy trends and their impact

Your job role is likely to include reviewing and evaluating policies to see that they are working effectively. Amend and write new policies due to changing trends to ensure that your practices are not outdated. It may be that particular aspects are a priority because of issues the service is experiencing, or there may be gaps, inadequacies or inconsistencies in the service's existing policies that need to be addressed.

You may need to prioritise areas to help identify where to start, especially if there are a number of areas to be addressed. You may also find that when you start working on one policy or issue, its impact will flow on to other areas and you will need to update or modify other policies for consistency.



Industry trends

Changes occur constantly in education and care services. Best practice is about continuous improvement; this is essential if you are to match the community's values and needs. There is constant research and development in education and care theory and this may provide updates to curriculum, actions and expectations. Government policy and promises are also reflected in funding and fee administration. Policies and procedures need to reflect these industry trends in formalised policy statements.

Examples of issues that may arise and need to be addressed:

- ▶ A new government policy may need to be discussed within the service to clarify what it means and how it will be implemented.
- ▶ An out-of-date policy may require additional research before it is rewritten.
- ▶ A service policy may be inconsistent with a national regulation and need to be rewritten.
- ▶ A policy may no longer relate to the service as its service-recipient base has changed.
- ▶ A funding policy might alter due to a change in funding, a change in submission or application for funding, or a change in administration of funds and fees.

Policy trends

In some cases, state/territory or local policy may differ to national policy. Policy trends, as industry trends, are about continuous improvement and changes will be occurring regularly. To keep up with trends you might find it useful to subscribe to a notification service or newsletter.

1C Completing research and consultation

Once you understand the specific legislation and policies that govern your service, you may need to undertake further research and consult with others to ensure you have the most relevant and current information, and that it relates specifically to your service and the issue you are dealing with.

It is essential that you consult widely to ensure policies align with legislation, reflect current practice, are relevant to the service and are worded so that their intent and implementation procedures are clear.

The following diagram describes a policy development and maintenance process. Those involved in the policy development and/or the consultation process are referred to as stakeholders and are seen at the centre of the diagram. You need to know who should be involved and how they can be involved.



Principles and practices of policy development

When developing policies, you need to understand and implement the principles and practices of policy development. These include understanding:

- ▶ how the policy reflects the service culture, values and objectives
- ▶ the scope of the policy
- ▶ the content of the policy, including related issues
- ▶ how the policy should be written, ensuring it meets the needs of those it serves and is easy to understand
- ▶ resourcing and implementation issues, such as ensuring the actions that underpin the policy are realistic and acceptable.

Meeting legal and ethical obligations

You must always follow your organisation's policies and procedures to ensure you meet your legal and ethical obligations.

For example, you have a legal duty of care to keep children safe and healthy whilst in your care, and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of their information.

You also have an ethical obligation to respect cultural diversity and support inclusive practice in your work so that everyone is treated fairly.

Watch this video to learn more about meeting legal and ethical obligations.



Research methodologies and tools

The following information outlines the research and consultation methods that can be used to gain the information you need.

Investigating legislation at the national and state/territory levels

Make sure that:

- ▶ you understand the wording of the policy/legislation and can clearly explain it to others
- ▶ the national policy aligns with the state/territory policy
- ▶ the policy is relevant to your service
- ▶ you check if the policy needs to be reworded to reflect the service's specific circumstances.

Identifying and using written sources of information

Sources may include:

- ▶ national legislation for child care and education
- ▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ▶ organisational policy manual
- ▶ sample policies (you can find some sample policies at: <http://aspirelr.link/sample-forms-and-templates> and <http://aspirelr.link/owfc-centre-policies>).

Checking the service's policy documents

Check that the policy:

- ▶ matches what is occurring in the service now
- ▶ meets organisational requirements
- ▶ follows or links with legislation (where relevant)
- ▶ demonstrates current information
- ▶ reflects the values and beliefs of individuals
- ▶ includes reference to information that backs up and/or supports the policy.



Provide resources

If you want people to write things down, provide pens and paper; if you want to talk on the phone, call them. Present your resources in sustainable ways and avoid wasting paper. Resources should be neat and in good order.



Thank stakeholders

Let them know they are valuable to the process. Individual feedback based on the contribution they made is the best way to do this.

Example

Communicating with stakeholders

Rohina works at an education and care centre in a community that includes many Sudanese people. She leads the review of the service's nutrition policy. She uses a variety of methods to share and gather information, including:

- ▶ meeting to discuss the policy with a committee who are interested and have skills and knowledge about nutrition
- ▶ placing items in the newsletter for all parents to read and asking for feedback or ideas
- ▶ bringing the policy topics up at staff meetings so that all staff can contribute
- ▶ inviting a nutritionist/dietitian to speak at a parent get-together/education night
- ▶ asking the nutritionist/dietitian if they are able to assist in menu planning
- ▶ gathering information about costs and suggesting ongoing requirements such as menu changes and updates
- ▶ surveying parents and children about the foods currently offered and what they would like to see in the future
- ▶ engaging a cook from the Sudanese community who will enable the service to add familiar and healthy Sudanese items to the menu
- ▶ gathering information about meatless dishes and the health of vegetarian children, as two children require vegetarian meals.

Practice task 3

Access a service policy related to the delivery and collection of children from a service. List the stakeholders you think are most influenced and/or affected by this policy and identify why they are linked.

Achieving resolutions

Resolutions can be reached following the constructive discussion. To achieve these resolutions you should evaluate and compare ideas. In some situations you might be the decision-maker, and in other situations the stakeholder might make decisions.

Resolutions are about evaluating information and comparing it so that you can clearly identify an outcome. You will be looking at the evidence, opinions and examples you gained in the constructive discussion and bringing them to an outcome.



Example

Constructive discussion

A policy at Maraya Children's Service Centre states that if a child requires medication, such as paracetamol, the child must be deemed too unwell to attend the service. This decision was made following constructive discussion with all parents and educators, where concerns were raised about health and spread of infection within the service. Parents and educators had noticed that because ill children were attending the service, they were passing on infections to other children who had severe chronic illnesses such as asthma.

This policy is service specific, as the Education and Care Services National Regulations and the School Exclusion Table do not exclude children requiring paracetamol for mild illnesses. The constructive discussion that occurred allowed the stakeholders to make informed and value-based decisions that suited the service's community as a whole.

Practice task 4

Which mechanisms can be used to support a constructive discussion?

2D Developing plans for policy resourcing, implementation and review

As part of policy development, you need to consider how the policy will be implemented and how it is to be reviewed. Once you have developed a draft, it is then time to plan toward implementation and putting the policy into practice.

Implementation planning

Implementation planning is about setting out how you are going to put the policy into place. It includes details about:

- ▶ which stakeholders you want to communicate with
- ▶ how you want to communicate with stakeholders
- ▶ when you plan to communicate with stakeholders
- ▶ what tools and support information you need
- ▶ your time lines
- ▶ who the decision-makers are
- ▶ challenges and how you plan to face them.



Implementation resources

The resources you need during implementation may include the following.

Time

For example, when the policy will be implemented and how long the implementation process should last for.

Budget

For example, what expenses will be required for promoting the policy?

Personnel

For example, who will be involved with the implementation and what will their role be?

Equipment and materials

For example, paper, pens, whiteboards, textbooks, sample policies, computers, printers and email access.

Practice task 8

Which **four** resources might you need when planning an implementation process?

Summary

- ▶ Policy formats must be clear and easy to follow. The format should be consistent across all your policies, as should the headings or structure you choose.
- ▶ When writing any form of informational document, it is suggested that you write a draft copy to enable you to put together all the information you have.
- ▶ Policies should be influenced by and reflect the legislation they are based on, and the service itself.
- ▶ The policy scope should help you to identify the stakeholders, and provide some guidance toward how to consider them and consult with them.
- ▶ Whether you are amending an existing policy or creating a new policy, pay particular attention to the wording you use to ensure the facts are current, names and dates are relevant, and the instructions are clear and easy to understand.
- ▶ The way you present information to others needs to be in a format and style that facilitates understanding, and allows them to apply the policy effectively.
- ▶ When policies that reflect legislation are not followed, a breach of compliance is occurring.
- ▶ Never assume that everyone knows all the information you refer to, or that they know how to find this information.
- ▶ The resources you need during implementation include time, budget, personnel, equipment and materials.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

Recording the consultation

Make sure you document all consultations, including dates, stakeholders, issues, recommendations and actions to be taken. These records allow you to review in a variety of ways, such as checking through information as well as matching, comparing and reviewing. Some stakeholders may have provided completed surveys and others may have proofread or read through your draft policy. When the stakeholder documents their comments on the draft, it is very easy to see their areas of concern or exactly where their constructive criticism is provided.



When it is time to modify the draft policy again, you will have these records as a reminder of the process and what you need to do next.

Example

Developing a consultation plan

Ryker prepares the following consultation plan as he wants to review the nutrition and food policy at the service where he works.

Heading	Details
Policy name	2.2 Nutrition and Food
Manager	Ryker
Start date	03.02.18
End date	03.04.18
Background	<p>New seasonal menu to be developed that includes dietitian involvement.</p> <p>A number of children with dietary allergies and intolerances cannot attend the service.</p> <p>Menu needs to become more culturally inclusive, particularly representing the growing Vietnamese population.</p>
Stakeholders	<p>The stakeholder group involved includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ parents ▶ dietitian ▶ allergy specialist ▶ cook ▶ Vietnamese community representative ▶ staff.

3C Modifying draft policies

Following final consultation, and before a policy is implemented, the policy needs to be modified to reflect the issues that have arisen from the draft. This is a time when all the records of consultation are useful for clarifying priorities and reminding you of the changes that are necessary.

Testing policies

Once the policy has been tested, you will hopefully have lots of information detailing what the stakeholders see as vital to the policy's success. It is time to reflect on this, and make notes about what needs to be done and how you will complete this. Testing allows you to answer the following questions:

- ▶ Have you done the right thing?
- ▶ Have you done it the right way?
- ▶ Could you improve and achieve more?



Identifying problems

When problems arise relating to the implementation of the policy, further consultation and testing may be required. You must continue with this cycle until these issues are resolved. Many of the problems you find within your draft policy will relate to issues with facts, presentation and format.

Common problems to rectify include:

- ▶ altering the format to meet the stakeholders' suggestions
- ▶ correcting spelling and grammar
- ▶ setting out the policy in a way that is more pleasing
- ▶ clarifying misunderstood sentences or phrases
- ▶ adding extra definitions
- ▶ including relevant legislation, guidelines or resource materials that were missing
- ▶ factual issues.

Modifying drafts

Your modified draft should include all the information required to pull together the policy, to resolve any problems in implementation and presentation, and to ensure the policy is ready to be assessed as a final draft. If you have not addressed all problems, another review may be required. This will slow down the process and ultimately delay the policy's implementation, but it is important to continue to work on the draft until all issues are resolved.

Learning checkpoint 3

Testing draft policies

Part A

1. List the headings you should use when developing a consultation plan.

2. What are **three** common modifications that might be made to a draft policy?



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

- 4A Preparing policy materials for stakeholders**
- 4B Presenting policy proposals to decision-makers**
- 4C Seeking and gaining formal approval**

Developing policy proposals

When a policy proposal has been prepared, it is then submitted to decision-makers. It explains the need to improve current practice by developing more effective policies, or to meet changes in legislation or best practice. Some organisations' decision-makers expect a policy proposal to be submitted prior to any consultation or review, so check this with your supervisor.

Background, purpose and overview

6

- ▶ Whether this is a new or reviewed policy
- ▶ Why the policy was developed or reviewed, including improvement to current practice and/or morale, issue or compliance
- ▶ What information has led you to this decision; this may include readings, conference information and experience
- ▶ Any legislation the policy addresses
- ▶ How the policy will improve the service

Impact

7

- ▶ How the service will be affected
- ▶ What resources will be needed; for example, human, financial, physical, operational and technological
- ▶ Changes to the behaviour or culture of the service
- ▶ Any compliance or regulatory implications such as approvals of people or bodies outside of the service
- ▶ Any training that will be required prior to or following full implementation

Timing

8

When you propose this policy should commence

Responsible people

9

Who is responsible for this implementation

Application

10

What applications apply to this proposal and who needs to be contacted to approve any applications

Example

Policy proposal

Here is an example of a completed policy proposal.

Policy proposal

Policy	1.1.2 Educational Program
Summary	The service would like to incorporate a project approach into their curriculum.
Consultation	Educators, parents, professional support coordinators (PSCs)
Scope	Educators, children, parents
Link to the service	The service's mission, vision and philosophy will be revised to reflect the policy and pedagogy.

4C Seeking and gaining formal approval

Your organisation will have its own guidelines for gaining formal approval when implementing a new or revised policy. If approval is required, this should be documented within a policy development or approval policy itself.

If your service does not have an approval process, you may still wish to present a proposal to the management body or owner to demonstrate your willingness to work with them and keep them involved in the processes.



Approval processes

Policies should not be presented for approval until all those involved in its development agree that it is ready.

Your organisation will process policy approvals in its own way; some services approve after reading through the materials provided, while others make their way through an extensive formal process.

An approved policy may need minor adjustment. The policy will usually be passed on the agreement that things, such as spelling issues, clarity in how a sentence is presented, a slight format alteration or the need for a new definition, will be amended.

If the decision-makers identify a larger issue, the policy may be rejected and guidelines for reconsideration should be provided.

Larger issues that could delay policy approval might include:

- ▶ not following an organisational expectation in format or structure
- ▶ not enough consultation taking place
- ▶ a vital issue being ignored
- ▶ time lines not fitting the purpose
- ▶ the budget not supporting the recommendations
- ▶ the decision-makers not agreeing with the values of the policy.

Example

Approval process

The approval process at Happyfield Child Care is as follows:

- ▶ The director completes the policy development process.
- ▶ The director provides the final policy and any materials to the owners group via email.
- ▶ The owners group makes a decision.
- ▶ The director follows on from the decision made.





Focus

Focus on particular issues that affect the stakeholders you are speaking with.



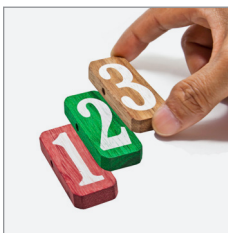
Listen

Listen and respect feelings of anger, fear and resistance, and try to find common ground.



Generate

Generate a feeling of enthusiasm and excitement about the outcomes.



Take time

Take change one step at a time rather than expecting it to happen immediately.

Dissemination methods

Discussions, demonstrations and displays are three effective methods for dissemination of information. More details about these methods are provided in the following information.

Discussions

You may hold meetings with individuals, groups and/or networks.

Demonstrations

Show how the policy:

- ▶ impacts on work roles or practices
- ▶ can be broken down and understood in parts and then as a whole
- ▶ differs from the previous version.

The following information is an example of a policy and procedure review process.

Policy and procedure review process

- ▶ A policy review committee will be formed to oversee the review process.
- ▶ Current policies must be reviewed at least on an annual basis to ensure they reflect legislation, service goals and industry practice; review dates must be listed on each policy.
- ▶ Current policies should be reviewed when there are changes to legislation or work practices.
- ▶ All relevant stakeholders must be consulted via appropriate methods, such as meetings, email or phone.
- ▶ A new policy will be created if a current policy is inadequate or if new legislation has been introduced.
- ▶ Current policies are to be amended if they are inconsistent with current terminology, legislation or practice.
- ▶ The organisation's template must be used to prepare new or amended policies.
- ▶ All documentation involving research and consultation must be kept for future reference.

Example

Policy review schedule

Candy has organised her policies in a tracking document showing when each should be reviewed.

Policy	Last review	Due for review
Sun protection	15.10.17	15.10.18
Water safety	26.6.17	26.6.18
First aid and emergency procedures	17.12.17	17.12.18
Incident, injury, trauma and illness, including infectious diseases and medical conditions	26.4.17	26.4.18
Dietary requirements, nutrition, food and beverages	15.5.17	15.5.18
Anti-discrimination	25.9.17	25.9.18
Children with special needs	26.6.17	26.6.18
Excursions	26.6.17	26.6.19
Orientation and enrolment	1.10.17	1.10.19
Child-safe environment	20.11.17	20.11.18

5E Obtaining and responding to stakeholder feedback

Policies help define a service's philosophy and demonstrate its commitment to quality service based on legislation and best practice.

An ongoing responsibility for policy makers is to promote the service's policies to key stakeholders. There are two reasons for doing this: promoting the policies so they are readily accepted by all stakeholders, and promoting the policies as a marketing tool.

Promoting policies for marketing purposes

It is important for a service to market itself as being a provider of high-quality education and care for children. One strategy you can use is to promote policies so that key stakeholders can see the value the service places on various aspects of the education and care environment.

The service's policies can be promoted in:

- ▶ newsletter articles
- ▶ letters to parents
- ▶ posters displayed in the service
- ▶ the service's website
- ▶ the organisation's philosophy statement.



Using feedback

Whenever a strategy is used to promote a policy, it is useful to prepare a feedback process so that you can record how stakeholders have received the information and whether there are still concerns or misunderstandings.

When you receive feedback after a marketing activity, you need to know what to do with the information after you have collated and analysed it; for example:

- ▶ how issues should be documented and logged
- ▶ who the issues should be addressed to
- ▶ when an immediate reaction must occur
- ▶ when the feedback can wait until the policy is next up for review.

In some cases, you may find that a concern is not directly related to the policy, but is due to a lack of effective implementation or a misunderstanding.

Preparing a report on feedback

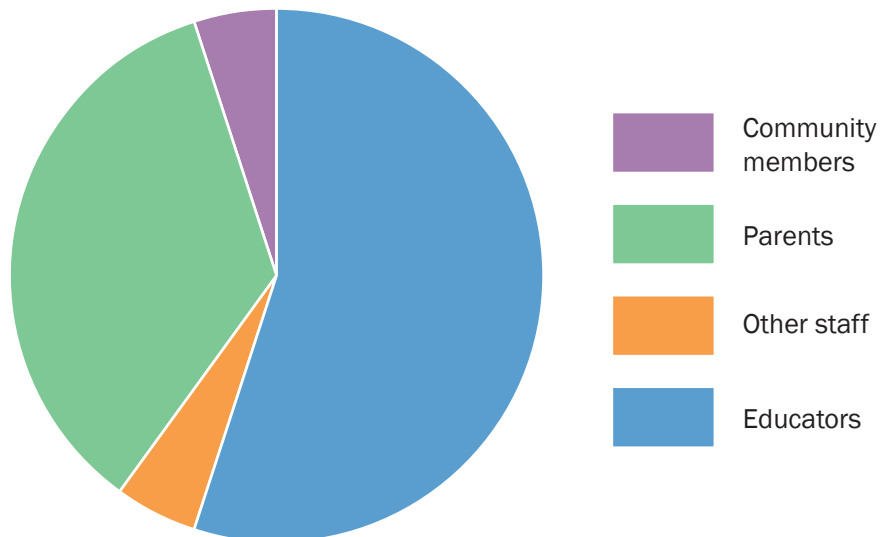
For any situation where feedback is gained, it is vital to share the results with the people you gained feedback from. Doing so allows them to see that you took notice of their comments and that you valued their input. It also shows how you used the information provided. This type of communication builds relationships.

Example

Survey feedback data

Ciara used a chart to show how stakeholders participated in the feedback survey.

Stakeholder participation



Practice task 20

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Prudence is writing a report relating to the feedback she has gained from stakeholders about a student policy. She involved 10 stakeholders and all stakeholders responded to her survey, which was asking for feedback on how appropriate the policy was. The results were as follows:

- ▶ Five educators agreed that the policy was clear and appropriate.
- ▶ One educator felt the policy expected too much from them and that they would prefer to exclude students from the program as they were too much work.
- ▶ Two stakeholders were students employed in the service, who replied that they felt supported by the policy.
- ▶ Two stakeholders were students from a local training organisation, who replied that they felt the service was providing an enormous amount of support to them through the policy and that this encouraged them and demonstrated a high-quality service practice.