

Lutheran Church of Australia

**Policy Statement for
Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care**

1) Definition

Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care refers to those services which:

- a) provide for children from birth to eight years of age in a variety of settings
- b) are conducted under the auspices of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) and,
- c) include education, nurture and care

2) Rationale

Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care is part of the LCA's ministry and mission in Australian communities, and is based on the Word of God and the confessions of the Lutheran Church. It is a recognition that early environments are critical elements in children's life-long development and in their endeavour to realize their God-given potential. It is a specific ministry of the Church to provide education, nurture and care for the individual child in a social-learning environment.

3) Christian ministry through Early Childhood Education and Care

Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care offers best practice service that is developmentally appropriate for each child, through a constructivist approach to learning. All who serve in Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care, as well as being qualified and highly competent in their work, will be committed to the Christian faith as confessed by the Lutheran Church, be willing to identify with, uphold and promote the Lutheran ethos and model a Christian lifestyle in, and beyond, the individual service. They are accountable to the relevant service authority and the Church.

Quality of care for all children, regardless of class or creed, is of the highest priority and integral to the expression of Christian love.

4) Partnership with families

Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care services operate on the basis that:

- a) a child's primary relations are with members of his/her family
- b) the family is part of the order of creation and is basic to society
- c) the family has primary responsibility for a child's education but may require support in fulfilling that responsibility
- d) family structures have many different forms
- e) families seeking to enrol their children in Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care commit themselves to actively support the stated aims and purposes of a particular service
- f) families with children so enrolled participate in the work of the service in a variety of ways

5) Partnerships with community

The nature Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care requires a high level of cooperation among its community. To enrich and enhance the education, nurture and care offered, it is necessary for a service to interact closely with its community, which will include all or some of the following:

- a) service staff
- b) families
- c) congregation and pastor
- d) governing body

- e) neighbouring education and care facilities
- f) community services
- g) district and national offices of Lutheran Education Australia (LEA)

6) Relationships with government authorities

Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care accepts financial support from state and Australian governments, which is in addition to the contribution of fees paid by families. Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care abides by Australian and state government legislative and other requirements as applicable to individual service types.

7) Principles for best practice Early Childhood Education and Care

Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care seeks to:

- a) integrate Christian beliefs into daily operations
- b) build a sense of community in and between Early Childhood Education and Care providers
- c) maintain an early childhood identity through philosophy and principles
- d) heighten the profile of Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care within and outside of the LCA
- e) view Early Childhood Education as part of a holistic approach to children's development and learning
- f) provide Christian ministry and service to children in their care and their families
- g) through servant leadership empower others to reach their full potential
- h) pursue excellence in education and care
- i) expand the base of interaction through networking with relevant government bodies, industrial and community organisations and Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care providers
- j) provide a network of back up services for families and staff
- k) build bridges into the community and create a strong working relationship with the sponsoring body