

CEWA Position Statement

# Early Years Learning and Care



**CATHOLIC EDUCATION**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA





**Catholic Education Western Australia cherishes each child as a precious and sacred gift from God, created as an individual, with their own unique gifts and talents.**

The research that underpins the understanding within Catholic Education Western Australia, is that the time from conception to eight years of age, is widely acknowledged as a period of rapid brain development and therefore vital for growth and learning. All experiences during this period are considered to be critical, impacting both on the here and now and into the child’s future.

The family is recognised as the child’s first and most influential educator and is valued as a partner in their education and care. Catholic Education Western Australia respects the history, culture, language and traditions of all families and communities. Families are welcomed, respected and actively encouraged to work in partnership with educators. Partnerships are based on an understanding of expectations, values and attitudes that build on the strengths of each other’s knowledge. The rich and diverse culture of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, which is central to their lives, is valued and acknowledged by all.

Within Catholic Education Western Australia, educators are dedicated to their own learning and that of others. They provide for holistic learning, based on understandings of early child development and implemented through appropriate early years pedagogy. They recognise learning occurs within a social context with children engaged in purposeful interactions with both peers and educators, as they take time to make sense of their world.

Educators support individual growth through a seamless blend of focussed and intentional teaching within a play-based learning environment. They are deliberate and reflective in planning, documenting and evaluating children’s progress whilst ensuring that they scaffold the learning to support individual development. The learning experiences reflect the local culture alongside each child’s interests and abilities.

Children are welcomed into a caring and stimulating environment where educators give witness to Catholic beliefs, values and attitudes. The environment is carefully planned to engage children in creative and sustained shared thinking and learning experiences that immerse them in discovering the joy and wonder of the world around them.

Children’s spiritual, physical, cognitive, linguistic, creative, social and emotional growth is nurtured as they form respectful and reciprocal relationships. Children are encouraged to develop a positive image of themselves and others as they are supported to live out our gospel values.

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## Living out our Philosophy

**Spiritual:** Catholic schools and care settings are by their very nature places where parents choose to send their children because of the promulgation of our Catholic faith. The gospel values form the basis of our being and the children are supported to develop their spirituality within the Catholic world view.

**Image of the Child:** Children are competent and capable human beings, who from birth construct meaning, knowledge, identity, culture and values within a co-constructed explorative and shared decision making process.

**Agency:** Children make choices and decisions that influence events that have an impact on their learning. They recognise their agency and capacity to initiate and lead learning and their rights to participate in decisions that affect them.

**Curriculum:** Curriculum in the early childhood setting means all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines, rituals and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development.

**Scaffold:** The educators' decisions, actions and questioning, support children to build on their existing knowledge and extend their understandings to enhance their learning.

**Brain Development:** Learning is a natural process of exploration that individuals engage in from birth as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early Learning experiences are closely linked to brain development and provide the solid foundations necessary for future growth. Planned and spontaneous learning experiences support children to obtain and construct knowledge through an integrated approach, which provide opportunities to engage, imagine, explore, create and problem solve.

**Developmental Learning:** Educators have a thorough knowledge of each individual child's strengths, abilities and development, which enables them to respond to children's capabilities and provide ongoing support. Through observations and interactions with children, educators gather data on what children know, can do and understand, in order to make informed and knowledgeable decisions about their strengths and capabilities.

**Learning environment:** The learning environment is considered to be the 'Third Teacher'. The environment is safe, inclusive and predictable with flexible spaces that cater for children's developmental needs within indoor and outdoor spaces.

**Intentional Teaching:** Intentional teaching involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions and in planning the learning environment. Decisions are made, based on the understanding of the child development, with focus on engaging children in experiences that enable them to think creatively, problem solve, investigate, explore and imagine in a meaningful context.

**Pedagogy:** Pedagogy refers to the early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning. In the early years, all pedagogy needs to be developmentally appropriate and engage children to think creatively, problem solve, investigate, explore and imagine in meaningful context.





Catholic Primary School



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**Play-based Pedagogy:** Play-based pedagogy provides a meaningful context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their world, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations. Through play children explore, imagine, create, negotiate, investigate and come to understand their social standing and place in their world. Within this environment, educator's decisions and actions build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.

**Literacy:** In the early years, literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, story telling, visual arts, media and drama as well as talking, reading and writing.

**Numeracy:** In the early years, numeracy includes understandings about mathematical language, thinking and reasoning. Engagement with concrete representation builds understandings about numbers, patterns, measurement and spatial awareness which support children's understanding of the mathematical world.

**Wellbeing:** Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience. Educators' practices and the relationships they form with families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning. Children thrive when families and educators work together to support their learning.

**Technology:** In the early years, technology is utilised as a tool to enhance learning in order to develop a deeper level of understanding.

## References

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