

# Code of Ethics

**In this Code of Ethics the protection and wellbeing of children is paramount, and therefore speaking out or taking action in the presence of unethical practice is an essential professional responsibility.**

## I. In relation to children, I will:

1. Act in the best interests of all children.
2. Respect the rights of children as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and commit to advocating for these rights.
3. Recognise children as active citizens participating in different communities such as family, children's services and schools.
4. Work with children to help them understand that they are global citizens with shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity.
5. Respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this perspective in all my interactions with children.
6. Create and maintain safe, healthy environments, spaces and places, which enhance children's learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth, dignity and show respect for their contributions.
7. Work to ensure children and families with additional needs can exercise their rights.
8. Acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of all children, in recognition that enjoying their childhood without undue pressure is important.
9. Acknowledge the holistic nature of children's learning and the significance of children's cultural and linguistic identities.
10. Work to ensure children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin.
11. Acknowledge children as competent learners, and build active communities of engagement and inquiry.
12. Honour children's right to play, as both a process and context for learning.

## II. In relation to families, I will:

1. Listen to and learn from families, in order to acknowledge and build upon their strengths and competencies, and support them in their role of nurturing children.
2. Assist each family to develop a sense of belonging and inclusion.
3. Develop positive relationships based on mutual trust and open communication.
4. Develop partnerships with families and engage in shared decision making where appropriate.
5. Acknowledge the rights of families to make decisions about their children.
6. Respect the uniqueness of each family and strive to learn about their culture, structure, lifestyle, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems.
7. Develop shared planning, monitoring and assessment practices for children's learning and communicate this in ways that families understand.
8. Acknowledge that each family is affected by the community contexts in which they engage.
9. Be sensitive to the vulnerabilities of children and families and respond in ways that empower and maintain the dignity of all children and families.
10. Maintain confidentiality and respect the right of the family to privacy.

## III. In relation to colleagues, I will:

1. Encourage my colleagues to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours.
2. Build collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty.
3. Acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional experience and diversity which my colleagues bring to their work.
4. Make every effort to use constructive methods to manage differences of opinion in the spirit of collegiality.
5. Share and build knowledge, experiences and resources with my colleagues.
6. Collaborate with my colleagues to generate a culture of continual reflection and renewal of high-quality practices in early childhood.

## IV. In relation to communities, I will:

1. Learn about the communities that I work within and enact curriculum programs which are responsive to those contexts and community priorities.
2. Connect with people, services and agencies within the communities that support children and families.
3. Promote shared aspirations amongst communities in order to enhance children's health and wellbeing.
4. Advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote child-friendly communities and work to change those that work against child and family wellbeing.
5. Utilise knowledge and research to advocate for universal access to a range of high-quality early childhood programs for all children.
6. Work to promote community understanding of how children learn, in order that appropriate systems of assessment and reporting are used to benefit children.





## V. In relation to students, I will:

1. Afford professional opportunities and resources for students to demonstrate their competencies.
2. Acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional knowledge, diversity and experience which students bring to the learning environment.
3. Model high-quality professional practices.
4. Know the requirements of the students' individual institutions and communicate openly with the representatives of that institution.
5. Provide ongoing constructive feedback and assessment that is fair and equitable.
6. Implement strategies that will empower students to make positive contributions to the workplace.
7. Maintain confidentiality in relation to students.

## VI. In relation to my employer, I will:

1. Support workplace policies, standards and practices that are fair, non-discriminatory and are in the best interests of children and families.
2. Promote and support ongoing professional development within my work team.
3. Adhere to lawful policies and procedures and, when there is conflict, attempt to effect change through constructive action within the organisation or seek change through appropriate procedures.

## VII. In relation to myself as a professional, I will:

1. Base my work on contemporary perspectives on research, theory, content knowledge, high-quality early childhood practices and my understandings of the children and families with whom I work.
2. Regard myself as a learner who undertakes reflection, critical self-study, continuing professional development and engages with contemporary theory and practice.
3. Seek and build collaborative professional relationships.
4. Acknowledge the power dimensions within professional relationships.
5. Act in ways that advance the interests and standing of my profession.
6. Work within the limits of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
7. Mentor other early childhood professionals and students.
8. Advocate in relation to issues that impact on my profession and on young children and their families.
9. Encourage qualities and practices of leadership within the early childhood profession.



## VIII. In relation to the conduct of research, I will:

1. Recognise that research includes my routine documentation and investigations of children's learning and development, as well as more formal research projects undertaken with and by external bodies.
2. Be responsive to children's participation in research, negotiating their involvement taking account of matters such as safety, fatigue, privacy and their interest.
3. Support research to strengthen and expand the knowledge base of early childhood, and where possible, initiate, contribute to, facilitate and disseminate such research.
4. Make every effort to understand the purpose and value of proposed research projects and make informed decisions as to the participation of myself, colleagues, children, families and communities.
5. Ensure research in which I am involved meets standard ethical procedures including informed consent, opportunity to withdraw and confidentiality.
6. Ensure that images of children and other data are only collected with informed consent and are stored and utilised according to legislative and policy requirements.
7. Represent the findings of all research accurately.

The Early Childhood Australia *Code of Ethics* (2006) was developed by a national working party consisting of Lennie Barblett (Convenor), John Buckell, Sandra Cheeseman, Margaret Clyde, Lyn Fasoli, Catharine Hydon, Anne Kennedy, Elizabeth Dau, Linda Newman, Lois Pollnitz, Gillian Styles, Louise Thomas, Laura Eiszele and Christine Woodrow.

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Mackay, H. (2004). *Right & wrong: How to decide for yourself*. Sydney: Hodder.

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