

Respectful Relationships Action Plan:

Respectful Relationships Action Plan – Early Childhood

1. Leadership and Commitment:

Benchmarks: There is strong leadership support and a shared commitment to creating policies and practices that promote mental health and wellbeing.

Leadership and commitment NQS – QA 5&6	What <i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	How <i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	Achievement milestones <i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>
We have a mental health and wellbeing policy that complies with Achievement Program requirements.	<p><i>Example: Our centre will create a policy that clearly states our commitment to promoting gender equality, and the importance of gender equality in healthy childhood development and wellbeing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council has a policy re: Mental Health and Wellbeing which our service plans to look at and redevelop a centre policy that complies with The Achievement Program requirements. ○ Update parent handbook to ensure it is gender equitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff time ○ Consultation with leadership to follow service procedures in updating or creating a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy ○ Share draft policy with all families for feedback prior to ratification ○ Use Achievement Program policy toolkit to draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy or update current MH&WB policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy now updated to incorporate language that supports gender equality

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2. Healthy physical environment

Benchmarks: The buildings, facilities and practices support mental health and wellbeing.

<p align="center">Healthy physical environment</p> <p align="center">NQS – QA 5</p>	<p align="center">What</p> <p align="center"><i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i></p>	<p align="center">How</p> <p align="center"><i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i></p>	<p align="center">Achievement milestones</p> <p align="center"><i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i></p>
<p>Our outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, play equipment, resources and access to the natural environment are welcoming and reflect the diversity and interest of the community.</p>	<p>Example: <i>Our centre will review the areas of our rooms to see if all children are using all the available spaces (i.e. home corner, block corner, dress up area), and develop strategies to alter the areas that are dominated by one gender in order to welcome all children to use the spaces</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dramatic Plan Audit ○ Experience Audit ○ Fabric (instead of dress/shirt – keep non-restrictive) ○ Real life example includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every year we send out feedback forms to our parents to include them in the decision making of the set up and running of our service such as <i>What resources would you like to see implemented within the centre?</i> ○ A number of families commented on what they wanted their children to dress up in for example a specific superhero. <i>Feedback:</i> However, one family reported that they were generally happy with what we currently provided but wanted to see more open-ended costumes as there was little opportunity for children to branch out in self-directed imaginative play with the current resources available to them. ○ Families were updated through our newsletter – this is what we have observed with these new resources and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Photos of inclusive practices ○ Observation of children engaging in different ways ○ Reflecting different practices ○ Welcome (in different languages) to be added to our centre foyer where everyone can see it ○ Each room carried out an audit of their dress up stations taking into account: colours of the dress up materials, what was there, what was being used the most and by which gender – we found that children’s choices were actually being restricted by gender stereotypical costumes. Eg. If boys expressed, they wanted to be a doctor but the stethoscope was pink then the boys didn’t want to use it because it was pink. ○ Now we have introduced open ended materials. ○ Educators now source materials from their local OP shop. Neutral colours are used only. The results have been incredible and all the children now use all of the materials. Without the children actually telling us this we could see if for ourselves that the children were now able to dress up in all materials available and not avoiding a specific piece because of the colour. ○ We set up a <i>Resource Rescue Station</i> – A rescue box where recycled materials are donated by families and used by the children to engage in imaginative play. For example a simple can of milo is used a musical instrument – a drum. Gives the child a sense of empowerment and doesn’t constrict their own identity. ○ We have girls who also want to be a robot. A box is neutral and allows children feel safe and use their own imagination in what they want to be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When engagement includes children of both genders ○ Since making this change management observed an increased understanding of gender equality, importance of non-specific gender roles and the role we play in guiding children. ○ Self-expression is vital for children. Children do not have to conform to what society expects of them but are allowed to express their individuality through imaginative play. Opens up opportunities for learning and opportunistic intentional teaching. ○ Early Childhood play a significant role in influencing children’s learning to see their potential to be themselves. We want all our children to engage in risky and boisterous play. ○ We are re-evaluating our curriculum to ensure we are involving the children more in hearing their voice in guiding us what they would like to play with.

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<p>Our indoor and outdoor learning environments encourage healthy social interactions and age appropriate risk taking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage children in obstacle course – support all children to participate in various activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cooking (understanding risky tasks – heat /cutting) ○ Exposing children to wide range of risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Obstacle course materials ○ Cooking equipment ○ Staff time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trying something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>'All about me'</i>

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3. Healthy Culture

Benchmark: Support for mental health and wellbeing is embedded in the service’s culture and is communicated in a respectful and inclusive way.

Healthy culture	What	How	Achievement milestones
NQS – QA 5 & 6 VEYLDF – P 4	<i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	<i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	<i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>
We promote a culture of respect, fairness and equity.	<p><i>Example: Our educators will respectfully challenge children’s statements that exclude others based on gender i.e “he can’t wear that because it’s for girls” or “she can’t play with us because it’s boys only”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parent information areas set up to promote “non-bias” ○ Audit of current resources as part of home corner play area to make it more open ended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audits of practice on the floor ● Audits of resources ● Discussions, questions of the monthly information emailed to families ● Removal of stereotypical outfits in favour of open-ended materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children are seen to be more fluid in their play ● Discussions are more open ended ● Children feel less pressure to feel they have to play with something
We support children, educators, staff and families to have conversations about mental health and wellbeing.	<p><i>Example: Our staff will actively encourage all children to acknowledge and name their emotions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will utilise the Early Years Learning Framework to guide our service to successfully embed the importance of teaching social and emotional skills to our children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educators to actively encourage all children to participate in meaningful relationships and contribute to group play ○ All educators to use teachable moments to listen and to talk with children who express disruptive and disrespectful behaviours and talk to them about how they are feeling and ways to express their feelings and needs. ○ Staff to make a meaningful relationship with each child in their care so they feel safe and valued —this is the context for successful teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children feel supported and safe within their setting. We acknowledge that Children who have good feelings about themselves and about others and who know how to express their emotions and relate to others will be more effective learners and achievers.
We implement strategies to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to hurtful and unsafe behaviours.	<p><i>Example: Our educators will use group time role-play scenarios to help children develop positive behaviours and social awareness</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Embed social and emotional teachings and learnings into our curriculum ○ Staff supported to attend PD to support children with challenging behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children who show signs of isolation, disruptive behaviours and disrespect are supported by an evidence-based framework, highly skilled staff in a planned supported setting to enhance their social awareness skills and the importance of respect for their peers.

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4. Child teaching and learning:

Benchmark: Mental health and wellbeing messages are embedded in the curriculum through formal and informal learning opportunities.

Child teaching and learning	What	How	Achievement milestones
NQS – QA 5 & 6 VEYLDF – P 4 & 5	<i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	<i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	<i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>
<p>We guide children to develop and practice social and emotional skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Self-management • Social awareness • Relationship skills • Responsible decision making • Embracing diversity 	<p><i>Example: Our educators will use group storytelling and role play activities to combat gender stereotyping and build children’s understanding of gender equality- i.e. stories that subvert traditional gender stereotypes- dad stays at home to care for the baby, female police officer, male nurse</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a wider range of books and puzzles available for all areas in particular books that do not promote gender stereotypes ○ Consider play areas ie. ‘home corner’ – how can we make this more of a neutral space for all children ○ Provide more books on emotion and how to express emotions ○ Routine books for children ○ Diversity in dress ups and being more neutral ○ More education/PD for educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget for purchasing new materials ○ Promote Beyond Sparkles and Superheroes booklist to families ○ Promote Stories Beyond Stereotypes booklist to families ○ Budget for staff time and PD’s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can find books that breaks down stereotypes and are gender neutral ○ Educators being comfortable and confident in working with children with role plays

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5. Supported staff and educators

Benchmark: Staff and educators have access to resources and support for their own mental health and wellbeing.

Supported staff and educators NQS – QA 4 & 7	What <i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	How <i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	Achievement milestones <i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>
<p>Through leadership and on the ground support we create an environment that minimises stress and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for our staff.</p>	<p><i>Example: Our management will maintain a consistent response to supporting all staff responding to parental concerns or resistance around the promotion of gender equality i.e. “everything in the centre is for everyone to use”, “dressing up is an important part of your child’s creative development and self-expression”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently we use EAP (Employee Assisted Program) which is available to all staff ○ Regular catch up meetings with Coordinator ○ Open conversations and management to provide support ○ Professional development opportunities for educators ○ Training is reflected through RADAR goals for each staff member ○ Recognition of staff achievements /families /children ○ Staff handbook ○ Parent handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Service budget to support staff to attend PD ○ Regular supervision scheduled with management and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff feel trusted and supported within their working environment.

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6. Families and community partnerships

Benchmarks: Families, the service community and expert organisations are engaged in the promotion and implementation of mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

Families and community partnerships NQS – QA 2 & 6 VEYLDF – P 1	What <i>Activities and programs to progress the key improvement strategies</i>	How <i>Budget, equipment, IT, learning time, learning space</i>	Achievement milestones <i>Changes in practice or behaviours</i>
<p>Our service has clear referral options and pathways for children, staff and families to access support services for mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p><i>Example: All staff will know how to contact EDVOS for advice if they have any concerns regarding actual or suspected family violence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EAP service now available – staff know how to access this ○ Be You service – Staff are aware of this and know how to access their resources ○ Up to date notice board for local services ○ Linking with MCH services ○ Network locally to learn of local services to support children staff and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff from Be You might be able to present to staff ○ Be aware and up to date of local networks and resources/research being conducted in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff report directly to management that they feel supported within their workplace