GUIDE TO READING AND USING

TASMANIA’S STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN

CHILDREN THRIVING IN STRONG, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

This Strategy outlines shared purpose and practices for all Tasmanian service providers that focus on improving the education, health and wellbeing outcomes of children from pregnancy to eight years.
Why Tasmania needs a Strategy for Children

Extensive research shows that continuing to invest in the early years is the key to helping our youngest children and their families reach their full potential (Jackson et al., 2015 & Lamb et al., 2015). The research demonstrating the importance of high quality early experiences for raising a child’s future life outcomes is unequivocal (OECD, 2011). Neuroscience provides strong evidence that early experiences in life shape a child’s future, particularly in relation to their health and learning outcomes. Key actions that support optimal brain development and positive futures for young children include protecting them from adverse social and environmental conditions and building the capacities of people, in their role as parents and carers, particularly, for children and families who are experiencing disadvantage or vulnerability. The research also shows that through supportive relationships children can grow and thrive (The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2017).

With high levels of social disadvantage and vulnerability in Tasmanian communities, compared to other states and territories, the provision of high quality early childhood experiences and family support is essential (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, Philips et al., 2015 & Vinson et al., 2015). We know that getting it right in the early years means getting it right for life. Working together, across services and communities for quality, equity and partnerships for all young children, is everyone’s business.

The Strategy for Children - Pregnancy to Eight Years has been developed in recognition of the extensive research, in response to the Tasmanian context and is directly linked to the Government’s policy priority of lifting education outcomes for all Tasmanian children. Co-construction of the Strategy, through extensive engagement and collaboration, with a mix of government and non-government school educators together with early childhood education and care professionals, parents and community members, has created a powerful platform to support all young children in Tasmania to thrive and prosper in strong, connected communities.

The development of the Strategy was grounded on Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model, placing the child at the centre and impacting influences on the child’s development surrounding the child (Day et al. 2015). Platforms – A Service Redevelopment Framework was used as a guide to develop the strategy and The Family Partnership Model supported the building of respectful relationships during the process (Centre for Community Child Health, 2010 & Day et al. 2010). The Strategy is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The ideal conditions for achieving the vision of Children Thriving in Strong Connected Communities
are divided into the five key areas of children, families, communities, environments and service providers and are underpinned by the pillars of Quality, Equity and Partnerships.

The Strategy can be used universally, across agencies and communities, to provide quality provision for improving the education, health and wellbeing outcomes of children from pregnancy to eight years in Tasmania.
How to read Tasmania’s Strategy for Children

**What guides us:** The strategy is guided and underpinned by United Nations *Conventions on the Rights of the Child*. This Convention sets out the rights of all children and young people under the age of 18. “Rights” are things every child should have or be able to do. All children have the same rights (United Nations n.d.).

**What we are aiming for:** To achieve the vision we are aiming for the ideal conditions for Tasmania’s young children to thrive. These are grouped into five essential areas – Children, Families, Communities, Environments and Service Providers.

**What we will focus on:** The strategy is supported by three pillars of Quality, Equity and Partnerships. These pillars are the drivers that support the development of the necessary environments for children to thrive. These are the broad outcomes for how we will work towards achieving the overarching vision – Children thriving in strong, connected communities.

**How will we know?** The measurement framework will assess the effectiveness of the strategy and inform future planning process. The framework is broad to capture education, health and wellbeing of children. The assessment tools and evaluation measures identified will be developed.
Service Providers Strategy for Children – Action Plan, are developed by early years’ service providers in line with their service’s context, policies and identified priorities with line of sight back to Tasmania’s Strategy for Children in the areas of ‘What guides us’ and ‘What we will focus on’.

How to read Service Providers Strategy for Children

What guides us: each service provider inserts their agency’s Frameworks and relevant National Law and Act

What we will focus on 2018–2021: From the Tasmanian Strategy for Children – What will we focus on (outcomes) each service provider will develop their own actions in line with their priorities.

How will we know? Service providers use relevant measures and tools to evaluate their actions, ultimately achieving the aims and vision of Tasmania Strategy for Children.
Appendix

1. Glossary

Agency: being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one’s world (Council of Australian Governments, 2009, p.45)

Children’s voice: when children are able to not only express an opinion or choice (verbally or non-verbally), but have the opinion or choice honoured and have an impact, they see themselves as someone whose views and opinions matter (Gowrie South Australia, 2015)

Communities: social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights and responsibilities and/or other bonds. ‘Communities’ is used variously to refer, for example, to the community within early childhood settings, extended kinships, the local geographic community and broader Australian society (Council of Australian Governments, 2009, p.45).

Developmental domains: As related to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), developmental domains include physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication skills and general knowledge (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017).

Diversity: understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies (Queensborough Community College, 2016)

Environments: includes the surrounding things, conditions, or influences; surroundings; milieu and ecology as well as the social and cultural forces that shape the life of a person or a population (Dictionary.com, 2016) but not restricted to: physical, cultural, social, relational, emotional, geographical, political and aesthetic environments.

Evidence: the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid (Oxford University Press, 2017)

Families: a social unit consisting of one or more adults with the children they care for (Dictionary.com, 2016).
National Quality Framework: raises quality and drives continuous improvement and consistency in Australian Early Childhood Education and Care services.

The National Quality Standard (NQS): is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and sets a high, national benchmark for early childhood education in Australia.

Partnerships: a relationship which strives for balance, equity and mutual respect and in which information, power and responsibility are shared by two or more...persons (Farlex, 2017)

Pedagogy: early childhood educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching and learning (Council of Australian Governments, 2009, p.45).

Research: diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover or revise facts, theories, applications (Dictionary.com, 2016)

Risk: providing challenge and risk for children within a framework of security and safety (Warden, 2012, p.15)

Safe: free from harm, injury, danger or risk that hinders physical, emotional or social development

Service providers: provision of services by individuals, business, or organisations to support children and families

Transitions: the process of moving between home and childhood settings, between a range of different early childhood settings, or from childhood settings to full time school (Council of Australian Governments, 2009, p.45)
A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

1. Every child has the right to live. The law should protect them from abuse against their will. This means that the government and their family are responsible for their safety.

2. The Convention applies to every child, regardless of race, religion, country, or any other type of family they may have.

3. It aims to ensure that every child is treated with respect and dignity.

4. Governments should ensure that every child has the right to have a voice.

5. Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of children to get the education they need, and to have access to healthcare.

6. Children have the right to be free from any form of violence, and to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

7. Governments should protect children from any form of violence, and to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

8. Children have the right to have their opinions heard.

9. Governments should ensure that every child has the right to be protected from violence, and to have access to healthcare.

10. Children have the right to a safe, healthy, and supportive environment.

11. Governments should protect children from any form of violence, and to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

12. Children have the right to education, and to have access to healthcare.

13. Governments should ensure that every child has the right to be protected from violence, and to have access to healthcare.

14. Children have the right to have their opinions heard.

15. Governments should protect children from any form of violence, and to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

16. Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from abuse against their will. This means that the government and their family are responsible for their safety.

17. Every child has the right to be free from any form of violence, and to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

18. Governments should protect children from any form of violence, and to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

19. Children have the right to live in peace and freedom from any form of violence, and to have access to healthcare.

20. Governments should ensure that every child has the right to be protected from violence, and to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

21. Children have the right to have their opinions heard.

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations in 1989. It outlines the rights of children around the world, and provides a framework for governments to protect and promote these rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world, with over 193 countries that have signed and ratified it. The Convention stresses the importance of children being treated with respect and dignity, and highlights the need for governments to ensure that children have access to education, healthcare, and protection from abuse. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is a powerful tool for promoting the rights of children, and it is essential that governments around the world continue to work to ensure that children are protected and respected.
References


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