

A Trans-national Selection of National/State/International Contemporary Early Childhood Education founded on principles of children's rights and capacities.

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UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2006)

Especially GENERAL COMMENT No. 7 (2005) Implementing child rights in early childhood

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/460bc5a62.html>

All points.

Some extracts

e.g. General principles -

5. A positive agenda for early childhood. The Committee encourages States parties to construct a positive agenda for rights in early childhood. A shift away from traditional beliefs that regard early childhood mainly as a period for the socialization of the immature human being towards mature adult status is required. The Convention requires that children, including the very youngest children, be respected as persons in their own right. Young children should be recognized as active members of families, communities and societies, with their own concerns, interests and points of view.

14:

- a) The Committee encourages States parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the concept of the child as rights holder with freedom to express views and the right to be consulted in matters that affect him or her is implemented from the earliest stage in ways appropriate to the child's capacities, best interests, and rights to protection from harmful experiences;
- b) The right to express views and feelings should be anchored in the child's daily life at home (including, when applicable, the extended family) and in his or her community; within the full range of early childhood health, care and education facilities, as well as in legal proceedings; and in the development of policies and services, including through research and consultations;
- c) States parties should take all appropriate measures to promote the active involvement of parents, professionals and responsible authorities in the creation of opportunities for young children to progressively exercise their rights within their everyday activities in all relevant settings, including by providing training in the necessary skills. To achieve the right of participation requires adults to adopt a child-centred attitude, listening to young children and respecting their dignity and their individual points of view. It also requires adults to show patience and creativity by adapting their expectations to a young child's interests, levels of understanding and preferred ways of communicating.

23 (Programme standards and professional training):

It is essential that [staff] have sound, up-to-date theoretical and practical understanding about children's rights and development (see also paragraph 41); that they adopt appropriate child-centred care practices, curricula and pedagogies

Scotland

Guiding statement in 'Realising the Ambition,,: Being Me (Scotland 2020)

<https://education.gov.scot/media/3bjpr3wa/realisingtheambition.pdf>

“European Commission working group on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) describes the image of each child as: a unique and a competent and active learner whose potential needs to be encouraged and supported. Each child is a curious, capable and intelligent individual. The child is a co-creator of knowledge who needs and wants interaction with other children and adults. As citizens children have their own rights which includes early education and care. (European Commission, 2014)”

New Zealand

Te Whariki (NZ 2017, 1996)

<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/ELS-Te-Whariki-Early-Childhood-Curriculum-ENG-Web.pdf>

Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum (Te Whāriki) sets out the curriculum to be used in New Zealand early childhood education (ECE) settings and provides guidance for its implementation.

Underpinning Te Whāriki is the vision that children are competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society. He purapura i ruia mai i Rangiātea e kore e ngaro. A seed sown in Rangiātea will never be lost. Introduction In Māori tradition the child was a valued member of the Māori worlds before conception, before birth, and before time. They began their journey in Rangiātea, homeland of the gods. Born into this world, they were nurtured like a precious seed to ensure their survival and inculcated with an understanding of their own importance. Reedy (2013) Located in Aotearoa New Zealand, this vision implies a society that recognises Māori as tangata whenua, assumes a shared obligation for protecting Māori language and culture, and ensures that Māori are able to enjoy educational success as Māori. Each child is on a unique journey. They come into the world eager to learn and into family, whānau or 'aiga that have high hopes for them. Teachers, educators and kaiako in ECE settings work together in partnership with the family to realise these hopes. 2 See Notice for providers on page 7. Te Whāriki – Early childhood curriculum 7 INTRODUCTION The expectation is that, in their early years, children will experience a curriculum that empowers them for their journey. Te Whāriki interprets the notion of curriculum broadly, taking it to include all the experiences, activities and events, both direct and indirect, that occur within the ECE setting. It provides a framework of principles, strands, goals and learning outcomes that foregrounds the mana of the child and the importance of respectful, reciprocal and responsive relationships.

Wales

Early Childhood Education and Care in Wales: An introduction: Research Briefing (2019)

<https://senedd.wales/media/yseggg0q/early-childhood-education-web-english.pdf>

“How societies view childhood It is argued that ECEC policy stems from very basic value judgements that different societies make about children and childhood. In some societies, children are viewed as being ‘empty vessels’ at the start of life and are made ‘ready to learn’ and ‘ready for school’ during the early years. Their value is generally measured by academic attainment linked to their economic and social contributions as ‘future citizens’. 1 Adapted from the international Thematic Review of ECEC Policy conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). An alternative view is holistic, where childhood is seen as important in itself, where each child is valued as a unique and a competent and active learner whose potential needs to be encouraged and supported. The child is viewed as a curious, capable and intelligent individual, and is a co-creator of knowledge who needs and wants interaction with other children and adults.”

Early childhood play, learning and care in Wales

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/early-childhood-play-learning-and-care-in-wales#:~:text=To%20ensure%20that%20all%20children,learning%20and%20care%20in%20Wales.>

<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/56774946-48aa-4fab-adda-f27508d8dc8f/early-childhood-play-learning-and-care-developmental-pathways-0-to-3.pdf>

From birth, children’s natural curiosity about the world around them is a strong motivator for exploration. Children are curious problem-solvers who often experience awe and wonder in everyday occurrences. They enjoy exploring and investigating by themselves and with others. They develop a need to share their delight in new knowledge or skills and learn from each other. Learning involves gradual development of play, skills, knowledge and competencies in increasingly complex ways. Children thrive in inclusive environments, both indoors and outdoors, and where there are open-ended opportunities to play, explore and investigate. Adults who are attuned to children’s interests, responses and nonverbal cues can support positive dispositions to learning as well as increasing knowledge and skills. From birth, children need quality interactions and time with an adult who can support them in their exploration. It is important that adults allow children the time to be inquisitive and to safely explore the environment around them.

British Columbia, Canada

Early Learning Framework 2019

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/early_learning_framework.pdf

“This framework ... carries the hope of inspiring and supporting the creation of rich, joyful early childhood spaces where children, adults, ideas, and materials come together, and where knowledge is constructed about learning and living in ways that are local, inclusive, ethical, and democratic.”

“Early care and learning for children aged birth to eight is based on an image of the child as capable and full of potential. All children are celebrated as strong, competent in their uniqueness, and having a secure sense of belonging. Children can experiment, investigate, and inquire in ways that are

relevant and meaningful to them. They are provided with opportunities to enrich and deepen their relationships with place, land, and community.”

“The method and practice of teaching by exploring ideas and issues and creating environments where learning and thinking can flourish. With this understanding, education and pedagogy are not about learning facts but are concerned with ethical questions of living in the world together.

Ontario, Canada

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years 2014

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-does-learning-happen-ontarios-pedagogy-early-years>

<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>

“Children are competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential. They grow up in families with diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Every child should feel that he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor to his or her surroundings, and deserves the opportunity to succeed. When we recognize children as capable and curious, we are more likely to deliver programs and services that value and build on their strengths and abilities.”

“The focus is not on teaching a body of knowledge or a predetermined set of topics. Nor is it centred on children’s achievement of a specific skill set. In the early years, programs are most effective when the content of learning is focused on supporting the development of strategies, dispositions, and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry.

Through play and inquiry, young children practise ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives. Problem solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, initiative and citizenship are all capacities vital for success throughout school and beyond.

How Does Learning Happen? asks educators to be attuned to what children know, what they wonder about, and their working theories about the world around them. Educators engage with, observe, and listen to children. They discuss with other educators, as well as with children and families and caregivers, the possibilities for children’s further exploration in increasingly complex ways. All are co-learners, constructing knowledge together.”

Italy

NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES

Italy 2022

ORIENTAMENTI NAZIONALI PER I SERVIZI EDUCATIVI PER L'INFANZIA

<https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/6735034/Decreto+Ministeriale+n.+43+del+24+febbraio+2021.pdf/33a0ba6d-6f99-b116-6ef7-f6a417e0dabe?t=1648550954343>

The document is very detailed: for example:

Children have the right to express themselves, to be listened to, to be protagonists in determining their own learning paths.

In order to respect and promote the rights and potential of children, it is necessary to identify the aims that guide educational planning and practices: the progressive consolidation of identity, the acquisition of the first autonomy, learning to learn in all situations of everyday life, learning to live and share meanings with other children and other adults. These aims, shared with parents, make it possible to orient themselves in the design and choice of experiences to be offered to children to support their development. In order to put this potential into action, it is necessary to have support and intentional promotion on the part of the adult through specific actions that ensure the protagonism of children, taking into account the actions and interests manifested, the propensities and inclinations manifested in an evolutionary key. It is not a matter of proposing codified experiences, but of designing the environments and supporting the children's activities and proposals, assuming a posture of listening and observation.

South Australia

Early Learning Strategy 2021 – 31

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/docs/early-years/early-learning-strategy-2021-to-2031-all-young-children-thriving-and-learning.pdf>

‘Children in preschool learn through play-based programs designed and delivered by qualified educators to support social, emotional and cognitive development. Research shows that quality early learning experiences at this age are not just about preparing for school, and literacy and numeracy, although these are important. Stimulating and nurturing environments to develop children’s social and emotional skills, confidence, creativity and sense of self are equally important to set children up for life. Benefits increase with higher quality preschool¹⁷’

RE-Imagining Childhood Enquiry 2012-13

<https://www.unisa.edu.au/about-unisa/Our-History/early-childhood-learning/#event-reggio-emilia-education-principles-in-sa>

<https://reimaginingchildhood.com/about/>

<https://reimaginingchildhood.com/app/uploads/2018/10/reimagining-childhood.pdf>

Partnerships included Department for Education and Child Development (DECD), Goodstart Early Learning, Catholic Education SA and the Association of Independent Schools. See the Residency

Report - Re-imagining childhood: the inspiration of Reggio Emilia education principles in South Australia.

To support the government's priority to provide 'Every Chance for Every Child', Rinaldi made recommendations to strengthen early childhood across the state through her report Re-imagining Childhood: the inspiration of Reggio Emilia education principles in South Australia .

The state government invested in 4 inter-related strategies based on Professor Carla Rinaldi's recommendations.

- Children are citizens from birth with the child declared as 'the competent child' and a possessor of rights.
- An integrated early childhood system birth to age 6.
- A new perspective for the role of school and early childhood centres.
- Establishment of The South Australian Collaborative Childhood Project.

Finland

<https://www.oph.fi/en/education-and-qualifications/national-core-curriculum-ecec-nutshell>

https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman%20perusteet%202022_EN_final_23%20.pdf

Underlying values in the national core curriculum for ECEC are:

- Intrinsic value of childhood
- Growth as a human being
- Rights of the child
- Equity, equality, and diversity
- Diversity of families
- Healthy and sustainable way of living.

“Interesting, goal-oriented and suitably challenging activities inspire the child to learn more and enhance the development of the child’s individual potential. Pedagogical activities that integrate and apply different areas of learning enable broad-based examination of things and phenomena. Working methods and learning environments should promote children’s enthusiasm for exploring, experimenting and practising things.

In ECEC, the importance of play for the child and its pedagogical possibilities in the promotion of well-being and learning are understood. Play motivates children and brings joy while allowing them to learn new skills and create meanings about themselves and the surrounding world. Children’s social relationships are supported and everyone’s opportunities to take part in play and shared activities are ensured according to inclusive principles.

Children are active agents and members of their group. They have thoughts and opinions of their own, which should be listened to and taken into consideration.”

“The National core curriculum for early childhood education and care is based on a conception of learning according to which children grow, develop, and learn in interaction with other people and the immediate environment. The conception of learning is also based on a view of the child's active

agency. Children are naturally curious and wish to learn new things and revise and repeat what they have learned. Learning is holistic and occurs everywhere. It combines knowledge, skills, actions, emotions, sensory perceptions, bodily experiences, language and thinking. Among other things, learning occurs when children observe and examine their surroundings and as they imitate the actions of others. Children also learn by playing, moving, exploring, working on different assignments, and expressing themselves as well as through activities based on arts. "(2.5 – The conception of learning.)

Sweden

<https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/forskolan/laroplan-for-forskolan/forskolan-styrs-av-skollagen-och-laroplanen>

<https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/forskolan/laroplan-for-forskolan/laroplan-lpfo-18-for-forskolan>

extracts:

The curriculum is decided by the government and consists of two parts: 1. The preschool's values and mission and 2. Goals and guidelines. The two parts must be seen as a whole. The curriculum contains no targets for what individual children should have achieved at different times or at different ages. Nor are there established standards or levels for which abilities or knowledge the children should develop. The knowledge of each child's learning and development should also not be used to categorize, sort or compare the children, but should instead be a basis for planning the continued activities with the children. This is why there are no individual development plans in the preschool.

The preschool is part of the school system and rests on the foundation of democracy.

The education must be carried out in democratic ways and lay the foundation for a growing interest and responsibility in the children to actively participate in society and for sustainable development ...

The education should give the children the opportunity to develop their capacity for empathy and concern for others by encouraging and strengthening their compassion and empathy for other people's situations. ... It should give the children the opportunity to reflect on and share their thoughts on life issues in different ways.

The preschool must encourage the children to bring forward their thoughts and ideas and create the conditions for this. The children's opinions must be taken into account in education and they must be given the opportunity to form their own opinions and make choices based on their own circumstances. In this way, the children can develop confidence in their own abilities and become involved and exert influence over the education.

The education must take its starting point from the curriculum and what the children show interest in, as well as from the knowledge and experiences that the children have acquired in the past. It must continuously challenge the children further by inspiring new discoveries and knowledge.

Education in preschool must lay the foundation for lifelong learning. It should be fun, safe and educational for all children. The education must be based on a holistic view of children and their needs, where care, development and learning form a whole. In collaboration with the homes, the

preschool shall promote the children's development into active, creative, competent and responsible people and members of society.

The education includes teaching. Teaching involves stimulating and challenging the children with the curriculum's goals as a starting point and direction, and aims for development and learning in the children. Teaching must be based on content that is planned or arises spontaneously because children's development and learning take place all the time.

Language, learning and identity development are closely related. The preschool must therefore place great emphasis on stimulating the children's language development in Swedish, by encouraging and making use of their curiosity and interest in communicating in different ways. The children must be offered a stimulating environment where they are given the conditions to develop their language by listening to reading aloud and talking about literature and other texts. The education should give the children the conditions to be able to think, learn and communicate in different contexts and for different purposes. In this way, the foundation is laid for the children to eventually acquire the knowledge that everyone in society needs. The ability to communicate, seek new knowledge and collaborate is necessary in a society characterized by a large flow of information and continuous change.

The children must be given time, space and peace for their own creation. They should have the opportunity to explore, reflect on and describe their surroundings. The education should give the children the opportunity to experience, portray and communicate through various aesthetic forms of expression such as image, form, drama, movement, song, music and dance. This includes that the children should have the opportunity to construct, shape and create by using different materials and technologies, both digital and other. In this way, creation is both a content and a method in preschool to promote children's development and learning.

Compiled by Sightlines Initiative 2023

**All children deserve
education which
champions their
inborn curiosity,
intelligence &
creativity ...**



"School is not at all like billiards. When you play billiards you push the ball with a certain force and it hits the table and bounces off; there's a definite way the ball will go, depending on force and direction. Children are not at all like this, predictable. But sometimes schools function as if they were; these are schools with no joy."

Loris Malaguzzi 1993