

# Orientation to Vacation Care

## Self-Guided Learning Package

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## About Self-Guided Learning Packages

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Self-Guided Learning Packages can be completed in your own time and convenience and offer an alternative to attending training sessions. This package aims to develop skills and knowledge that will be valuable to you in providing quality education and care programs. Packages are often used for professional development by staff teams, networks and other groups of children's services professionals. You can work through the package with colleagues by reading the package together, discussing the information and collaborating to complete the one assessment task.

Gowrie Victoria Leadership and Learning Consultants are available to support you while working through the package. Feel free to phone or email if you require any assistance completing the tasks within the package. Phone 1800 103 670 (freecall) or (03) 9347 6388 or email [psc@gowrievictoria.org.au](mailto:psc@gowrievictoria.org.au)

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# Orientation to Vacation Care

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You have chosen to complete the Orientation to Vacation Care package. The aim of this package is to provide information to new or potential Vacation Care Educators. It provides an introduction to the skills and knowledge that will be valuable in running or working in a successful Vacation Care Program.

## Introduction

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Vacation Care programs offer an important service for families within the community. Not only do they provide a safe place for children when parents/guardians are working or studying, they also provide a fun and memorable time for children during their holidays with opportunities to try out new experiences, go to new places and meet new friends.

Vacation Care programs aim to:

- Meet the needs of parents/guardians who are working, studying or looking for work
- Provide quality programs which include supervised play and recreational experiences appropriate for school-age children
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in leisure and play-based learning which is responsive to the needs, interests, and choices, and contribute fully to their ongoing development
- uphold all children's rights to have their cultures, identities, abilities and strengths acknowledged and valued

The Vacation Care Educators are the 'face' of the program. They have the contact with the families and children and can ensure the children have an enjoyable and fulfilling time. Working on a Vacation Care program can be an exciting and rewarding job.

Whilst Vacation Care programs run as an OSHC licensed service, it is also usual for Vacation Care to occur in home based settings, being Family Day Care and In Home Care.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Vacation Care Educators

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Vacation Care Educators have a vital role to play in ensuring children receive high quality care and experiences. They need to ensure the program operates effectively and safely, so Educators and children have fun and enjoy themselves.

Vacation Care Educators are responsible for the children while they are at the program and need to:

- Follow all rules and regulations of the service
- Establish and apply appropriate guidelines that encourage positive behaviour
- Guide and supervise experiences and implement daily routines
- Ensure that all possible precautions are taken to avoid accidents
- Assist in planning, implementation and evaluation of a program to meet the needs of all children in attendance
- Communicate effectively with other Educators

**The Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the Victorian Children's Services legislation.**

The Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) provide the policy and planning advice for the delivery of education and early childhood development in the state of Victoria. DEECD licenses, regulates and manages a range of education and early childhood services

within Victoria, using the Children's Services Act 1996 and the Children's Services Regulations 2009. All Victorian services which provide care or education for 4 or more children who are under the age of 13 years in the absence of their parents or guardians for fee or reward, are required to hold a licence (Children's Services Act 1996, s3.1 and s7).

## **Ratios**

### *Onsite*

OSHC Services are required to follow the Educators to child ratios, being 1 Educator to a maximum of 15 children when at the program premises, however 2 Educators must be in attendance at all times unless an exemption has been granted on the regulated minimum Educators' requirement through DEECD.

### *Home Based Services*

Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) Educators must be registered with a licensed and approved service. They are allowed to educate and care for up to 7 children at any one time, of which up to 4 can be preschool children.

### *Excursions and Risk Assessment Requirements:*

The Educator-to-child ratios (regulations 53, 54, 55 and 56) prescribe the minimum number of Educators required to care for or educate children. However, meeting these ratios may not always be sufficient to provide adequate supervision in all children's services. Educator-to-child ratios for an excursion need to be carefully considered in relation to the experiences that children will be involved in, the hazards these experiences present, and how the hazards are going to be controlled or eliminated.

Working through risk assessment procedures will assist in determining an Educator-to-child ratio that allows for adequate supervision while on the excursion or routine outing, and provide evidence of your decision. *Regulation 74 of the Children's Services Regulations 2009*; prescribes that the proprietor of a service must ensure that a risk assessment is conducted to determine whether there is adequate adult supervision for the excursion or routine outing, before Educators take a child outside the premises at which the children's service is provided. In a Family Day Care service, this responsibility also extends to the individual Educator.

From January 2012, the National Quality Framework (NQF) will formally commence. As part of the NQF, the Education and Care Services National Law (2010) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations will replace the Victorian legislation and regulations. In Victoria, the ratios covering vacation care programs will not alter from the current requirements. It is also a requirement of Quality Area 4.1.1 of the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care that the 'Educator-to-child ratios (including qualification requirements) are maintained at all times' (2009, p18).

## **Safety and Supervision**

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*NQS 2.3.1: 'Children are adequately supervised at all times' (National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, 2009, p14).*

*NQS 2.3.2: 'Reasonable steps are taken to identify and manage risks, and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazards' (National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, 2009, p14).*

*NQS 2.3.3: 'Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented' (National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, 2009, p14).*

Safety is a basic need for everyone. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* hold safety to be one of every child's rights (United National General Assembly, 1990, a3.3). To feel safe is to feel welcome, comfortable and non-threatened. The Vacation Care environment should feel safe for the Educators, children and

families. The safety of all children is of utmost importance. Educators must do whatever they can to ensure that the children are safe at all times. This can be a huge responsibility but if Educators supervise the children effectively, know what is happening at all times, and follow the rules of the program they will drastically reduce the chances of accidents happening. The safety of the children can be affected by:

- Ensuring Educator-to-child ratios are adhered to
- The level of supervision that the Educators are offering
- The policies and procedures of the service and their enforcement
- The knowledge of the Educators in relation to policy and procedures
- The condition of the materials and equipment used within the program
- Using age appropriate materials and equipment

### Self Help Question 1

Consider the safety policies and procedures in place at the service you work (or one you have visited). Place a Y (Yes) or N (No) in the box provided if the following occur, considering that safety involves three main elements

#### Continual maintenance of the indoor and outdoor environment to reduce and help prevent accidents and injuries:

Are children's arrivals and departures monitored? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Is there a daily check of the indoor and outdoor environment to remove hazards? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Are equipment and materials used age and skill appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Is the environment arranged to ensure clear traffic flow? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Are children visible at all times to Educators? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

#### Adequate policy and procedures to help prevent accidents:

Do Educators respond calmly and swiftly when a child is injured? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Are emergency and parent phone numbers correct and regularly updated? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Do Educators understand and follow the centre's emergency and accident procedures? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ?

#### Helping children remember and understand the expectations and guidelines of the service:

Are children involved in deciding the rules of the program? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Are children reminded of the rules before games begin? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Do Educators immediately respond when children are in unsafe situations? \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Are children educated in the proper use of equipment and materials appropriate for their age/skill level?  
\_\_\_\_\_ ?

If you have answered No to any of the previous questions, devise an Action Plan to incorporate the action into the program.			
Safety Element	Action	Who is Responsible?	Equipment Needed
E.g. Is there a daily check of the indoor and outdoor environment to remove hazards?	Checklist developed for Educators to tick off when doing a morning check Educators roster implemented	Coordinator / Educator	Gloves, Broom, Dust pan & brush

## Duty of Care

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'Duty of Care' is the legal responsibility of an Educator to look after and care for the children in his/her care. This involves the standard of care that is given to children.

If an incident does occur in the program and is taken to court, Educators must prove that they did what was reasonably expected in the circumstances and that they had not been negligent in any way. The way a court of law decides this is to work out if a reasonable person would have acted in the same way. The court also takes into consideration the industry standards and the person's knowledge and experience. Therefore, Educators must ensure that their behaviour with, and supervision of, the children is more than adequate, that they follow the policy and procedures of the program and do everything in their power to make sure that accidents are prevented. Educators must ensure they take precautions to cover their own actions, as well as providing a safe environment where the chances of accidents are minimised.

## Expectations/Guidelines

Rules provide children with guidelines of what is expected of them while attending the service. If children are aware of the boundaries and behaviour that is expected of them while they are at the program, accidents and inappropriate behaviour can be minimised.

- Expectations and guidelines of behaviour may cover such areas as:
- Respect for other's feelings and property
- Safety
- Clean up and other responsibilities

Children may not automatically remember the expectations and guidelines; therefore they will need to be reminded of them at regular intervals. This is very important in Vacation Care as there can be different children arriving every day.

Services should have a policy that explains the procedures of the program. The policy and procedures manual should be visible and available to all Educators and families using the program. There are many ways to remind children of the expectations of the program.

## Self Help Question 2

How can you develop rules for the program with children?

How can you inform children of the rules and expectations of the program?

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## Supervision of Children

*NQS 2.3.1: 'Children are adequately supervised at all times' (National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, 2009, p14).*

Supervising children involves observing the environment in which they are playing or about to play. It involves monitoring children's behaviour and actions as well as identifying possible risks and taking action to reduce or eliminate the risks. It is the Educators duty to adequately supervise the children at all times. It is also important to acknowledge particular areas for Educators to supervise. Even if Educators are involved in a game or activity, they must make sure that they can see all the children at all times.

The following are basic supervision guidelines for Educators:

- All children are visible to Educators
- Educators participate and play with children
- Educators face children when supervising, not have their back to a group of children
- If children are both inside and outside, Educators are inside and outside
- Educators intervene immediately if children are in a potentially dangerous situation
- Children are supervised in the kitchen, storeroom or other areas where dangerous appliances and items may be kept
- Service procedures are followed for children going to the toilet e.g. children go in pairs, children tell an Educator before they go, etc.
- The environment has been planned to minimise potential danger e.g. ball games are played in separate areas to quieter experiences
- 'Safety zones' are created
- Head counts of children are performed regularly
- Active and constant supervision is performed

## Accidents/Incidents

There are three main factors that cause accidents:

1. Environment – potential hazards
2. Development – developmental ages and stages of children
3. Human Influence – human error or negligence.

The Service's policy document should include specific procedures relating to accidents and incidents within the program. In all cases, details of the accident/ incident should be recorded in an Accident Report Book or form and the Coordinator informed. All accidents, however minor, need to be recorded in full and the record kept till the child turns twenty-five years of age for legal purposes. If it is a more serious accident, the appropriate steps should be taken regarding first aid, contacting ambulance, the family, doctor, etc. All records and information on children/families should be kept private and confidential.

When dealing with an injured or sick child, the Educator should request assistance from another Educator to continue to supervise the other children. In home based services, the Educator will need to follow their service's procedure, which may involve contacting a neighbour or the Field Worker for support and assistance. Educators are responsible for all of the children, not just the sick or injured child.

The Children's Services Act 1996, section 29C requires a service to notify the Secretary of a serious incident. This notification is required to be made by telephone within 24 hours of an incident followed by written notification as soon as practicable (regulation 90). Notification to your regional office to a Children's Services Advisor should be made once all Educators and children are safe and no longer considered under threat or danger. (From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012, the Education and Care Services National Law [2010, s174.2.a] continues to require the notification of any serious incident to be notified to the Regulatory Authority.)

Children's Services Advisers (CSAs) are authorised officers employed by the department in nine regional offices across Victoria to monitor a service's compliance with the *Children's Services Act 1996* and the *Children's Services Regulations 2009*, to investigate complaints or concerns raised with the department about a children's service, and to provide best practice advice to services on the care and education of children. Contact your local DEECD Regional Office and ask to speak with a Children's Services Advisor.

### First Aid Qualifications

- All Educators must have completed first aid and anaphylaxis management training by 2012 (Children's Services Regulations 2009, r63 and 64).
- Until January 2012 at least one Educator on duty must have first aid training (Children's Services Regulations 2009, r122.1)
- If a child diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis is being cared for or educated by the service, all Educators on duty must have anaphylaxis management training (Children's Services Regulations 2009, r67).
- All Educators must have undertaken training in the administration of the adrenaline auto injection devices at least every 12 months (Children's Services Regulations 2009, r65).
- DEECD recommends that all Educators practise using the adrenaline auto injection devices quarterly, whether or not a child with anaphylaxis is enrolled and attending the service.

### Self Help Question 3

1. How can you ensure that all children know the expectations and guidelines of your service?  
(Remember that different children may attend every day)

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2. Name five safety rules currently in use at your service

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3. What steps can you take to minimise accidents occurring at your service?

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## Program Experiences

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*Children in school age care settings are challenged to be curious about what is of interest to them while at the same time developing self-identity and social competencies (adapted from Nordic Teachers Council, n.d.).*

FSAC will form part of the Council of Australian Government's reform agenda for childhood education and care and will be a key component of the Australian Government's National Quality Framework for childhood education and care. It will be incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure delivery of nationally consistent and quality school age care across sectors and jurisdictions, as of 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2012.

FSAC and VEYLDF provide broad direction for school-age care educators in settings to facilitate children's play, leisure and learning. It guides educators in their program decision-making and assists in planning, implementing and evaluating quality in school age care settings. It also underpins the implementation of more specific experiences relevant to each local community and school age care setting.

Decisions about the program your service offer are made through an ongoing cycle of program decision-making. This involves Educators drawing on their professional knowledge, including their in-depth knowledge of children and, in collaboration with children and families they can then carefully evaluate to inform future planning.

Vacation Care services' programs will be evaluated against the principals under *Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice*, which incorporates the implementation of the Framework for School-Age Care to ensure that they reflect the outcomes in the School -Age Care Framework.

As Vacation Care is all day care for weeks at a time it is important to have a wide variety of experiences available for the children. Some children attend everyday for the entire program; others attend once or twice a week. The children that attend are all at different ages and stages of development as most programs cater for 5 – 12 year olds. So it is important to develop a program that caters for all children. Make sure that the experiences reflect the cultural diversity, gender and abilities of all the children, as well as the children's individual interests. These can be gauged by regularly asking the children what experiences they would enjoy doing and through consultation with families.

A school-age care program encompass all the interactions, experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned, which occur in an environment designed to support wellbeing and foster children's learning and development. The emphasis in the Framework is on the planned or intentional aspects of the program which includes supporting spontaneous play and leisure experiences initiated by children. Children are receptive to a wide range of experiences. What is included or excluded from the program affects how children learn, develop and understand the world (FSAC, 2010, p7).

#### Self Help Question 4

The EYLF, FSAC and the VEYLDF support a model of program decision making as an ongoing cycle:

What are the four key areas of the cycle; and

Which one do you think you might have the most difficulty with and why?

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#### A Range of Experiences

Variety is the key to successful programming. Children enjoy trying new experiences, learning new skills and practising skills they already have. 'The program for each child takes into account their strengths, capabilities, culture, interest and experiences' (National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care, 2009, QA 1.2). Variety in the type of experiences provided will allow children this opportunity. These can include:

- Drama
- Music
- Sport
- Science
- Active games
- Quiet games
- Construction
- Creative play
- Cooking
- Art and craft
- Reading

#### A Balance of Experiences

Variety in the way experiences are presented will allow for different learning styles as well as the times in the day when different types of experiences are appropriate i.e. after lunch, before going home. A balance of experiences may include:

- Active/quiet
- Adult directed/not directed
- Group /individual
- New/familiar games
- A range of different environments
- A range of materials/equipment
- Inclusive play/games
- Cooperative games
- Positive play between adults and children
- Indoor/outdoor
- Large/small groups

#### A Choice of Experiences

It is important to remember that the Vacation Care program is not school. These children are on holidays and should be able to choose what they want to do. Choices and options should be available to children. Programs should have:

- A range of experiences
- Alternatives for children who do not want to do the set experience
- Props and equipment set up to allow for free play
- Opportunities to learn and practice skills
- Variety to prevent children from becoming bored.
- Children's choice of experience

## The Physical and Social Environment

The EYLF, FSAC and the VEYLDF explore how children gain a strong sense of identity when they feel safe, secure and supported to confidently explore and engage with social and physical environments through relationships and play.

- Does the environment welcome the child and family?
- Is it comfortable, well equipped and age appropriate?
- Does the environment take into account every child and family's social, cultural and linguistic diversity?

The way the environment looks can make the centre more interesting and enticing to the children. Invite children to participate in decision-making and in the way the environment looks. Invite the children to decorate and design the layout of the space so that it becomes 'their place.' Also invite them to decide where to store materials and equipment to make them feel comfortable and in control of their surroundings. Creating different spaces for different experiences gives each experience a home.

- Where will the construction area be?
- Is there a table to keep finished and unfinished work
- Is there an area for quiet play/reading

*Remember: The program environment should be inviting and encourage participation*

The EYLF, FSAC and the VEYLDF emphasise how school age care environments and resources can also emphasise accountability for a sustainable future and promote children's understanding about their responsibility to care for the environment, day to day and for long term sustainability. These spaces promote the development of life skills such as growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling.

Within any week, there may be some experiences, events and excursions that have been pre-planned and some times where you will be required to organise and run some of your own experiences. The coordinator may be able to provide the equipment e.g. cooking ingredients, art and craft supplies, if required.

At other times, it may be necessary to fill in a few moments keeping children occupied when no props are available, such as waiting for the bus, filling in time between other experiences. It is a good idea to have a repertoire of experiences to use in any of these situations.

### Self Help Question 5

List four (4) specific skills and interests you possess that may help you to run 4 specific experiences, and explain why?

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Where can you find out and learn about new experiences that might be of use in your service?

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How will you store and file information about experiences and games that you will want to remember?

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Write down and briefly explain three quick and easy experiences that need no equipment or preparation?

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## Excursions

Excursions are an exciting part of a Vacation Care program. They offer a break from the service and provide an opportunity to widen children's experiences. As excursion destinations are often unfamiliar territories for both children and Educators, extra care should be taken to ensure all expectations and guidelines are understood and the boundaries are clear. Safety on an excursion is vitally important.

The physical environment of the excursion will present many opportunities for children in supporting their developmental needs and interests. Consider the group of children who will be going on the excursion and decide if the destination requires specific skills or abilities to participate safely in the proposed experiences. Some children may have difficulties that may get in the way of their participation, and there may be children in the group whose behaviour may present a challenge for the supervision or safety of the group. The physical environment of the destination may also present hazards, so it is important that a risk assessment of each experience has been undertaken that relates to the group of children and the activity locations before you arrive at the venue.

Some places you may visit with the children will have activity guidelines for experiences being undertaken there, you can ask the venue for a copy of these and discuss with the children to assist them in understanding what to expect when they arrive, and how they can safely and effectively participate. Some venues will also have available their own risk assessment for the experiences they provide, so ask the venue for a copy of these for your records as well. If you need to bring group equipment with you, consider what hazards this equipment may present and if you need any emergency management equipment, in addition to the first aid kit stocked appropriately for the specific venue. It is important for the health and safety of the children and Educators/volunteers that attend on the day that your first aid kit can be readily accessed throughout the excursion, and that everyone is aware of where medical treatment can be obtained in the event of an emergency.

### Guidelines for Taking Children on Excursions

#### Self Help Question 6

When an Educator takes a child outside the premises, it is a requirement under the Children's Services Act 1996 that the parent or guardian provides written authorisation (regulations 73(1) and 73 (2))

Access a copy of the Children's Services Regulations 2009 and list the seven (7) items the authorisation must state:

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	

**Before the excursion:**

- Check the service's policy and procedures on excursions
- Remind families via a newsletter and word of mouth about the departure and arrival times of the bus or transport.

**Before leaving the centre:**

- Make sure each child has a signed permission slip to attend the excursion
- Explain the guidelines, boundaries and expectations to the children

**Things to take with you include:**

- Emergency details, contact phone numbers, the roll of names (leave a copy with an emergency contact person as well)
- A first aid kit and sunscreen/hats
- Any medications and plans, such as asthma plans, required by individual children
- A mobile phone

**On transport**

- Children must be seated at all times
- Educators should be spaced evenly throughout the vehicle
- Head counts of children getting on and off the vehicle

**Walking to and from the service**

- Revise road safety rules and expectations before leaving the service
- Children should walk in pairs
- Positioning of Educators evenly throughout the group – always have an Educator at the head and at the end of the group of children
- Perform regular head counts

**On an excursion**

- Depending on the destination and venue:
- Individual Educators can take responsibility for a small group of children throughout the day.
- Educators need to do head counts at regular intervals, especially when moving from one area to another.
- A communal meeting spot can be arranged where children will meet for lunch or can return to if separated from their group
- Call the roll regularly

**Remember:** Specialists or activity instructors or guides contracted by the program, are not responsible for the safety of the children unless specific arrangements have been made. Educators are always responsible for the children.

### Self Help Question 7

What expectations and guidelines would you go through with children before leaving for an excursion?

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How could you easily identify children in your group on an excursion?

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### Inclusion and Participation

Inclusion is about creating a sense of belonging for children, families and Educators where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and participate. Although in the past, the term 'inclusion' has been used to refer to those with a disability; it is actually a very general term that can be applied in a variety of ways.

The EYLF, FSAC and the VEYLDF build on the idea that children become aware of fairness when they experience of ways in which people are included or excluded from physical and social environments, so think about the environment and how this may be perceived for every child and family utilising the service.

Although many children are growing up in diverse communities, they may not necessarily be aware of this, or the benefits of diversity. Educators need to not only draw attention to the diversity in their lives, but how they are enriched by it.

The EYLF, FSAC and the VEYLDF emphasise the need for Educators to respond to children's expertise, cultural traditions and ways of knowing, the multiple languages spoken by some children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and the strategies used by children with additional needs to negotiate their everyday lives

This can be done in a number of ways, by combining unfamiliar or new materials and experiences with those the children are already familiar with, such as singing a familiar song in a different language, or practising different ways of eating familiar food. This is non-threatening and promotes the idea that things are not necessarily 'better' or 'worse', but simply different. It is also important that Educators model a non-biased, inclusive approach where all children, regardless of gender, culture, ability, appearance, religion or family situation are treated equally and with respect.

### Self Help Question 8

Apart from the examples listed above, explain two ways could you combine familiar and unfamiliar materials in an experience?

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What are some of the ways you can raise awareness of the cultural diversity of the children attending your service?

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## Participation

Encouraging participation involves more than just providing equal access. Many Educators comment that all children are allowed to play with any of the equipment, but we need to actively involve children, particularly those with diverse backgrounds. We can do this in a number of ways:

- Spending one-to-one time with children to reassure them and offer assistance when necessary.
- Accessing support services if necessary
- Providing familiar play materials.
- Becoming aware of cultural issues which may affect the child, such as discipline, food, religious beliefs.

## Positive Leadership

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Positive leadership involves being a good role model for the children in your care. Educators can make the difference between a child having a fantastic time or an average time. How an adult responds to a child is vitally important in the way the child relates back to the adult. Being enthusiastic, creative and positive will encourage the same behaviours from the children. Children have the same needs as adults to feel significant and important. They also require security and a sense of belonging. The following points may assist you to provide the supportive environment that is paramount for children to feel confident, to try new skills, to meet new friends, to enjoy themselves and above all to show respect to one another.

- Provide a fun and active program
- Provide choices
- Be enthusiastic
- Speak to children as equals
- Learn the names of all children and call them by their name
- Establish a relationship with each child
- Acknowledge and respect children's feelings
- Avoid making judgements or labelling children
- Involve yourself in games and experiences
- Encourage the children to play and participate
- Bring a sense of humour

The children are on holidays and deserve to have a great time. If the program is safe, challenging, variable and exciting and the Educators are enthusiastic, fun and sensitive to the needs of individual children, there is a good chance they will have a good time. If the children are enjoying themselves it is more likely that the Educators will be having a good time too.

## Self Help Question 9

What kind of a play environment do you want children to experience?

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How can you make a positive influence in a child's day?

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## Working in a Team

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Working together as a team in can be a very rewarding experience; as Educators support and encourage each other. Employment on a Vacation Care program can mean long hours, few breaks and a lot of loud, noisy children, day after day. This type of work can be exhausting. If Educators work together and welcome each other's company, time at work will be much more enjoyable. In home based services, this might include regular phone contact with other Educators. Below are three ways to contribute to a positive team environment in a Vacation Care program.

### 1. Communication

Possibly the major key to working successfully with others is communication.

- Participate in regular educators' meetings
- Meet with Educators prior to the program to plan
- Listen to other Educators
- Discuss any issues after the program and away from children and parents
- Incorporate 'ice breakers' with Educators and children to introduce new Educators to the program. 'Ice breakers' are quick games that encourage involvement and provide a relaxed environment for people to get to know and feel comfortable with each other. They could include experiences such as 'Name Games', warm-ups, circle experiences, guessing games etc.

### 2. Support and Acceptance

Educators need to support and help each other.

- Encourage other Educators
- Utilise the strengths of all Educators
- Be consistent when dealing with breaches or behaviour guidelines
- Offer to plan and run experiences

### 3. Responsibilities

Know what your responsibilities will be prior to the program. If you are not informed of any specific roles make an effort to ask the coordinator.

Carry out your specific responsibilities. If you can be relied upon to do your tasks without being reminded you will make things easier for the other Educators

Aim to:

- Have everything ready at the service on or before time

- Show initiative
- Be enthusiastic
- Help other Educators when needed
- Ensure all Educators are consistent in the treatment and guidance of children
- Attend and input in educators' meetings
- Know your strengths and weaknesses

**Self Help Question 10**

What do you consider to be your strengths when working in a group situation regarding your contribution to communication, support and responsibilities and how could they be used?

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What do you consider to be your weaknesses when working in a group situation regarding your contribution to communication, support and responsibilities and how could they be managed?

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You have seen another Educator do something that you think is inappropriate. Briefly describe the scenario you think of. How could you handle this situation? Explain two (2) different strategies:

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## References and Resources

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# Assessment Task

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## **A. Program Activities**

1. List three key things to consider when planning for vacation care.
2. Plan a program for a day.
3. Write down all the possible experiences that could happen in one day and, using the FSAC, choose a principle from *Outcome 2; Children are connected and contribute to their world* - describe two activities that would support this principle in practice, and explain how.

## **B. Safety and Supervision**

1. Write up a safety checklist for both Indoors and Outdoors, with at least ten items for consideration.
2. Provide two reasons why the level of supervision for a small group of 5 year olds is different for a group of 10-year-olds.

## **C. Excursions**

1. You are on an excursion with a group of school-age children. A child has broken away from your group. Identify two procedures you would implement immediately.
2. Explain what you could do to minimise this happening again?

## **D. Inclusion and Participation**

1. How might you celebrate a culturally diverse occasion? Research a religious or cultural celebration that may be significant to your service:
  - provide a brief history of the occasion,
  - list three activities or experiences you might provide to children, and
  - explain how the activities or experiences might enhance the children's understanding of this celebration
2. How is a new child introduced when first starting at the service? Describe three strategies to assist a new child settle in to the service.

## **E. Working in Teams**

1. How can you contribute to your service when it comes to working in teams? Identify three skills or talents you can contribute to your team that are not common to your other team members. Explain how they are different to your other team members and why these would make a positive contribution
2. List two principles of effective team work that could be improved in your team. Explain why they need improvement and list two strategies for each that may assist with the improvement.