

Policy Statement for Lutheran School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care

1) Definition

Lutheran School-Aged and 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 and/or provide for children of school age outside of formal school hours
- b) are conducted under the auspices of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) and,
- c) include education, nurture and care

2) Rationale

Lutheran School-Aged and 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 safe early learning environments are critical elements in children's life-long development, in their endeavour to realize their God-given potential and in supporting families outside of formal school hours

3) Christian ministry through School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care

Lutheran School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care offers best practice education through a child-centred approach to learning. All who serve in School-Aged and Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care will be willing to identify with, uphold and promote the Lutheran ethos and model a Christian lifestyle. Staff in Lutheran School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care will fulfil the relevant accreditation requirements of Lutheran Church of Australia.

Quality education and care for all children is 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 relationships are with members of his/her family
- b) families can be made up in many different ways
- c) the family has primary responsibility for a child's education but may seek support in fulfilling that responsibility
- d) families seeking to enrol their children in Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care commit to supporting the stated aims and purposes of a particular service
- e) families with children so enrolled are encouraged to participate in the work of the service in a variety of ways

5) Partnerships with community

The nature of 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) LEA and regional offices

6) Relationships with relevant authorities

Lutheran School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care Services may receive financial support from a variety of sources including state and federal governments as well as family contributions. Lutheran Early Childhood Education and Care Services abide by state and federal government legislative and other requirements as applicable to individual service types.

Services are accountable to LEA and regional offices, the relevant service authority, and the State/territory regulatory authority.

7) Principles for best practice School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care

Lutheran School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care seeks to:

- a) model Christian beliefs and practices in daily operations
- b) maintain services which achieve the standards required by the National Quality Framework, ensuring all services continually raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency
- 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 and care as part of a holistic approach to a child's development and learning
- f) provide Christian ministry and service to children and their families
- g) empower individuals to reach their full potential
- h) pursue excellence in all aspects of education and care
- i) explore and develop networking opportunities with relevant government and non-government bodies and Lutheran School-Aged and Early Childhood Education and Care services
- j) provide information about community support services for families and staff
- k) create a strong working relationship with the local Lutheran congregation/s and local Lutheran school/s
- l) build a sense of community