

**Early Childhood Australia
National Conference
2018**

**Building a Culture of
Ethical Leadership**

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Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority







Session Overview

- What is ethics?
- Quality in education and care
- Leadership and positive outcomes for children
- Guidance on ethical leadership
- Leadership in education and care
- Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics
- Ethical decision-making and reflective practice
- Embedded ethical practice and leadership
- Clarity, communication and culture.

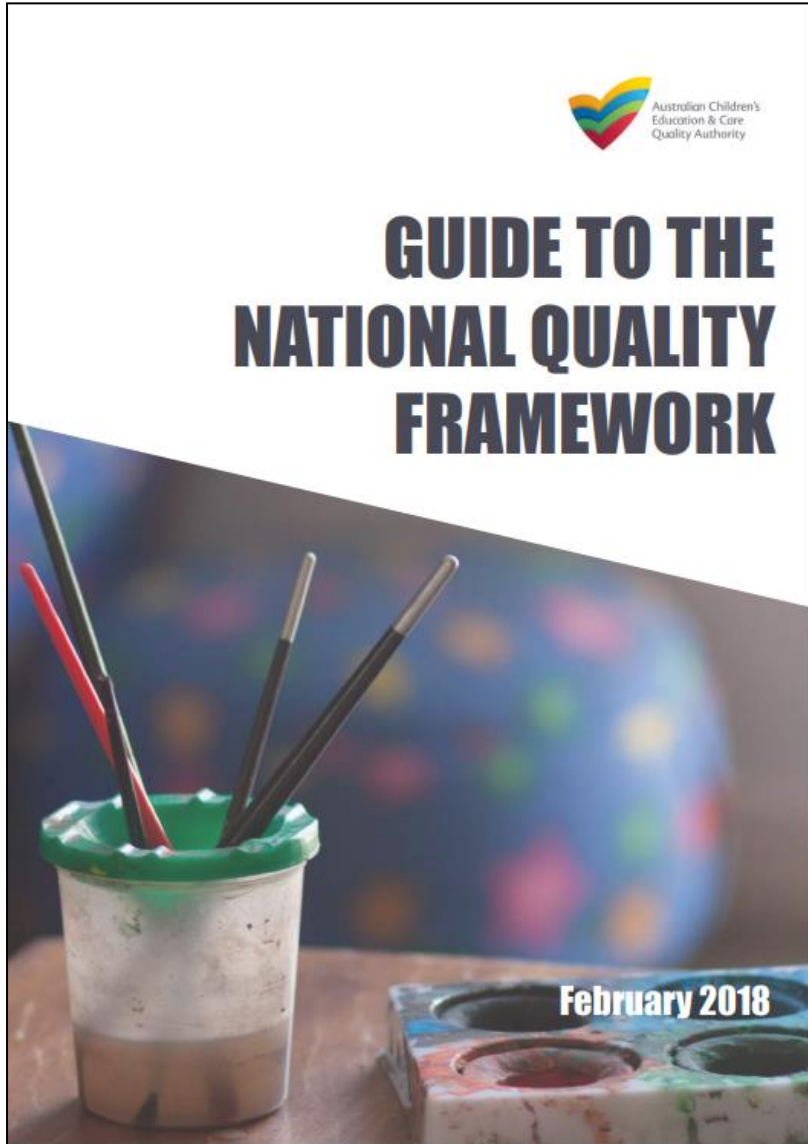


Ethics

- A reflection of our character.
- Our deeply held principles or beliefs that influence:
 - how we think
 - how we act
 - how we respond.
- Developed through our personal and professional experiences.
- An understanding of ethics and ethical behaviour are fundamental to education and care leadership.



The NQF and Leadership



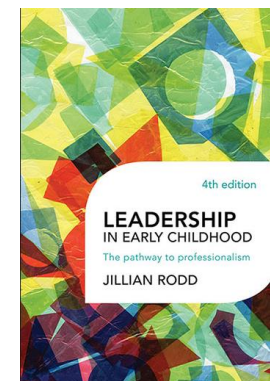
- The NQF is the result of all Australian Governments working together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children.
- Ethical leadership is embedded within the NQF including the:
 - National Legislation
 - National Quality Standard
 - Approved Learning Frameworks
 - Assessment and rating process.



Leadership in Education and Care

‘In the twenty-first century, visionary and ethical leadership is proving to be a critical professional issue for early childhood educators around the world. Leadership continues to be of paramount importance for improving quality service provision for young children and families, and for early childhood to be recognised as a credible profession with unique expertise that is different from and yet equal to other professions’.

(Jillian Rodd 2013, p.1)





Ethical Leadership Qualities

- What qualities does a great leader have?
- How do they display ethical behaviour as they lead?
- Is there a leader that you admire?
- How do their leadership qualities build a culture of ethical behaviour?





The NQF Supports Leadership

Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

- Quality improvement & administration
- Guiding and supporting staff
- Promoting positive workplace culture
- Creating collaborative and reflective communities of practice

Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements

- Professionalism
- Provision of qualified and experienced educators
- Creating a collaborative and ethical culture, guided by professional standards

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

- Relationship with Quality Area 7



The NQF Supports Leadership

Standard 4.2 Professionalism

- Mutual respect
- Collaboration
- challenging and learning from one another
- Recognising strengths
- Professional standards

Standard 7.2 Leadership

- Continuous improvement
- Educational leadership
- Development of professionals




Being a Leader

What attributes, knowledge and skills are required?

- Guide to the NQF provides guidance.
- Leadership can be a characteristic, not a title.
- Ethical leadership is a shared practice - responsibility lays with each of us.
- Distributed leadership is collective leadership
 - collaborative - one verses many
 - team approach
 - interactivity between people and positions.
- An ethical leader builds capacity and embeds a culture of ethical behaviour and leadership.

ECA Code of Ethics



The image shows the front cover of the 'Code of Ethics' booklet from Early Childhood Australia. The cover is primarily blue with white and yellow text. It features several photographs: a woman holding a baby, a woman and two children looking at a tablet, and a woman holding a baby. The booklet is organized into sections: VISION, PREAMBLE, CORE PRINCIPLES, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, and DEFINITIONS OF TERMS IN ECA'S CODE OF ETHICS. The bottom right corner includes the ECA logo and contact information.

VISION

Professionals who adhere to this Code of Ethics act in the best interests of all children and work collectively to ensure that every child is thriving and learning.

PREAMBLE

Early Childhood Australia recognizes that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been nurturing and teaching children on this land for thousands of years. The Code of Ethics acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional ways of being and caring for children.

This Code of Ethics is informed by the principles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2009). A Code of Ethics is an aspirational framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of childhood professionals who work with, or on behalf of, children and their families. In this Code of Ethics the protection and wellbeing of children is paramount and therefore speaking up or taking action in the presence of unethical practice is an essential professional responsibility.

Being ethical involves thinking about everyday actions and decision making, either intuitively or reflectively, and responding with respect to all concerned. The Code of Ethics recognizes that all childhood professionals act in a unique position of trust and influence in their relationships with children, families, colleagues and the community; therefore professional accountability is vital.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The core principles in the Code of Ethics are based on the fundamental and shared values of the profession. They are guiding decision making in relation to ethical responsibilities. These core principles require a commitment to respect and maintain the rights and dignity of children, families, colleagues and communities.

- Each child has unique interests and strengths and the capacity to contribute to their communities.
- Children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- Effective learning and teaching is characterized by professional decisions that draw on specialist knowledge and multiple perspectives.
- Partnerships with families and communities support shared responsibility for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Democratic, fair and inclusive practices promote equity and a strong sense of belonging.
- Respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships are central to children's education and care.
- Play and leisure are essential for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Research, inquiry and practice based on theory, theory-informed, quality education and care.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The first Code of Ethics for the Australian early childhood profession was developed in 1988. It was widely cited and used for 19 years. The first review of the Code of Ethics began in 2005 with the second version launched in 2007. The second review of the Code of Ethics began in 2014 with the third (current) version approved by the ECA National Board in February 2016.

ECA is grateful to everyone who has contributed to the development and ongoing review of the Code of Ethics including those who have participated in consultation surveys, forums and workshops over the years as well as those who have provided advice and insight through their service or reference and advisory groups. We would particularly like to acknowledge those engaged in writing each version of the Code.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS IN ECA'S CODE OF ETHICS

A CODE OF ETHICS—defines the core aspirational values of the profession and provides guidance for professional decision making especially when there are conflicting obligations or responsibilities.

CORE PRINCIPLES—fundamental and guiding values of the profession.

FAMILIES—the people who have significant care responsibilities for and/or a major relationship with a child.

CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL—a person who works with or on behalf of children and families in education and care settings.

COMMUNITIES—a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

COLLEAGUES—includes employees and those with whom you work directly or more loosely.

STUDENT—a person undertaking study at a secondary or tertiary institution.

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Code of Ethics

Early Childhood Australia
A code for young children

The Code of Ethics:

- details professional standards for education and care
- links to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- has a vision that professionals act in the best interest of children
- provides a framework for reflection & professional decision-making
- emphasises a commitment to action.



ECA Code of Ethics as a Practical Document

- Why have a Code of Ethics?
- What does it mean for you?
- What does it mean for your service?
- What does it mean for children?
- The Code recognises the professional responsibility of **each educator**:
 - encourages qualities and practices of ethical leadership within our profession.

Ethical Leadership in Practice

The ECA Code of ethics invites us to:

- acknowledge and support the diverse strengths and experiences of colleagues in order to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills
- implement strategies that support and mentor colleagues to make positive contributions to the profession.



Ethical Leadership and Excellence

Bermagui Preschool has demonstrated Excellence through their ethical leadership:

- Individual educator 'advocacy in action' each week.
- Bega Valley Community Preschool Network
- Bega Community Forum.



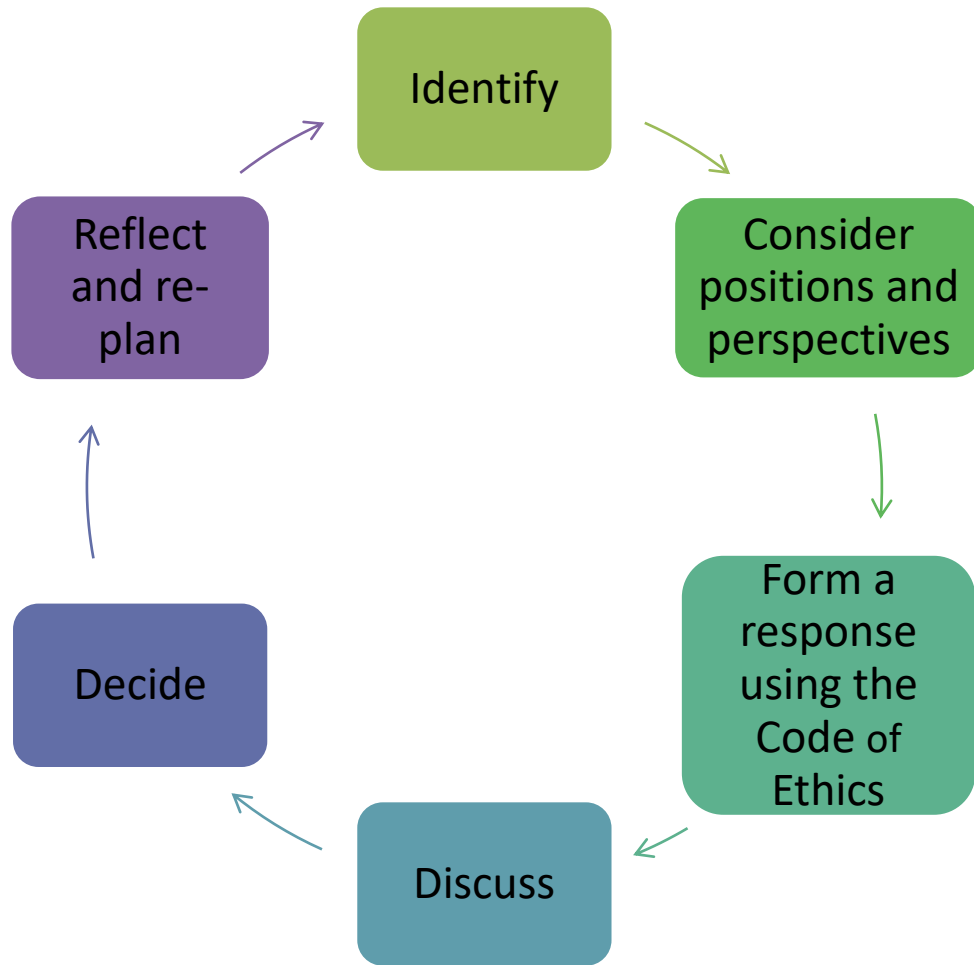


Ethical Leadership and Excellence

Concordia Out of School Hours Care have demonstrated Excellence through their ethical leadership and reflective practice:

- **Mentoring** other OSHC services to improve the educational program and outcomes for children.
- **Challenging** other services to reflect on and improve their practices of behaviour management.
- Seeking opportunities to engage with the boarder education and care sector to **share their story** of improvement.

Ethical Decision-Making



- Who is involved?; Where did it happen?; What was said?
- Consider the perspectives of all involved.
- Respond using your knowledge of the ECA Code of Ethics.
- Discuss your proposed response with colleagues.
- Decide on the action you will take.
- Reflect on the outcomes of the process and re-plan.

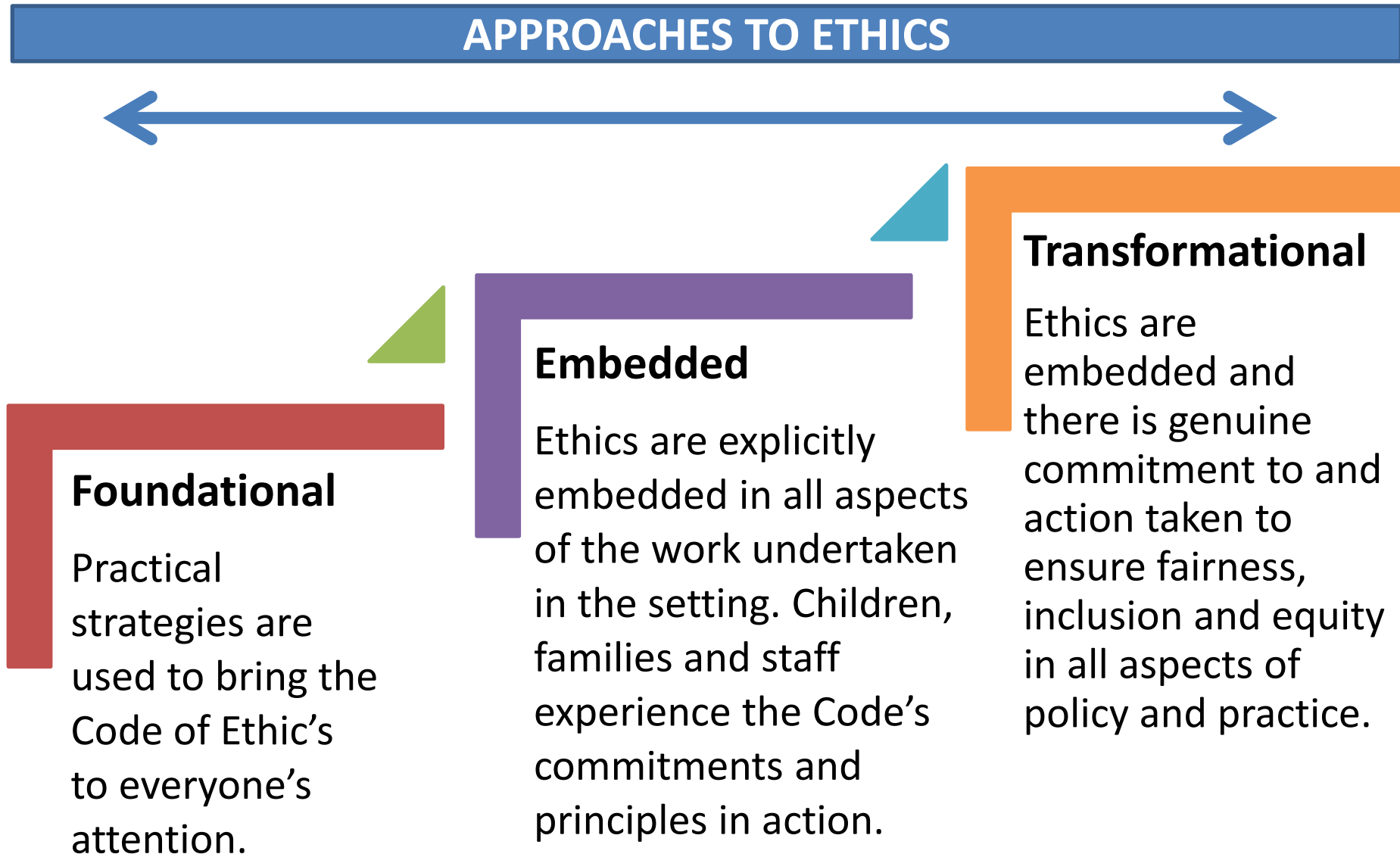


Reflective Practice Builds Ethical Leadership

The ECA Code of Conduct and critical reflection:

Ethical leaders support educators to become increasingly thoughtful about their work, to analyse their actions objectively and motivate them to reflect and explore new ideas and approaches as part of daily practice.

Ethical Leadership in Practice





Embedding Ethical Leadership

Examples of embedded practice

- The Code of Ethics is available and regularly reflected upon.
- All staff understand and aspire to enacting the Code's principles and commitments.
- The Code informs staff selection processes and is considered in performance review cycles.
- The Code informs the setting's philosophy, policies and practices and the Quality Improvement Plan.
- The Code is a reference point for ethical decision making and regularly reviewed in staff meetings.



Ethical Leadership and Exceeding the NQS

Exceeding practice is demonstrated when each educator:

- seeks out and considers alternative ways of supporting each child
- reflects together
- considers and discusses social justice and the equity implications of their practice decisions to support and promote each child's health, safety and wellbeing.



Clarity, Communication and Culture

How might we use the ECA Code of Ethics to support:

- Professional identity and **clarity** regarding professional roles and responsibilities?
- Educator's capacity to **communicate** the intent of their practice?
- Collaborative, respectful and ethical relationships and the building of a positive organisational **culture**?



Key Messages

- Ethics: how we think, how we act and how we respond
- The NQF and ECA Code of Ethics provide guidance
- Leadership impacts education and care quality and learning outcomes
- Quality, ethical leadership creates quality workplaces
- An ethical decision-making framework is a key tool
- Collaborative, respectful and ethical relationships are a strong foundation to an ethical organisational culture
- A collaborative process builds ethical leader capacity
- Ethical leaders allow and inspire creative and innovative practices

The Quest for Quality Game



The Quest for Quality is a trivia-style game developed for educators in education and care services to understand the requirements of the NQF.

- Explores the seven quality areas in the National Quality Standard (NQS) through sector specific trivia, knowledge questions, provocations and actions.
- Extension packs *e.g. Family day care; Exceeding NQS, Inclusion, Environmentally Responsible, 24 hr movement guidelines*
- Can be purchased online or you can download for free and print your own set.

Information and Resources

ACECQA

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