

Centre details

Centre name				Centre approval number			
Columbia Park Early Learning Centre				SE – 00003864			
Primary contacts at service							
Cathy Arevalo – Centre Manager							
Physical location of centre				Physical location contact details			
Street	28A Columbia Drive			Telephone	03 9560 8636		
Suburb	Wheelers Hill			Mobile			
State/territory	Victoria			Fax			
Postcode	3150			Email	info@columbiaparkelc.com.au		
Approved Provider				Nominated Supervisor			
Primary contact	Sheyam Gunaratnam			Name	Cathy Arevalo		
Telephone				Telephone	03 9560 8636		
Mobile	0403 010 720			Mobile	0490 066 192		
Fax				Fax			
Email	committee@columbiaparkelc.com.au			Email	cathy@columbiapakelc.com.au		
Educational leader							
Name	Emma Trezise (Pedagogical leader), Nakita Dalton (Ed Leader Mentor) and Tania Desfosses (Ed Leader)						
Telephone	03 9560 8636						
Email	emma@columbiaparkelc.com.au, n.dalton@columbiaparkelc.com.au and t.desfosses@columbiaparkelc.com.au						
Operating Hours	Monday 07:00 18:00	Tuesday 07:00 18:00	Wednesday 07:00 18:00	Thursday 07:00 18:00	Friday 07:00 18:00	Saturday CLOSED CLOSED	Sunday CLOSED CLOSED

Location / Directions

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre is conveniently located within the Columbia Park precinct, with easy access for families during drop-off and pick-up times. Ample visitor parking is available both on site and in designated nearby parking areas. Please note that demand for parking may increase during training sessions and events at the adjoining sporting facility, kindergarten, and nearby school. Note that due to a recent fire affecting the Waverley Park Hawks Junior Football Club building, some parking areas may be temporarily unavailable.



Figure 1 – Aerial Map of Columbia Park Precinct

Figure 2 – Entrance to Columbia Park Early Learning Centre

Operating Hours / Term Dates

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre operates Monday to Friday from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm except for:

- Victorian gazetted public holidays; and
- 2 weeks over Christmas and New Year.

Kindergarten programs operate Monday to Friday during gazetted Victorian school terms on a fortnightly rotational basis as follows:

- Week One
 - 3-year-old program runs 11.54am - 5.00pm; and
 - 4-year-old program runs 8.30am to 1.36pm.
- Week Two
 - 3-year-old program runs 8.30am to 1.36pm, and
 - 4-year-old program runs 11.54am - 5.00pm.

Mealtimes as follows:

Breakfast: 7.00am-8.00am

Morning Tea:

- Coobaaroo/Babajin 9.00am
- Woolert 9.30am
- Babajin 9.45am
-

Lunch:

- Coobaaroo 11.15am
- Mirram 11.30am
- Woolert 12.00pm
- Babajin 12.30pm

Afternoon Tea: 2.45pm

Drop-off and pick-up typically occur:

- 7.00am-9.30am
- 3.30pm-6pm

Educational program and practice -

The children of Columbia Park Early Learning Centre participate in a range of indoor and outdoor program including:

- Weekly Nature Explorer/Bush Kinder programs within the surrounding Columbia Park precinct; or
- Planned excursions.

Team members will be happy to advise details of any planned activities closer to the date of any assessment visit.

Visitor Safety Protocols

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff, and visitors all guests must sign in and out at reception upon arrival and departure. Visitors are required to follow all emergency procedures, including participating in emergency evacuations if an alarm or evacuation is initiated during their visit. For the privacy and protection of children and families, the taking of photographs, videos, or recordings is strictly prohibited unless prior authorization has been granted by the Centre Manager.

How are the children grouped at your service?

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre offers tailored programs from first steps to school readiness grouped as follows:

- 6 months to 2.5 years - **Coobaaroo** Room - 11 children
- 2 years to 3.5 years - **Mirram** Room - 12 children
- 3 years to 4 years - **Woolert** Room including integrated 3-year-old kindergarten program comprising 16 children
- 4 years to 5 years – **Babajin** Room including integrated registered & funded 4-year-old kindergarten program comprising 21 children

Write the name and position of person(s) responsible for submitting this Quality Improvement Plan

Prepared by:

- Cathy Arevalo – Centre Manager and Nominated Supervisor
- Nakita Dalton – Assistant Manager and Educational Leader Mentor
- Tania Desfosses – Senior Lead Educator, Senior OHS Rep and Child Safety Advocate (Assistant Manager and Educational Leader)
- Emma Trezise – 4 yrs kinder teacher and Pedagogical leader
- Rhiannon Cross – 3 years kinder teacher

Reviewed and approved by:

- Sheyam Gunaratnam – Member of Management Committee and President
- Shaunee Ryan – Member of Management Committee
- Emily Resciniti – Member of Management Committee

Centre statement of philosophy

Philosophy

We believe in every child and every right — that every child has a voice and every child has a choice

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre welcomes all with *Womindjeka* – a traditional Boonwurrung word meaning “welcome.” We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment where every child is valued. We view children as capable, competent and active participants in their learning, with the right to express their ideas, make choices and contribute to decisions that affect them. Child safety and wellbeing are our highest priorities. We foster a culture where every child feels respected, protected and heard. Our teaching team are committed to creating environments that uphold children’s rights, dignity and emotional development. Through strong leadership, collaboration with our teaching team and parent committee, and meaningful partnerships with families, we support high-quality education and continuous improvement. We recognise families as children’s first teachers and value their knowledge, culture and contributions. Our curriculum celebrates the diverse cultures, languages and experiences within our community, while promoting sustainability and respect for the environment. Through play-based learning, children develop curiosity, confidence, empathy and a sense of responsibility for the world. We provide individualised learning programs that support each child’s unique strengths, capabilities, interests and challenges. Our teaching team use specialised teaching strategies to ensure every child can develop, learn and thrive at their own pace.



Figure 3 – Columbia Park Early Learning Centre Philosophy

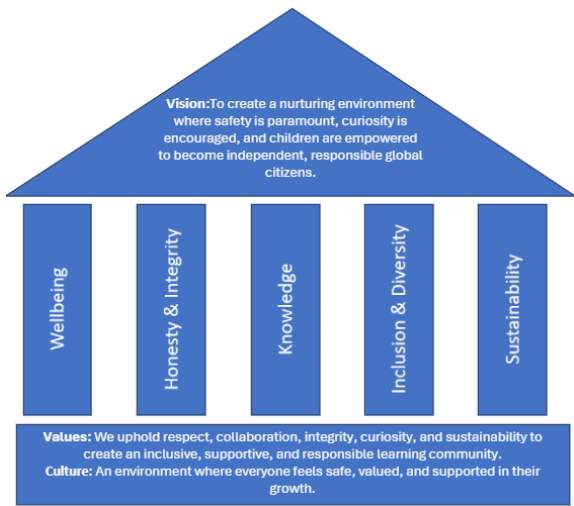


Figure 4 – Columbia Park Early Learning Centre Vision, Values & Culture

The Centre's philosophy is deeply embedded in the Centre's operations as evidenced through teaching programs and staff performance and development programs. This is further evidenced below:



Figure 5 – Columbia Park Early Learning Centre Notice Board Displaying Philosophy and Babajin Children's Interpretations

The Babajin (4-Year-Old Kindergarten) children participated in the process of developing the centre philosophy through their learning experiences and discussions about children's rights. Teaching teams supported the children to explore concepts of fairness, inclusion, respect, safety, and belonging through group discussions, reflections, and by reading books focused on children's rights. Children were encouraged to share their ideas, opinions, and understandings, ensuring their voices contributed meaningfully to the philosophy review process. This supported children's agency and promoted a sense of ownership, participation, and understanding of their rights within the kindergarten environment.

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre values building meaningful relationships with the Traditional Owners of the land on which we learn, play and grow. Through our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), we nurture children's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and perspectives. This commitment is woven throughout our philosophy, vision, values, and daily practices, helping children develop a sense of belonging, respect, and connection to country, culture, and community.

Figure 6 – Columbia Park Early Learning Centre RAP
[9067-columbia-park-early-learning-centre-rap-b4D9T1.pdf](https://www.columbia-park-early-learning-centre-rap-b4D9T1.pdf)

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre acknowledges the Boonwurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our Centre stands. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and community, and honour the rich cultural heritage and knowledge that has been shared for thousands of years.

VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, we are committed to deepening our understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, and cultures. We strive to create meaningful opportunities for the teaching team, children, families, and the wider community to engage in culturally responsive practices, guided by the principles of equity, inclusion, and respect. Grounded on Boonwurrung Country, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land. We are dedicated to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our daily practice, fostering children's sense of identity, belonging, and connection to Country. We are committed to building authentic and respectful relationships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, working in partnership to contribute to a more reconciled, inclusive, and connected society.



Figure 7 – Columbia Park Early Learning Centre Babajin room boomerang painting with Pallyan (see educational plan 2/7/2026) by Emma Trezise his incursion provided them with opportunities to explore culturally constructed symbol systems including Aboriginal/Wurundjeri signs and symbols of the local surrounding area.

CPELC – Our QIP Journey Since 2023

Our Quality Improvement journey at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre has never been about simply meeting a standard or achieving a rating. It has been about asking ourselves, “**What can we do better, what can we learn, and how can we continue to grow together (continuous ongoing improvement)?**”

Back in 2023, our QIP provided a foundation for reflecting on our practice and identifying the areas that mattered most for our children, families, educators and community. We were already proud of the relationships, commitment and professional knowledge within our Centre, but we understood that quality improvement is not something that is ever finished.

In 2023, CPELC was assessed as **Exceeding the National Quality Standard**. This was an important recognition of the practices we had built together. However, we did not see Exceeding as the end of our journey. Instead, it became a point from which we could continue to question, reflect and explore.

Our Reconciliation action plan ongoing Journey

One of the significant journeys since our Exceeding assessment has been our **Reconciliation Action Plan journey**.

Our thinking has continued to develop around how we respectfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into our everyday curriculum, relationships and environment. We have explored our connection to Country, Aboriginal perspectives, local Boonwurrung culture, significant dates and events, and how reconciliation can become part of who we are rather than something we simply acknowledge on particular days.

This journey has challenged us to keep learning, to listen and to consider how we can create meaningful experiences for children that build respect, belonging and understanding.

Our Emotional Coaching Journey

Our **emotional coaching journey** has strengthened the way we understand children's behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

We have continued to explore the idea that **behaviour is communication**. Rather than simply asking, “How do we stop this behaviour?”, we have increasingly asked, “**What is the child communicating, and what do they need from us?**”

This has supported educators to respond with greater empathy, to validate children's emotions before attempting to problem-solve, and to help children develop the language and strategies they need to recognise and regulate their emotions.

Our journey has also strengthened our understanding that regulation comes before reasoning. When a child is overwhelmed, our first responsibility is connection, safety and co-regulation.

The teaching moment comes once the child is ready.

Our Leadership Journey

Our **leadership journey** has been about recognising that leadership does not belong to one person.

We have continued to explore distributed leadership, mentoring, professional conversations and the strengths that individual educators bring to our Centre.

Leadership at CPELC is increasingly about creating opportunities for to contribute, question practice, share knowledge and support one another. Our experienced teaching team members mentor newer team members, educational leaders guide practice, and educators are encouraged to take ownership of areas that are important to them.

This has strengthened our belief that when educators feel valued and empowered, they become active contributors to quality improvement rather than simply participants in it.

Our Committee Journey

Another important part of our story has been our **Management Committee journey**.

As a parent-run, community-managed not-for-profit Centre, our management committee is an integral part of who we are.

We have continued to explore what genuine partnership between governance, families and educators looks like. Our committee contributes to decisions that affect the Centre's future, while educators bring their professional knowledge and understanding of children's learning, development and wellbeing.

This partnership reminds us of that CPELC belongs to the community. Quality improvement is therefore not just an educational responsibility — it is something we build together.

Our Community Involvement Journey

Our journey has also expanded beyond the Centre through **community involvement**.

We have continued to explore how children can develop a sense of belonging not only within their rooms and Centre, but within the broader community.

Connections with local organisations, community members, schools, professionals and community leaders provide children with opportunities to see themselves as active members of their community.

These experiences help children understand that learning does not stop at the Centre gate. Their community is part of their learning environment.

Where are we now?

Looking back from 2026, our QIP journey is not a straight line.

It is more like a series of pathways that connect with one another:

Each journey has influenced the others.

Our work with children has influenced our leadership.

Our leadership has influenced our relationships with families.

Our committee has strengthened our connection with the community.

Our community connections have influenced our educational program.

And our ongoing reflection has brought us back to the most important question:

How does this make a difference for children?

That is what continues to drive our QIP.

Our 2023 Exceeding rating recognised the quality of what we had built. The years since have demonstrated that we are not satisfied with simply maintaining what we have.

We continue to learn.

We continue to question.

We continue to reflect.

We continue to evolve.

Our QIP is therefore not a document that sits on a shelf. **It is the story of who we are becoming as a Centre.**

And our journey continues.

Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Area 1

Summary of strengths for Quality Area 1

Strengths	The centre delivers a high-quality, child-centred educational program consistently aligned with the EYLF V2.0 and VEYLDF, while continuing to explore and embed the VEYLDF 2.0. • Children's agency, voice, strengths, interests, challenges, culture and abilities drive curriculum planning and decision-making. • Teaching teams intentionally design learning experiences that support each child's: ○ Learning and development ○ Wellbeing ○ Inclusion ○ Individual strengths and interests ○ Equity and participation ○ High expectations and positive outcomes • Teaching teams listen to, observe and respond to children's voices, using this information to: ○ Guide curriculum planning ○ Extend children's learning ○ Respond to individual interests and needs ○ Create meaningful learning experiences • Children's ideas and contributions are documented, revisited and reflected upon, ensuring children's voices remain central to ongoing learning. • Educators critically reflect on whether children's participation is authentic, meaningful and acted upon, rather than simply documented. • Indigenous curriculum authentically embedded throughout the educational program. • Curriculum experiences promote: ○ Respect ○ Belonging ○ Cultural responsiveness ○ Connection to community • Strong partnerships with families are developed through consistent communication and collaborative engagement. • Family perspectives and knowledge contribute to continuity of learning between home and the service. • Mindfulness, emotional coaching and resilience are intentionally embedded throughout the educational program and everyday practice. • Educators support children to: ○ Recognise and express emotions ○ Develop self-awareness ○ Regulate their emotions ○ Build resilience ○ Develop problem-solving skills ○ Build positive relationships • Mindfulness is incorporated into daily routines to support children to calm their bodies and minds and develop emotional regulation strategies. • Emotional coaching is used during everyday interactions and challenging moments to help children understand and manage their emotions. • Literacy is intentionally embedded across the curriculum and learning environment. • Children experience meaningful opportunities for: ○ Conversations ○ Storytelling ○ Songs and rhymes
-----------	---

- Books
 - Mark-making
 - Symbols
 - Environmental print
 - Communicating ideas
- Educators intentionally extend children's **vocabulary, language and early literacy skills** through play, routines and everyday interactions.
- **Assessment for learning** is embedded within the educational program and informs ongoing curriculum planning.
- Teaching teams use:
 - Observations
 - Conversations
 - Documentation
 - Intentional interactions
 - Children's contributions and ideas
- Assessment considers each child's:
 - Learning and development
 - Strengths
 - Interests
 - Culture
 - Challenges
 - Emerging skills
 - Dispositions for learning
- Educators analyse and reflect on collected information to:
 - Plan responsive learning experiences
 - Monitor progress
 - Identify next steps
 - Extend children's learning
 - Support individual outcomes
- Assessment is viewed as a **continuous cycle of observing, planning, implementing, evaluating and extending learning**.
- Children's learning is regularly reviewed with families to strengthen partnerships and continuity of learning.
- The teaching team uses the “**narrative of the long-distance travelled,**” **advocated by Catharine Hydor**, to recognise and document children's learning and development over time.
- Educators focus on the **learning journey**, rather than isolated achievements.
- Evidence is gathered over an extended period to identify:
 - Progress
 - Strengths
 - Dispositions for learning
 - Growing capabilities
 - Emerging skills
- This approach makes children's learning journeys **visible over time**.
- The narrative supports **assessment for learning and intentional teaching** by identifying meaningful next steps.
- Educators use ongoing observation, documentation, critical reflection and family collaboration to **celebrate progress and plan future learning**.
- Teaching teams engage in **ongoing critical reflection** to evaluate:
 - Pedagogy
 - Learning outcomes

- Children's experiences
- Effectiveness of the educational program
- Impact of teaching practices
- Reflections inform **continuous improvement** across the centre.
- Professional learning is used to strengthen teaching practice and improve outcomes for children.
- On **10 February 2026**, the teaching team participated in professional learning with **Catharine Hydon**, focusing on:
 - Strengthening Educational Leader practice
 - Pedagogical leadership within **QA1**
 - Embedding child safety across the educational program
- Agreed strategies included **targeted support for Educational Leaders and ongoing professional learning** to strengthen teaching practice.
- These practices are embedded across the centre and strengthened through **meaningful engagement with children, families and the community**.

Standard 1.1 – Program: The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators. Our program is guided by the VEYLDF, and the EYLF V2.0 incorporating STEAM learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and cultural celebrations. Learning experiences are intentionally planned and documented to reflect children's interests, developmental needs, and community connections. Our curriculum is further enriched through a calendar of events that acknowledges significant cultural and community events. A balance of planned and spontaneous learning opportunities supports children's holistic development. Mid-year assessments and twice-yearly summative assessments ensure each child's progress is monitored and inform ongoing curriculum planning. Strong partnerships with families are prioritised, with regular opportunities for feedback that guide and inform the program. The service's Reconciliation Action Plan (2026) further strengthens the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in authentic and meaningful ways. At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, educational practice is embedded across everyday centre operations and is reflected in the way educators plan, interact, assess, reflect and make decisions about children's learning and development. Intentional teaching, responsive teaching, scaffolding and assessment are not separate activities. They are integrated into everyday routines, play, indoor and outdoor environments, relationships and centre decision-making. Embedded Practice Includes: ● Educators consistently using the planning and assessment cycle to inform their practice. ● Intentional teaching occurring throughout the day, including routines, transitions, play and spontaneous learning opportunities.

- Educators responding to children's interests, ideas, strengths, challenges and individual learning needs.
 - Scaffolding children's learning while promoting **independence, agency, confidence and resilience**.
 - Children's voice and perspectives influencing curriculum decisions.
 - Indoor and outdoor environments being intentionally planned and reviewed to support learning.
 - **STEAM, sustainability and Nature Explorers** being embedded into the curriculum rather than treated as isolated activities.
 - Resources being selected based on children's learning needs, interests, development and identified curriculum priorities.
 - Budget decisions being connected to the educational program and children's learning.
 - Educators regularly reflecting on whether experiences and environments are achieving intended learning outcomes.
 - Child safety being embedded into all educational experiences, environments, interactions and decision-making.
 - Families contributing to and being informed about their child's learning and development.
 - Emma (4 yrs ECT) supporting consistency in educational practice and transition-to-school planning, including meaningful **Transition Statements**.
- The expectation is that educators can demonstrate the connection between the **educational program, everyday practice and children's learning outcomes**.

Evidence for the QIP

Evidence that practice is embedded across centre operations may include:

- Room programs and planning.
- Observations and assessments.
- Teaching team reflections.
- Children's voice.
- Environmental audits.
- Indoor and outdoor learning plans.
- STEAM and sustainability projects. (Woolert science week experiments 17 - 21 August 2026 Rhiannon)
- Nature Explorers documentation.
- Resource and budget decisions.
- Professional discussions and team meetings.
- Family feedback.
- Transition Statements.
- QIP reflections and improvements.
- Professional learning and mentoring.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection

Critical reflection is embedded across the centre. Dedicated time is allocated by the management team for teaching teams to reflect on practices, program effectiveness, and outcomes for children. This occurs during monthly Lead Educator and Teaching team meetings and Network Professional Nights, supporting continuous improvement.

The teaching team are responsive to children's ideas, cues, and emerging interests. Programs are continuously adapted, extended, and modified to remain relevant and engaging. Children are active participants in their learning and are supported to contribute to and implement aspects of the program. Targeted support is provided to children experiencing challenges, ensuring equitable access to learning and positive developmental outcomes.

Critical reflection informs all aspects of planning and practice. Through reflective discussions, teaching teams identified a need to strengthen community engagement, leading to the development of meaningful partnerships with local organisations and schools.

This includes regular visits to a local primary school, where children engage with older students in shared learning experiences such as caring for animals, participating in literacy activities, and collaborative play. These experiences support children's confidence, social skills, and sense of belonging within the community.

The program is continuously evaluated and adapted based on these reflections, ensuring ongoing improvement and responsiveness.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community	Families are actively engaged and informed about their child's learning and development through a variety of strategies. Opportunities such as library book borrowing support family involvement in children's learning at home and promote a love of literacy. Families are also supported through access to information about local primary schools, including handouts, information sessions, and direct communication with Foundation teachers. These partnerships strengthen continuity of learning and support successful transitions to school. A wide range of excursions and incursions are intentionally planned to extend and enrich children's learning: • Excursions: Kinder programs participate in community-based excursions such as Twisted Science, Kew Traffic School, Woolworths, MOPA, and Chesterfield Farm. These experiences are carefully planned, with all risk assessments and documentation completed to ensure children's safety and engagement. • Incursions: The centre provides diverse incursions that enhance learning across multiple domains, including: ○ Dental health education ○ Aboriginal cultural programs with community Elders ○ Responsible pet education ○ African drumming and cultural dance experiences ○ Sustainability education programs ○ Library and local council visits ○ Community services such as police engagement These experiences are intentionally linked to the curriculum and children's interests. Our program reflects a strong commitment to cultural inclusion and community engagement: • Aboriginal perspectives are embedded through meaningful experiences, including visits from community members and the implementation of a Wurundjeri language program across all rooms. • Learning environments reflect this commitment through the introduction of culturally significant room names. • Collaborative projects, such as the veggie garden renovation, actively involve children, families, and educators. Children participate in planting, maintaining the garden, and composting through a worm farm, fostering sustainability and shared responsibility.
---	--

Standard 1.2 – Practice: Teaching teams facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	Teaching teams intentionally facilitate and extend each child's learning and development through responsive relationships, intentional teaching, meaningful interactions and purposeful learning environments. Educators recognise each child as a capable and active learner and build on their individual strengths, interests, ideas, culture, abilities and emerging skills. Educators use the planning and assessment cycle to identify children's learning, consider their next steps and provide appropriate opportunities for challenge, exploration and investigation. Through scaffolding, modelling, questioning, conversations and shared thinking, educators extend children's knowledge, skills, confidence and problem-solving abilities.



Educators provide children with opportunities to make choices, take appropriate risks, develop independence and contribute to decisions about their learning. Children are encouraged to attempt tasks for themselves, persist through challenges and develop a strong sense of agency.

Teaching teams intentionally use both **indoor and outdoor environments**, STEAM experiences, sustainability initiatives, Nature Explorers and everyday routines as opportunities for learning. Resources are selected and adapted to provide age-appropriate challenge and reflect children's interests and developmental needs.

Educators work collaboratively to ensure learning is consistent across the centre and regularly reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching strategies. Information from observations, children's voice, families and assessment is used to inform future planning and extend learning.

Teaching team demonstrate this through:

- Intentional teaching throughout the day.
- Responsive interactions that follow children's interests and cues.
- Scaffolding learning and gradually reducing support as children develop confidence.
- Providing appropriate challenges that encourage persistence and problem-solving.
- Supporting children's independence and agency.
- Extending children's thinking through open-ended questions and conversations.
- Connecting learning across indoor and outdoor environments.
- Embedding STEAM, sustainability and Nature Explorers into the curriculum.
- Using children's voice to influence learning experiences.
- Assessing learning and identifying meaningful next steps.
- Working collaboratively with families and colleagues.
- Reflecting on and adapting teaching practices to meet individual children's needs.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection

Critical reflection is embedded in daily practice at our service. Teaching teams engage in ongoing evaluation of their teaching approaches, interactions, environments and the effectiveness of the educational program. Evaluations identify strengths, challenge existing practice and identify areas for improvement, directly informing future planning and strengthening outcomes for children.

Our Educational Leaders, **Tania (Under 3s) and Nakita (Over 3s)**, supported by **Curriculum Design Officer Emma**, play a key role in leading and strengthening reflective practice across the service. They work alongside teaching teams to critically examine pedagogical approaches, question current practices and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

Critical reflection is informed by observations, children's voice, assessment, family perspectives, team discussions, professional learning, the Centre Philosophy and the EYLF/VEYLDF. Educators consider not only **what happened**, but **why it happened, the impact on children's learning and wellbeing, and what could be done differently**.

Critical reflection has resulted in meaningful changes to practice, including:

- Adapting teaching strategies to respond to individual children's strengths, interests and learning needs.
- Strengthening inclusive practices to ensure all children can actively participate and experience a sense of belonging.
- Increasing intentional scaffolding and appropriate challenge.
- Adjusting environments and resources to support children's engagement and independence.
- Strengthening approaches for children with additional learning needs.
- Embedding trauma-informed and responsive practices that support children's emotional safety, regulation and wellbeing.
- Using children's voice and family perspectives to inform curriculum decisions.
- Identifying professional learning and mentoring opportunities for educators.

Through this ongoing process, educators are encouraged to **question, reflect, adapt and evaluate** their practice rather than simply repeat established approaches.

Critical reflection is demonstrated through action. The impact of changes is evaluated and used to inform the next stage of the planning cycle, ensuring continuous improvement remains focused on meaningful outcomes for every child.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

Teaching teams engage in meaningful, respectful and collaborative interactions with children, families, professionals and the wider community to extend children's learning, development and wellbeing. Our approach recognises that families and communities bring valuable knowledge, culture, experiences and aspirations that contribute to a deeper understanding of each child.



Strong partnerships with families and allied health professionals support a **holistic and coordinated approach** to children's learning and development, particularly for children with additional needs, developmental differences or those experiencing challenges. Educators collaborate, where appropriate, with **Occupational Therapists (OT), Speech Pathologists, Preschool Field Officers (PSFO), Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS), Inclusion Support Services (ISS), NDIS-funded professionals and other relevant specialists** to ensure strategies are reflected consistently within the educational program. Our school readiness funding has been used to build up our toolkit with resilience, emotional coaching and building children's

Where required and in accordance with legislative and centre requirements, educators also work collaboratively with **Child Protection and other support services** to promote children's safety, wellbeing and best interests.

Trauma-Informed and Responsive Practice

Trauma-informed practices are embedded throughout the centre to support children's emotional wellbeing, regulation and sense of safety. Educators recognise that children's experiences can influence how they engage, communicate and respond to their environment.

Teaching teams work collaboratively with families and relevant professionals to understand children's individual needs and develop responsive strategies that support children to feel **safe, secure, respected, included and ready to engage in learning**.

Families as Genuine Partners

Educators actively engage with families to develop a deeper understanding of each child's:

- Strengths and interests.
- Culture, identity and family background.
- Learning and developmental needs.
- Communication and relationships.
- Routines and preferences.
- Aspirations and goals.
- Experiences outside the service.

Family knowledge and perspectives are incorporated into the **assessment and planning cycle**, ensuring that curriculum decisions are meaningful and relevant to each child.

Shared decision-making is central to our approach. Families are encouraged to contribute ideas, provide feedback, share information about their child and participate in decisions that affect their child's learning and wellbeing.

Community Connections

Strong community partnerships enrich children's learning and provide authentic opportunities to connect with the wider community.

Room programs incorporate experiences such as:

- Library visits and connections with local services. (25 August 2026 book week celebrations)



written by Serena This experience supported the children's language, communication, early literacy and social skills. During the walk, children used words such as "car" and "truck" to share what they noticed, helping them build their vocabulary and confidence in communicating with others. Exploring the library gave the children an opportunity to experience a new environment and become familiar with a place in their local community. Their interest in the soft toys, books and ducks showed their natural curiosity and confidence to explore. During story time, the children listened carefully and enjoyed joining in with the action songs. Copying the actions helped develop their listening, attention, memory and body movement skills, while engaging with the books supported their growing interest in stories and reading

- Cultural events and community celebrations include Orthodox easter.
- Holi celebration – 18 March 2026 written by Emma 4 years ECT

"Holi is celebrated on 18 March. It is an Indian Hindu festival of colours. As it celebrates in spring, it is called the "Festival of Spring." In India, it is a holiday, celebrated wide across the country. Children also celebrate by applying colour to each other. Awtani family very kindly bought a white t-shirt for every child in the Woolert and Babajin and the Gulal colourful powder. Dheepa, Mum spoke about Holi being the festival of colour, about love, family, friends, happiness and laughter. We engaged in colour run, fun and games. They ran back and forth, dodging the colour or joyfully covering themselves in it. Having so much fun and then they had a turn covering their teachers and some parents.

- Fire, police and community safety programs.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and education.
- Connections with local community organisations.

- Nature and sustainability experiences within the local environment.
- Community visitors and incursions.

These experiences extend children's understanding of their community and support them to develop a sense of **belonging, connection, identity and active citizenship**.

Cultural Inclusion

The centre invests in culturally inclusive resources, environments and experiences that reflect the diverse identities, cultures and perspectives of children and families.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded respectfully and authentically throughout the curriculum, including opportunities for children to develop connections to **Country, culture, community and belonging**.

Educators critically reflect on whether cultural perspectives are represented respectfully and meaningfully rather than as isolated activities or celebrations.

Communication and Continuity of Learning

Ongoing communication through **newsletters, digital platforms, conversations, meetings and day-to-day interactions** keeps families informed and provides opportunities for two-way communication.

Information shared between home and the centre supports continuity of learning and enables educators and families to work together to respond to children's emerging interests, strengths, needs and goals.

Impact on the Assessment and Planning Cycle

Family, professional and community knowledge directly contributes to the assessment and planning cycle:

Educators use information from families, children, professionals and community connections to adapt the educational program and strengthen outcomes.

This ensures our assessment and planning cycle remains **dynamic, inclusive, culturally responsive and responsive to the individual child**.

Our partnerships are not an addition to the educational program — they actively shape what we plan, how we teach, how we respond and how we support each child to learn and thrive.

School Readiness Funding – Building Children's Resilience and Emotional Capability

Our **School Readiness Funding (SRF)** has been strategically used to strengthen our centre toolkit and educator practice in the areas of **resilience, emotional coaching and children's emotional capability**.

Through professional learning, resources and evidence-informed approaches, educators have developed a stronger understanding of how to support children to recognise and communicate their emotions, develop self-regulation, build resilience and confidently navigate challenges.

The SRF investment has strengthened educators' capacity to:

- Support children to identify and express emotions.
- Build children's emotional vocabulary.
- Develop children's resilience and persistence.
- Support children to regulate and co-regulate.
- Teach strategies for managing big emotions and challenging situations.
- Build children's confidence and sense of agency.
- Support positive relationships and social problem-solving.
- Provide trauma-informed and emotionally responsive interactions.
- Recognise individual children's needs and adapt teaching approaches accordingly.

These strategies are embedded into everyday interactions, routines, play and learning experiences rather than being delivered as isolated programs.

Educators use the knowledge and resources gained through SRF to **intentionally support children's emotional wellbeing, confidence, resilience and readiness to engage in learning.**

The impact of this investment is reflected through educators' observations, team reflection, children's engagement and the assessment and planning cycle. Educators continue to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and adapt their practice to meet the changing needs of children.

Our SRF investment has strengthened our educators' toolkit, ensuring that resilience, emotional coaching and emotional wellbeing are embedded into everyday practice and contribute to positive learning and developmental outcomes for every child.

Standard 1.3 – Assessment and planning: Teaching teams and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.

Exceeding themes

1. Practice is embedded in centre operations

Teaching teams and coordinators take a **planned, intentional and reflective approach** to implementing and evaluating the educational program for each child. The assessment and planning cycle is embedded into everyday practice and is used to identify children's strengths, interests, learning needs, progress and opportunities for further development.

Dedicated and Protected Planning Time

Planning team members have allocated **dedicated and protected planning time** to support high-quality teaching and learning. Planning time is distributed across the centre to ensure teaching teams have meaningful opportunities to engage deeply with:

- Observations and assessment.
- Children's learning and development.
- Documentation.
- Individual learning goals.
- Program planning.
- Critical reflection.
- Evaluation of teaching strategies.
- Future learning opportunities.

The allocation of planning time across all rooms demonstrates the service's commitment to ensuring educators have the time, resources and professional support required to implement a high-quality educational program.

Individualised Planning

Each child is intentionally planned for over a structured period, with educators taking responsibility for a group of children while working collaboratively as a teaching team.

Planning responsibilities are regularly reviewed and rotated to ensure that **all children's learning, development and wellbeing are consistently monitored and supported**. Educators share knowledge and observations to ensure continuity and consistency when planning for individual children. This approach ensures that planning is not focused only on activities, but on **what each child is learning, what they are ready to learn next and how educators can intentionally extend their learning**.

Children's Voice and Agency

Children's voices are actively embedded within the assessment and planning process. Educators listen to children's ideas, questions, interests, choices and perspectives and use this information to influence the direction of the program.

Children are supported to contribute to:

- Individual learning goals.
- Choice of experiences.
- Indoor and outdoor learning.
- Project and inquiry topics.
- Resource selection.
- Environmental changes.
- Group discussions and decision-making.

This ensures children are active participants in their learning rather than simply recipients of planned experiences.

Collaborative Planning and Reflection

Teaching teams regularly discuss children's learning, engagement, development and progress during **team meetings, room discussions and dedicated planning time**.

Educators use these discussions to:

- Share observations and professional knowledge.
- Identify emerging learning needs.
- Evaluate teaching strategies.
- Consider appropriate challenge and scaffolding.

- Identify next steps for individual children.
- Review the effectiveness of experiences.
- Adjust the learning environment.
- Plan future intentional teaching opportunities.

Reflections are used to inform future planning, ensuring the program remains **responsive, dynamic and relevant to children's current learning.**

Specialist Planning and Centre Priorities

Dedicated planning time is also allocated to specialised areas, including **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), sustainability and other identified centre priorities.**

This ensures these areas are intentionally considered within the educational program, regularly reviewed and connected to children's learning and wellbeing.

For example, sustainability planning may incorporate children's involvement in gardening, composting, recycling, caring for Country and making environmentally responsible choices.

Embedded Planning Cycle

Our approach reflects the ongoing cycle:

The cycle is continuous and responsive. Assessment information is used to inform planning, planning informs teaching, teaching provides evidence for assessment, and reflection identifies opportunities for further improvement.

Our protected planning time ensures educators have the opportunity to move beyond documenting what children have done and focus on understanding what children are learning, why it matters and how we can intentionally extend each child's learning and development.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection

Critical reflection is embedded within the service's approach to strengthening the assessment and planning cycle. Through **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) reviews, Educational Leader meetings, team self-assessments, professional discussions and ongoing evaluation**, the centre has identified and responded to challenges affecting the quality and consistency of planning.

Reflection has identified areas including **workload, time management, clarity of expectations, access to appropriate planning spaces and educators' confidence in implementing the planning cycle.** Rather than viewing these as individual educator issues, the centre has critically examined the systems and structures supporting educators and implemented whole-of-centre improvements.

Strengthening Systems and Educator Support

As a result of this critical reflection, significant improvements have been implemented, including:

- Protected and dedicated planning time for educators.
- Increased time allocated to the Educational Leader for focused planning, mentoring and critical reflection.
- Dedicated support for lead teaching teams and Kindergarten Teachers.
- Structured Educational Leader meetings.
- Regular team self-assessment and review.
- Greater clarity around planning expectations and responsibilities.

- Improved access to appropriate planning spaces and resources.
- Ongoing mentoring and professional conversations.
- Opportunities for educators to discuss challenges and identify practical solutions.

The increased allocation of Educational Leader time provides greater capacity for **individual mentoring, collaborative planning, observation, reflection and professional support**, strengthening consistency across the service.

Evaluating the Impact of Practice

Teaching teams regularly evaluate their experiences of the planning process and the effectiveness of their teaching practices. Through team discussions, professional learning and reflective conversations, educators identify areas for growth and consider how their practice can be strengthened.

Reflection has supported educators to develop a deeper understanding of:

- The assessment and planning cycle.
- The VEYLDF and EYLF.
- Child development and individual learning needs.
- Meaningful observation and assessment.
- Intentional teaching and scaffolding.
- Children's voice and agency.
- Family and community perspectives.
- Inclusive practice.
- Appropriate challenge and learning extension.

Professional learning is then connected back to everyday practice, ensuring that new knowledge is implemented, evaluated and refined.

Critical Reflection and Additional Support

Educators critically reflect on when a child may require additional support beyond the strategies available within the everyday educational program. Where concerns or emerging needs are identified, educators work collaboratively with families to better understand the child and determine appropriate next steps.

	With family involvement and consent where required, this may include seeking guidance or referrals to relevant medical, allied health or specialist professionals, such as Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, PSFO, KIS, ISS or NDIS-funded supports. This collaborative approach ensures that decisions are proactive, responsive and focused on the individual child's learning, development, safety and wellbeing. Impact on Continuous Improvement Critical reflection has resulted in a stronger and more sustainable planning system across the service. Educators are increasingly supported to understand why planning is undertaken, how assessment informs teaching and how reflection leads to improved outcomes for children. The centre continues to monitor the effectiveness of these changes through QIP review, Educational Leader discussions, educator feedback, team self-assessment and evidence from children's learning. Our critical reflection focuses not only on improving educator practice, but also on critically examining the systems that support educators. By investing in time, mentoring, professional learning and collaborative reflection, we strengthen educator capability and ultimately improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for every child.
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community	Meaningful, respectful and ongoing communication between teaching teams and families is embedded across the service. Educators use multiple communication platforms, including HubHello digital portfolios, weekly room reflections, learning stories, face-to-face conversations and day-to-day communication, to ensure families are informed about their child's learning, development, wellbeing and participation in the educational program. Communication is viewed as a two-way partnership, with educators actively seeking and valuing family knowledge, perspectives, feedback and aspirations. Information shared by families contributes to educators' understanding of each child and informs assessment, planning, goal setting and intentional teaching. Collaboration with Professionals and Community Teaching teams actively engage in discussions and ongoing evaluation of children's learning and development with families and relevant professionals. Where appropriate, input from Preschool Field Officers (PSFO), Maternal and Child Health Nurses, psychologists, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and NDIS providers contribute to a holistic understanding of each child's strengths, needs and learning goals. Strategies recommended by professionals are incorporated into everyday practice and reviewed regularly. These may include strategies to support: • Behaviour guidance and emotional regulation. • Routines and transitions. • Toilet learning. • Communication and language development. • Social interactions. • Gross motor development. • Independence and self-help skills. • Sensory and regulation needs. Educators critically reflect on the effectiveness of these strategies and adapt them in consultation with families and professionals to ensure they remain appropriate, consistent and responsive to the child's changing needs. Families as Partners in Decision-Making Families are active participants in decisions about their child's learning and development. Educators seek family perspectives when establishing goals, planning learning experiences and reviewing children's progress. Family insights contribute to:

- Individual learning goals.
- Assessment and planning.
- Understanding children's interests and strengths.
- Identifying strategies that work at home.
- Supporting continuity between home and the service.
- Decisions regarding additional support.
- Reviewing children's progress and next steps.

This collaborative approach recognises families as the **primary source of knowledge about their child** and ensures their perspectives are genuinely reflected in the educational program.

Kindergarten Teaching Toolkit

The **Kindergarten Teaching Toolkit** further supports children's individual learning journeys by providing educators with meaningful, developmentally appropriate resources and strategies that can be adapted to children's strengths, interests and learning needs.

Educators use the toolkit to extend learning, support school readiness and provide appropriate challenge while maintaining a play-based, child-centred approach.

Impact on Practice

Information gathered through families, professionals and community partnerships is actively incorporated into the assessment and planning cycle:

Listen → Collaborate → Plan → Implement → Review → Reflect → Adapt

This ensures that the educational program remains **dynamic, inclusive, culturally responsive and individualised**.

Our partnerships extend beyond communication. **Family knowledge, professional expertise and community connections actively influence what we plan, how we teach and how we respond to each child's learning and development.**

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 1

Improvement Plan

Standard/ element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?
1.3	Assessment as learning and visible observations.	Strengthen pedagogical practice and ensure documentation reflects intentional teaching and learning outcomes for the children	M	Embed reflective practice discussions in team meetings Documentation audits • Reflective meeting minutes • Improvement in program quality • Educator feedback	Responsibility of Educational Leaders Nakita and Tania /Kinder teachers Emma and Rhiannon The Educational Leader will continue to support teaching teams to strengthen documentation practices and the development of summative assessments. Through ongoing mentoring, professional dialogue, and critical reflection.	Implementation by ongoing monthly review
Progress notes	Quality Area 1: Educational Program What action was taken?					

- Educational Leaders provided ongoing mentoring, professional dialogue and critical reflection to strengthen documentation and assessment practices.
- Reflective practice discussions were embedded into team meetings.
- Documentation audits were used to review the quality and effectiveness of programming.
- Parent–Teacher Meetings were facilitated in the Mirram and Coobaaroo rooms in March 2026.
- Summative assessments were completed for all children in July 2026, drawing on observations, assessment for learning, family contributions and children's voices.

What was the result?

- Teaching teams developed a stronger shared understanding of children's learning and developmental progress.
- Family information and children's voices were incorporated into assessment and future curriculum planning.
- Summative assessments identified children's strengths, interests, capabilities and priorities for future learning.
- Assessment information was used to inform intentional teaching, curriculum planning and transitions.

What impact did it have?

- Educational planning became more **individualised, intentional and responsive** to each child's learning journey.
- Partnerships with families were strengthened through shared discussions about children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- There was greater continuity between children's experiences at home and within the educational program.
- Teaching teams were better able to identify priorities and plan meaningful extensions to children's learning.

What evidence demonstrates this impact?

- March 2026 Parent–Teacher Meeting documentation.
- July 2026 completed summative assessments for all children.
- Family contributions and collaborative goal-setting forms. (start of the year and mid year)
- Reflective meeting minutes.
- Documentation audits.
- Educational program and planning documentation demonstrating links between observations, assessment and intentional teaching. (July 2026)

2026 Educational Goals and Feedback forms

Send to the team on 16/8/2026

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/efSVCeVjMR?origin=lprLink>

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Area 2

Summary of strengths for Quality Area 2

Strengths	Strong and embedded commitment to protecting and promoting every child's health, safety, wellbeing and rights. • Health and safety are integrated across: ○ Teaching and learning ○ Daily routines ○ Environments ○ Risk management ○ Professional learning ○ Decision-making • Educators support children's physical and emotional wellbeing through responsive relationships, emotional coaching, wellbeing programs and safe environments. • Comprehensive risk management and safety procedures ensure hazards are identified, assessed, monitored and addressed. • Teaching teams maintain compliance with mandatory training, including: ○ Child protection ○ Trauma-informed practice ○ Food safety ○ Child safety • Effective systems manage health records, medical conditions, medications, allergies and immunisation information. • Individual health needs are consistently identified, communicated and supported. • Consistent hygiene and infection control practices minimise the spread of illness. • Outdoor learning and physical activity support children's health, coordination, physical development and wellbeing. • Clear leadership and accountability support OHS compliance and shared responsibility for health and safety. • Health and safety practices are regularly reviewed through critical reflection and continuous improvement. • Child safety and safeguarding are embedded across governance, everyday practice and service operations. • Educators incorporate child safety into: ○ Daily routines ○ Active supervision ○ Risk assessments ○ Educational programs ○ Interactions ○ Environmental planning ○ Policies and procedures ○ Professional learning • Teaching teams actively apply the Child Safe Standards. • Children are supported to: ○ Understand their rights ○ Express their views and feelings ○ Make choices ○ Understand personal boundaries ○ Identify trusted adults
-----------	--

- Develop help-seeking strategies
- Educators create environments where children feel **safe, respected, heard, valued and empowered**.
- Children's **voice, agency and participation** are recognised as important protective factors.
- Child safety is embedded into how educators **plan, supervise, communicate, assess risk and make decisions**.
- Child safety is viewed as an **everyday responsibility**, rather than simply a compliance requirement.
- Teaching teams regularly reflect on whether children are:
 - Safe
 - Heard
 - Aware of their rights
 - Protected from harm
- Cooking experiences provide authentic opportunities for children to develop:
 - Healthy eating awareness
 - Nutrition knowledge
 - Independence
 - Self-help skills
- Small-group cooking experiences promote:
 - Active participation
 - Safe food practices
 - Fine and gross motor development
 - Mathematical thinking
 - Language development
 - Problem-solving
 - Social skills
- Cooking demonstrates how **health, wellbeing, safety and learning are intentionally integrated** into everyday practice.

Safe Sleep and Rest

- Educators demonstrate a strong commitment to **safe sleep and rest practices** aligned with current recommendations and regulatory requirements.
- Safe sleep practices include:
 - Safe sleep environments
 - Regular sleep checks
 - Active supervision
 - Individualised sleep routines
 - Responding to children's health and wellbeing needs
- Educators work collaboratively with families to promote **consistent sleep practices**.
- Safe sleep information is shared through:
 - Family Handbook
 - Newsletters
 - Emails
 - Family communication boards
- The **Under 3s teaching team has completed Red Nose Safe Sleep training**, strengthening knowledge, confidence and consistency.
- Road safety education is embedded through **intentional teaching, practical experiences and risk management**.

- Children develop an understanding of:
 - Pedestrian safety
 - Road awareness
 - Car park safety
 - Hazard identification
 - Making safe choices
- The **Babajin Kinder group's Traffic School excursions** provide practical opportunities to apply road safety knowledge.
- Road safety is incorporated into:
 - Excursion planning
 - Community walks
 - Risk assessments
 - Everyday learning experiences
- Professional learning strengthens educators' capacity to embed **road safety awareness** throughout the curriculum.
- Partnerships with families support **consistent road safety messages between home, the Centre and the community**.
- Health, safety and wellbeing practices are reviewed through:
 - Risk assessments
 - Team discussions
 - Professional learning
 - Quality Improvement Planning
 - Service evaluation
 - Critical reflection
- Feedback from **children, families, educators and relevant professionals** informs continuous improvement.
- The Centre uses a continuous improvement cycle of:
 - **Identifying risks**
 - **Implementing controls**
 - **Monitoring practice**
 - **Reflecting**
 - **Improving outcomes**
- Health, safety and wellbeing are fundamental to **every learning experience, relationship, environment and decision** across the Centre.

Exceeding themes

1. Practice is embedded in centre operations

Health, nutrition and wellbeing practices are embedded throughout everyday routines, relationships, environments and the educational program. Educators intentionally create opportunities for children to develop healthy habits, understand wellbeing and make informed choices about their health and safety.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

Healthy eating is actively promoted through the educational program, with children participating in conversations, food preparation and hands-on cooking experiences alongside our Chef, **Angelina**.

Menus are developed in alignment with the **Australian Dietary Guidelines** and guidance from the **Healthy Eating Advisory Service**, with tools such as Food Checker used to support the review of nutritional quality and ensure meals and snacks meet appropriate nutritional standards.

Menus also reflect our commitment to sustainability through the inclusion of:

- Seasonal produce.
- Locally sourced ingredients where possible.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Bush tucker foods such as lemon myrtle, wattle seed and kangaroo.
- Opportunities to discuss where food comes from and how it is produced.

Children participate in experiences such as **Eat a Rainbow**, encouraging them to explore, taste and develop an appreciation for a variety of nutritious foods. (April 2026)

Healthy habits are reinforced throughout the day through:

- Drinking water.
- Oral hygiene routines.
- Conversations about nutrition.
- Hand hygiene before meals.
- Positive and relaxed mealtime experiences.
- Encouraging children to listen to their bodies and develop independence.

Physical activity is embedded across both indoor and outdoor environments through planned and spontaneous experiences.

Children have opportunities to develop:

- Strength and coordination.
- Balance and gross motor skills.
- Body awareness.
- Spatial awareness.
- Confidence and physical capability.
- Persistence and resilience.

Educators provide opportunities for appropriate challenge and risk-taking within **safe, supervised and intentionally planned environments**. Children are supported to understand safety expectations, contribute to decisions and develop an understanding of how to manage risks.

Health and wellbeing practices are consistently reflected in everyday routines and centre operations. Educators implement health and safety policies and procedures, including **child safe practices, OHS requirements, hygiene, infection control and safe sleep practices**.

Educators recognise that emotional wellbeing is equally important and provide responsive, respectful relationships that support children to feel safe, secure and connected.

Children are active participants in learning about the relationship between **health, food and the environment**.

Experiences such as:

- Gardening.
- Growing vegetables and herbs.
- Composting.
- Food preparation.
- Exploring seasonal produce.
- Learning about food waste.
- Caring for plants and living things.

support children to understand sustainability, healthy eating and the life cycle of food.

These experiences provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop responsibility, agency and a connection to the natural environment.

Outdoor experiences, including **mud play**, are intentionally used to support children's holistic development.

Mud play (mud pit) provides opportunities for:

- Sensory exploration.
- Creativity and imagination.
- Social interaction.
- Collaboration.
- Problem-solving.
- Scientific investigation.
- Language development.
- Fine and gross motor development.
- Physical wellbeing.

Educators recognise the value of children's active engagement with natural materials and provide appropriate opportunities for children to explore, investigate and take manageable risks.

Children are active participants in decisions about their health, safety and wellbeing. Educators encourage children to contribute ideas, make choices, develop independence and understand why healthy and safe practices are important.

Health, nutrition and wellbeing are not treated as separate curriculum topics. They are embedded in children's everyday experiences, routines, relationships, environments and learning, supporting children to develop the knowledge, skills, confidence and agency to make healthy and safe choices.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection



Figure 8 –BABAJIN INDOOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM 6th may till 22nd May 2026

Critical reflection is embedded within our approach to health, nutrition and wellbeing. Teaching team members, including our Chef **Angelina**, actively participate in professional networks such as the **Monash Network and Link Health**, attending meetings and engaging in shared learning to strengthen knowledge and remain informed about current approaches to nutrition, health and wellbeing.

Professional knowledge is critically considered and translated into everyday practice. The centre uses tools such as **FoodChecker** and strategies from the **Healthy Achievement Program** to evaluate food provision, menu choices and nutrition practices. Educators and the Chef reflect on whether current approaches are meeting children's nutritional needs, supporting healthy eating and providing meaningful opportunities for children to develop positive relationships with food. (Angelina completed the food training by 18 Aug 2026 by healthy achievement advisory service) Menu planning and food provision are regularly reviewed with consideration given to **nutrition, children's preferences, cultural needs, sustainability and food waste**.

Critical reflection has supported a focus on:

- Appropriate portion sizes.
- Reducing unnecessary food waste.
- Using seasonal and sustainable ingredients.
- Providing a variety of nutritious foods.
- Encouraging children's participation in food preparation.
- Supporting children's developing independence.
- Considering individual dietary and nutritional needs.

Educators reflect on children's engagement with food and use this information to adapt experiences and teaching strategies.

Supporting Children with Diverse Eating Needs - Teaching teams critically reflect on how best to support children with diverse eating needs, including **fussy eaters and children experiencing challenges with eating**.

Rather than pressuring children to eat, educators use respectful and responsive strategies such as:

- Sensory exploration of food.
- Exploring food through sight, smell, touch and taste.
- Involving children in food preparation.
- Talking positively about different foods.
- Providing opportunities to make choices.
- Introducing unfamiliar foods gradually.
- Working collaboratively with families.
- Seeking professional guidance where additional support is required.

These strategies are regularly reviewed to consider what is effective for each individual child and adapted according to children's responses, family knowledge and professional advice.

Professional learning, including **road safety training and health and wellbeing professional development**, contributes to ongoing critical reflection and strengthens educators' understanding of their responsibilities under the **EYLF, NQS and relevant health and safety frameworks**. (Emma attended Road safety training end of 2025)

Educators consider how new knowledge can be applied within everyday practice rather than treating professional learning as an isolated requirement.

A whole-centre **Eat the Rainbow** project was initiated by **Nakita and Angelina** to strengthen children's understanding of healthy eating, nutrition and wellbeing.

The project will be extended across room programs, with children exploring and tasting fruits and vegetables according to different colours each week.

The project provides opportunities for children to:

- Explore a variety of fruits and vegetables.

- Develop positive attitudes towards healthy foods.
- Engage their senses through sight, smell, touch and taste.
- Learn about colour and nutrition.
- Develop language and vocabulary.
- Participate in food preparation.
- Make choices and express preferences.
- Develop an understanding of healthy eating and wellbeing.

Teaching teams will critically reflect on children's participation, engagement and responses throughout the project and use this information to determine future learning opportunities.

Impact of Critical Reflection

Critical reflection enables the centre to move beyond simply providing healthy food and health experiences to considering **how effectively our practices support children's learning, wellbeing, participation and long-term healthy habits.**

The ongoing cycle of:

Professional Learning → Reflection → Change in Practice → Implementation → Evaluation

ensures that health, nutrition, sustainability and wellbeing practices continue to evolve and remain responsive to the needs of children, families and the wider community.

Our critical reflection is focused on asking not only what we provide for children, but whether our practices are meaningful, inclusive, sustainable and achieving positive outcomes for every child.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

Strong partnerships with families are central to supporting children's health and wellbeing. Families are required to provide updated communication plans when there are changes to children's medical or dietary needs, ensuring consistency between home and the centre.

Teaching Team work collaboratively with families to support children's individual health needs, particularly in areas such as eating, routines, and wellbeing. Communication is ongoing through weekly wrap up, newsletters, daily updates, weekly reflection and shared learning information, ensuring families are well-informed and actively involved.

Community engagement further enriches our health and safety practices. Initiatives such as dental visits (for both under 3s and kinder children), road safety education programs, and community gardening projects strengthen children's understanding of health, safety, and wellbeing within a broader context.

Police visit 2 July written by Kerry *The children developed an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of community helpers and explored how police officers contribute to keeping people safe. They demonstrated a growing awareness of their community and the importance of helping others. Through discussions about road safety, wearing seatbelts, and knowing when to call Triple Zero (000), the children strengthened their understanding of practices that support their own health, safety, and wellbeing. The children showed curiosity by asking questions, making predictions, sharing prior knowledge, and actively engaging with the police equipment and vehicle through hands-on exploration. The children confidently shared their ideas, observations, and experiences, listened respectfully to the police officer, and participated in meaningful conversations using appropriate language related to community safety.*

Dental visit Babajin children shared their learning – 8 July 2026 reflection written by Wendy

Learning about keeping our teeth healthy is an important part of supporting children's overall health and wellbeing. Experiences like this help children develop positive lifelong habits and an understanding of why good oral hygiene is important. Min provided the children with practical knowledge about how to care for their teeth, including the correct brushing technique and the importance of brushing twice a day. This visit also strengthened our connection with the wider community, giving the children an opportunity to learn about the role of a dentist in a positive and engaging way. Experiences like these can help children feel more confident and less anxious about future visits to the dentist. Several children demonstrated their prior knowledge by identifying healthy foods and confidently answering Min's questions, showing their growing understanding of how healthy eating and good dental hygiene work together to keep their teeth strong and healthy.

Partnerships with local organisations, including Monash Council and health services, support continuous improvement and access to resources that benefit children and families.

At CPELC Emma 4 yrs kinder leads the group, the Babajin 4-year-old Kindergarten group participates in a meaningful, hands-on excursion to the local Woolworths supermarket, where children walk to the store to purchase ingredients for cooking experiences back at the Centre. This experience forms part of our intentional curriculum and aligns with the principles of the Early Years Learning and Development Framework V2.0.



The excursion provides children with authentic, real-world learning opportunities, supporting numeracy, literacy, social development, and decision-making skills. Children are actively involved in selecting ingredients, recognising items, counting, and engaging in conversations with teaching teams about healthy choices, sustainability, and food origins.

Following the excursion, children participate in a cooking experience where they use the ingredients they purchased to prepare and cook food. This process supports children to develop independence, fine and gross motor skills, and an understanding of food preparation, hygiene, and safety practices. Teaching teams intentionally scaffold children's learning through discussions, modelling, and shared experiences.

This end-to-end process—from planning, shopping, and cooking—supports children to make connections between their learning and the real world. It promotes agency, as children are actively involved in decision-making, and encourages collaboration and teamwork as they work together to create meals.

Families are engaged in this process through communication and sharing of learning experiences, strengthening the connection between home and the Centre. This experience also supports healthy eating habits and fosters an appreciation for fresh, nutritious food.

Risk management and safety practices are embedded throughout the excursion, with thorough planning, active supervision, and adherence to excursion policies and procedures. This ensures that children can safely engage in meaningful, high-quality learning experiences beyond the Centre.

This practice demonstrates an exceeding approach by providing authentic, child-led learning opportunities that integrate community engagement, real-world experiences, and intentional teaching, while promoting children's independence, confidence, and sense of belonging.

We had Whole centre evacuation due to a fire the occurred in the adjacent building on 4 May 2026 at the pavilion – The Babajin 4 yrs kinder room extended their learning by drawing who to call 000 for fire, ambulance and police and practise emergency procedure such as get down low and go go....



	 The babajin and woolert attended the fire station on 28 August 2026 - To extend on the children's learning on 000, what to do an event of a fire – crawl down low go go go and smoke alarms  Menshed constructed a new shelf in the Mirram room to enhance the learning environment by promoting children's independence, responsibility, and organisation through a dedicated space for their belongings.
--	--

Summary of strengths in practice where there is evidence of Exceeding NQS themes

Notes:

- This Exceeding NQS section is to be completed when there is evidence of one or more of the Exceeding NQS themes demonstrated in the practice at your service.
- Additional information about the Exceeding NQS themes is available on ACECQA's [Exceeding the NQS](#) webpage.

Standard 2.2 – Safety: Each child is protected.

Exceeding themes

1. Practice is embedded in centre operations

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre (CPELC), the **Child Safe Standards are deeply embedded within everyday practice and intentionally reflected across all educational programs, environments, interactions and decision-making**. Our approach demonstrates a strong commitment to children's safety, wellbeing, participation and rights and aligns with the principles of the **Early Years Learning and Development Framework V2.0 (VEYLDF)** and the **National Quality Standard (NQS)**.

Child safety is viewed as a **whole-of-centre responsibility** and is not treated as a standalone policy or annual training requirement. Teaching teams actively consider children's safety, voice, agency and rights when planning experiences, assessing environments, supervising children and developing relationships.

From 2022 – ongoing Child Safe Standards are a consistent focus within teaching team meetings and professional discussions. Teaching teams engage with:

- Child safety training.
- Videos and professional resources.
- Group discussions.
- Practical scenarios and examples.
- Policy and procedure reviews.
- Reflective conversations.
- Ongoing professional learning.

These opportunities support educators to critically examine how Child Safe Standards are demonstrated through everyday interactions and ensure that educators can confidently **articulate, recognise and implement child-safe practices**.

Professional learning is connected directly to practice, with educators encouraged to reflect on how child safety can be strengthened within their individual room environments and educational programs.

Protective Behaviours and Body Safety Raising awareness for Bravehearts week of 7/9/2026 (Evidence safety network Coobaaroo 6 august 2026 learning story)

Protective behaviours are intentionally embedded across all rooms through age-appropriate conversations, resources, stories, songs and experiences. Children are supported to develop an understanding of:

- Body autonomy.

- Personal boundaries.
- Consent.
- Respect for themselves and others.
- Safe and unsafe feelings.
- Speaking up.
- Saying no.
- Identifying trusted adults.
- Seeking help when they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Age-appropriate resources are used to support these conversations, including:

- *My Underpants Rule* – K. & R. Power.
- *The Invisible String* – P. Karst.
- *No Means No* – J. Sanders.
- *My Body Is Special and Private* – A. Simeone.

In the **Coobaaroo Room**, children explore *My Body Is Special and Private*, with families encouraged and supported to continue these important conversations at home.

In the **Woolert and Mirram Rooms**, the concept of “**Boss of My Own Body**” is reinforced through songs, discussions and intentional teaching experiences. These experiences support children to understand that they have ownership of their bodies and that their personal boundaries and choices should be respected.

Children’s Voice, Rights and Agency Children are actively encouraged to express their views, make choices and communicate when something does not feel right. Educators listen to children’s perspectives and respond respectfully to their concerns.

Child safety is therefore connected directly to **children’s agency and participation**. Children are supported to understand that their voice matters and that trusted adults will listen to and support them.

Community Safety Education CPELC also works with community services to extend children’s understanding of safety beyond the Centre environment.

	Children participate in experiences with community organisations and emergency services, as well as safety education such as: • Responsible Pet Ownership. • Road safety education. • Emergency services visits. • Community safety discussions. • Practical safety experiences. These experiences provide authentic opportunities for children to develop knowledge about identifying risks, making safe choices and seeking assistance within their community. Partnerships with Families Child safety education is strengthened through partnerships with families. Families are informed about the protective behaviours and child safety learning being explored within the program and are encouraged to continue age-appropriate conversations at home. This creates greater consistency between home and the Centre and supports families to feel confident discussing body safety, boundaries, consent and help-seeking with their children. Continuous Improvement Teaching teams regularly reflect on how effectively Child Safe Standards are embedded within their practice. Through teaching team meetings, professional learning, QIP reflection and team discussions, educators identify opportunities to strengthen child safety education, supervision, environments and children's participation. Child safety is embedded in what we teach, how we interact, how we supervise, how we listen and how we make decisions. Our goal is for every child to feel safe, respected, heard, valued and confident to speak up.
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	We intentionally create opportunities for children to build agency and understanding of safety. Children are supported to recognise and communicate safety risks, such as informing teaching teams when they move between indoor and outdoor environments and understanding expectations during play. Active supervision is a priority across the service, supported by strong communication between teaching teams to ensure children are always safe and supported. Following incidents, we critically reflect as a team on how practices can be improved to prevent future occurrences, demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement. Our emergency management procedures are practiced monthly, with rotating teaching team leadership to build shared understanding and confidence. These practices align with our centre philosophy of “Keeping Children Safe” and are embedded through intentional teaching and collaborative partnerships with families.



We maintain strong partnerships with external professionals, including Maternal Health Nurses, speech pathologists, psychologists, and NDIS providers. Their guidance informs individualised strategies to support children's development, including behaviour guidance, routines, language development, and self-care skills. These strategies are consistently reviewed and implemented across both the centre and home environments.

We use critical reflection to drive continuous improvement in child safety practices. Feedback from teaching team surveys, audits, and professional discussions is used to identify areas for growth. For example, we identified the need to strengthen educators' confidence in articulating Child Safe Standards, and we are responding by embedding more opportunities for discussion, role play, and reflective practice.

Risk management practices are embedded in daily operations. Teaching teams complete and review risk assessments, particularly during excursions, incursions, and daily routines. Emergency procedures are practiced regularly, with different teaching teams taking leadership roles to strengthen shared knowledge and confidence.

At CPELC, management and teaching team have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities in promoting and protecting children's safety and wellbeing. This includes the responsibility to identify, respond to, and report any concerns related to a child at risk of abuse or neglect, in line with regulatory requirements and best practice.

Team members have completed Child Safety training, Reportable Conduct training, and Trauma-Informed Practice training. These professional learning opportunities strengthen educators' capacity to recognise signs of harm, respond appropriately to disclosures, and implement practices that support children's emotional safety and wellbeing.

These practices align with the principles of the Early Years Learning and Development Framework V2.0, particularly the emphasis on safe, secure, and respectful environments, as well as children's rights and wellbeing. Trauma-informed approaches are embedded into daily interactions, ensuring that teaching teams respond to children with empathy, consistency, and sensitivity to individual needs and experiences.

Our centre has clear policies and procedures in place to guide reporting and response processes. These are regularly reviewed, discussed, and reinforced through team meetings, inductions, and ongoing professional learning, ensuring all teaching team remain confident and competent in fulfilling their child protection responsibilities.

This shared commitment to child safety demonstrates an exceeding approach, where safeguarding children is embedded in everyday practice, supported by ongoing training, reflective practice, and a strong culture of accountability across the entire service.

Mentoring and support are provided by experienced team members and leadership, ensuring new teaching team are supported to apply their knowledge in practice. This includes opportunities to observe, ask questions, and engage in reflective discussions about child safety practices. Through this structured and supportive induction process, CPELC ensures that all new team members are equipped to contribute to a safe, responsive, and child-centred environment from the outset.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

Communication with families is a key strength at CPELC. We provide regular updates through Hubhello portfolios, learning stories, weekly reflections, and ongoing verbal communication. Families are informed and engaged in their child's learning journey and are supported through access to professional recommendations, resources, and guidance.

Leadership and OHS roles Tania and Sonya are clearly defined, with allocated planning time supporting critical areas such as emergency management, allergy management, sustainability, and incident reporting. This ensures compliance and promotes a proactive approach to safety and wellbeing.

All Child Protection Policies and Child Safe Standards are regularly reviewed and updated. Teaching teams complete Mandatory Reporting training annually, and we utilise resources from the Commission for Children and Young People to strengthen our understanding of the Reportable Conduct Scheme and child protection responsibilities.

Our approach to child safety is proactive, responsive, and embedded across all areas of practice. We demonstrate a strong commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where children's rights are upheld, their voices are heard, and their wellbeing is prioritised at all times.

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 2

Improvement Plan

Standard/element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?
2.2	Strengthen child safe practice consistency and compliance awareness.	Management, And teaching team are aware of their roles and responsibilities about child safety, including the need to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.	H	Ensure full compliance with child safe standards and embed a culture of safety and vigilance. • Review child safe policies. • Mandatory annual child protection training. • Include child safety as standing agenda item in meetings. • Monitor incident	Nominated Supervisor / All Team members Teaching teams understand and implement child protection responsibilities Display and regularly review: • Code of Conduct • Child Safe policies Use real-life scenarios and case studies Strengthen educator understanding of reportable conduct and mandatory reporting obligation Ensure all new teaching team complete induction covering child safe practices.	Every term
Progress Notes	Training records Child safety NQF child safe culture guide Self assessment and risk assessment tool completed on the PD day 7 Jan 2026. • Incident reports • Compliance audit outcomes Minutes from child safety training 10/4/2026 more than half team members completed mandatory online child safety training. The remaining will complete after term 1 school holidays. The centre will close at 5pm					

on Tuesday 12 May
Monday 13 July
Wednesday 12 August

The training ensures our team remains up to date with:
Child child safety is paramount

- Child safe principles and practices, including child-safe recruitment and esafety
- Child protection laws
- Identifying and responding to inappropriate conduct
- Grooming risk indicators
- Digital safety and appropriate boundaries
- Reporting pathways and responsibilities
- Processes for maintaining training records
- Culturally safe and responsive practices
- Tuesday 12 May we had our child safety training –
Active and dynamic supervision, inappropriate conduct, empowering children to give consent and speak up – what does this look like?
- Monday 13 July 2026 the 2nd child safety training covering child abuse, physical signs, behavioural signs, developmental and learning signs, relational and environmental signs, what to do if a child discloses to you about abuse, narrative to use such as what happened, tell me more, who was there and no leading questions. Child safe policy and wellbeing (reporting process ELAA guide to reportable conduct and template to document suspected case of child abuse. Handout given to team on traffic light quick reference guide to monitor and managed manage sexualised behaviours in children. Looked at when to notify ACECQA, CSCG incident response template, National decision tree.
Implemented an extra layer of child safety for the Babajin and Woolert kinder group such as using a walkie talkie. Discussed with team that in term 3 child safety network to be implemented across all rooms in educational planning – reading the book boss of my own body
 - Looking at who at children's safe adults
 - Continue using correct body parts
 - Assess what children know about body safety and safety network from goal.
 - Coobaaroo plan Child Safety Daily Practice All educators support children to build body awareness and an understanding of personal safety through everyday routines, play, and intentional teaching. Educators introduce and reinforce the names of body. Educators also support children to use both verbal and non-verbal communication to express their feelings and let trusted adults know when they feel uncomfortable, worried, or need help. To extend children's understanding of their safety network, educators introduce and discuss the trusted people in their lives, including family members, educators, police officers, firefighters, and doctors, helping children recognise who they can go to for care, support, and safety. (Learning, Communication, Wellbeing) Songs: My Body, My Rules and Boss of My Body
 - From end of aug 2026 the team where given time to complete the foundations child safety training module 3 and 4.
 - **Superhero week Monday 7 till Friday 11 September 2026**
 - [Free Child Protection Resources | Bravehearts](#)
 - [Information on implementing Child Safe Standard 3 | vecra.vic.gov.au](#)
 - Strong emphasis on Children are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation (3.1).
 - teaching children about their rights, personal safety, body autonomy, and respectful relationships through age-appropriate experiences and discussions
 - Parents – proactive steps link below
 - [Protecting Children from Grooming and Sexual Abuse: 7 Protective Steps Parents Can Take | Bravehearts](#)
- Team meeting on the 8th September focus on Safe pedagogical photographs

Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Area 3

Summary of strengths for Quality Area 3

Strengths	CPELC provides well-designed, purposeful indoor and outdoor environments that support children's holistic development, wellbeing, learning and sense of belonging. Environments are intentionally planned to encourage children to explore, investigate, create, take appropriate risks and develop independence. Strengths and Embedded Practice • Well-designed indoor and outdoor environments supporting holistic development. • Strong indoor-outdoor flow that promotes uninterrupted play and learning. • Environments that encourage children's agency, independence and decision-making. • Purposeful use of natural, open-ended and recycled materials. • Embedded sustainability practices with active participation from children. • Rich outdoor educational experiences. • Nature-based learning across all age groups. • Opportunities for physical challenge, exploration and appropriate risk-taking. • Environments that support creativity, inquiry and problem-solving. • Regular review of environments to ensure they remain responsive to children's interests and learning needs. Indoor and Outdoor Learning The indoor and outdoor environments are viewed as extensions of the educational program, rather than separate spaces. Strong indoor-outdoor flow enables children to move between environments and continue their learning, play and investigations without unnecessary interruption. Educators intentionally consider how each environment can provide different opportunities for: • Exploration and discovery. • Creative expression. • Physical development. • Social interaction. • Quiet reflection. • Sensory experiences. • Construction and problem-solving. • Nature connection. • Risk-taking and challenge. Children are encouraged to make choices about where and how they engage, strengthening their agency, independence and confidence as capable learners. Sustainability and Natural Materials Sustainability is embedded throughout the physical environment and educational program. Children actively participate in caring for their environment through experiences such as gardening, composting, recycling, reusing materials and caring for living things. Natural and recycled materials are intentionally incorporated into children's play and learning. Loose parts and open-ended resources encourage children to create, design, investigate and problem-solve without a predetermined outcome. These experiences support children to develop an understanding of resource conservation, environmental responsibility and their role in caring for the world around them. Nature Explorers Program The Nature Explorers Program is a core component of our educational approach and provides children with regular opportunities to connect with natural environments throughout the terms. Through hands-on, inquiry-based experiences, children are encouraged to: • Investigate nature and natural materials.
-----------	--

- Ask questions and develop theories.
 - Observe changes in the environment.
 - Explore plants, insects and living things.
 - Develop curiosity and persistence.
 - Take appropriate risks and challenges.
 - Build resilience and confidence.
 - Develop a sense of responsibility for the environment.
 - Develop a deeper connection to nature and Country.
- Nature-based learning is embedded across all age groups and incorporated into everyday routines and experiences within the Centre.

Bush Kinder

The Nature Explorers approach is further extended through **Bush Kinder**, providing children with opportunities to learn in natural environments beyond the traditional Centre setting. Bush Kinder supports children to experience:

- Nature-based inquiry.
 - Physical challenge.
 - Risk-benefit learning.
 - Problem-solving.
 - Collaboration.
 - Creativity.
 - Resilience.
 - Environmental responsibility.
 - Connection to Country and community.
- CPELC has received a **\$6,000 Bush Kinder Grant**, providing an opportunity to further strengthen our capacity to develop meaningful nature-based learning experiences and resources.

The grant demonstrates the Centre's commitment to investing in environments and experiences that extend children's learning beyond the traditional classroom and strengthen children's connection with nature.

Children's Agency and the Environment

Children's perspectives and interests contribute to decisions about the learning environment. Educators observe how children use spaces and resources and reflect on whether environments provide appropriate challenge, choice and opportunities for independent learning.

Children are encouraged to contribute ideas about:

- What resources are provided.
- How spaces are used.
- What they would like to investigate.
- How the environment can be improved.
- Sustainability projects.
- Nature-based experiences.

Our environments are intentionally designed to invite children to explore, question, create, move, connect and learn. The environment itself acts as a third teacher, supporting children's agency, wellbeing, curiosity and lifelong learning.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	At CPELC, the design, use and ongoing development of our physical environment is underpinned by intentional, collaborative and critical reflection. Educators continually evaluate how the environment influences children's safety, wellbeing, learning, engagement, agency and sense of belonging. Our approach aligns with the National Quality Standard (NQS) and the principles and practices of the Early Years Learning and Development Framework V2.0 (VEYLDF). Educators reflect on the environment as an active contributor to children's learning and consider not only what resources and spaces are available, but how effectively they are supporting children's learning and development. Reflective Environmental Design Our indoor and outdoor environments are intentionally designed to provide a diverse range of learning opportunities, including: Calm and quiet spaces., Collaborative and social play, Imaginative and dramatic play, Sensory exploration. Construction and problem-solving, Creative expression. Gross motor development, Nature-based learning, Opportunities for appropriate challenge and risk-taking. The strong connection between indoor and outdoor spaces enables children to move fluidly between environments, supporting continuity of learning, uninterrupted play and deeper engagement in inquiry. Educators regularly observe how children use spaces, resources and materials and reflect on whether they are meeting children's current interests, developmental needs and emerging capabilities. A rich variety of open-ended and loose-part resources is intentionally provided to encourage children to: Create and design, Investigate and experiment, Problem-solve, Develop theories, Collaborate with others, Represent their ideas, Make independent choices. Educators reflect on which resources encourage sustained engagement and which may need to be adapted, replaced or extended. Children's feedback, interests and actions are used to inform environmental decisions, ensuring the environment remains responsive rather than static. Environmental decisions are informed by ongoing risk assessments, safety reviews and critical reflection. Educators consider potential hazards while also recognising the importance of providing children with appropriate challenge and opportunities to develop confidence and risk-management skills. The team considers whether environments are: Safe and accessible. Inclusive and equitable. Developmentally appropriate. Responsive to individual needs. Supportive of children's agency. Accessible to children with diverse abilities. Appropriate for both active and quiet learning. Supporting emotional wellbeing and regulation. Where a need or risk is identified, educators collaboratively consider appropriate control measures and evaluate their effectiveness. Teaching teams engage in professional dialogue to review environmental experiences and identify opportunities for improvement. Reflections may occur through: • Team meetings. Educational Leader discussions. Room reflections. QIP reviews. Risk assessments. Children's voice. Family feedback. Observations of children's engagement. Professional learning. Educators share observations and perspectives to ensure environmental decisions are informed by more than one viewpoint. Critical reflection follows an ongoing cycle: For example, educators may identify that a space is not supporting sustained engagement, that resources are not sufficiently challenging, or that an environment requires greater accessibility. The team then considers possible changes, implements them and evaluates the impact on children's learning and wellbeing.

	Children's participation in caring for and developing their environment further strengthens this process. Gardening, recycling, composting, caring for resources and maintaining shared spaces support children to develop responsibility, respect and a sense of ownership. Through ongoing critical reflection, CPELC ensures that the physical environment remains safe, inclusive, purposeful and responsive. Our approach recognises that the environment is not simply a space where learning occurs — it is an active part of the curriculum that influences children's choices, relationships, independence, curiosity, wellbeing and learning. Critical reflection ensures that environmental decisions remain purposeful and continue to evolve in response to children's changing needs, interests and capabilities.
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	A key example of this process is the development of our outdoor learning spaces. Following a critical incident review, teaching teams identified the need to create dedicated running zones to support safe physical play. Multiple design proposals were considered in collaboration with teaching team, families, leadership, and monash council. The upgraded outdoor environment reflects a balance between safety, risk management, and children's right to engage in challenging and meaningful play. This demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and shared responsibility for children's safety. Through ongoing reflection, collaboration, and responsive design, CPELC demonstrates an exceeding approach to the physical environment. Our practices ensure that environments are not only safe and compliant but also dynamic, inclusive, and intentionally designed to support children's learning, wellbeing, and engagement. At CPELC, the OHS Officer utilises the ACECQA risk register to systematically identify, assess, and manage hazards within the service. This tool supports a consistent and proactive approach to prioritising safety, ensuring that risks are clearly documented, evaluated, and addressed in a timely manner. The risk register is actively used to inform decision-making and guide continuous improvement across all environments. Identified risks are prioritised based on severity and likelihood, and appropriate control measures are implemented to minimise or eliminate potential hazards. This process ensures that safety remains at the forefront of all operational and educational practices. The OHS Officer collaborates closely with educators, leadership, and management to ensure that risk assessments are not completed in isolation but are part of a shared responsibility across the service. Regular reviews of the risk register occur as part of ongoing critical reflection, ensuring that safety practices remain current, effective, and responsive to changing environments and emerging risks. This approach demonstrates a strong culture of safety and accountability, where risk management is embedded in daily practice and aligned with regulatory requirements and the National Quality Standard. Through the use of the ACECQA risk register, CPELC maintains a proactive, transparent, and collaborative approach to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children, teaching team, and visitor
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community	Our centre values strong collaborative partnerships with the management committee, ensuring that decisions about the environment prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and educators. We also actively seek and incorporate feedback from families, children, educators, and external professionals, including Aboriginal consultancy services, to ensure our environments are culturally responsive and inclusive. We work in partnership with local organisations, such as Monash Council, to maintain and enhance our facilities. Recent upgrades, including the installation of a new bathroom in the kindergarten area, demonstrate our commitment to providing safe, functional, and high-quality environments that support children's wellbeing.

	OHS practices are embedded into our environmental design processes. The OHS team has updated hazard checklists using ACECQA-approved templates, and management has reviewed and revised risk assessments for excursions to ensure alignment with best practice guidelines. These processes support proactive risk identification and management, contributing to safer environments for children and teaching team. The addition of a purpose-built teaching team room further supports collaborative practice by providing a dedicated space for planning, critical reflection, documentation, and team discussions. This space strengthens educator wellbeing and enhances professional collaboration, contributing to improved outcomes for children. Our surrounding environment, including local parklands, is intentionally utilised as part of our educational program. These spaces provide rich learning opportunities and connect children to their broader community, fostering a sense of belonging and awareness of their environment. Through ongoing reflection, collaboration, and responsive design, CPELC demonstrates an exceeding approach to the physical environment. Our practices ensure that environments are not only safe and compliant but also dynamic, inclusive, and intentionally designed to support children's learning, wellbeing, and engagement.
--	---

Standard 3.2 – Use: The centre environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	At Columbia Park ELC, all learning environments are intentionally designed to support a flexible indoor–outdoor program that promotes children's agency, exploration, and engagement. Our approach aligns with the principles and practices of the Early Years Learning and Development Framework V2.0, ensuring that children are active participants in their learning journey. Children are encouraged to move fluidly between indoor and outdoor spaces, supporting independence, decision-making, and self-regulation. For example, children in the Babajin Room confidently communicate their intentions when transitioning between environments, reorganise their play spaces, and collaborate with teaching teams and peers. This demonstrates strong learner agency and supports the development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Our environments are thoughtfully designed to provide both familiar and challenging experiences, catering to a wide range of developmental needs. Open-ended resources and loose parts are embedded throughout the program, enabling children to express their ideas, extend their thinking, and engage in creative and critical inquiry. Teaching teams intentionally plan environments that provoke curiosity and support emergent learning opportunities. We have introduced the weekly Nature Explorer program, where children engage in rich learning experiences within the adjacent parklands. Using only natural materials, children explore, investigate, and play without manufactured resources. This experience fosters resilience, problem-solving, and a deep connection to nature and Country, while supporting children's wellbeing and environmental awareness.

	Sustainability is embedded across our curriculum through initiatives such as the vegetable garden. Children actively participate in planting, nurturing, and harvesting produce, providing meaningful, hands-on experiences that support learning across science, health, and wellbeing. Teaching teams use the garden as a platform for intentional teaching, encouraging inquiry, collaboration, and responsibility.
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	This program also promotes healthy eating habits, as children engage in growing, harvesting, and tasting fresh produce. It supports children's understanding of where food comes from and encourages respect for living things and sustainable practices. Families are actively engaged in our sustainability initiatives, contributing seeds, seedlings, compost, and knowledge. This partnership strengthens connections between home and the centre, fostering shared responsibility and reinforcing community values around environmental stewardship. Through critical reflection, collaboration, and intentional design, our learning environments demonstrate an exceeding approach. They are dynamic, inclusive, and responsive, supporting children's agency, sustainability learning, and connection to the natural world while strengthening partnerships with families and the wider community. The Nature Explorers program (formerly Bush Kinder) is a key component of our curriculum, offering children rich, meaningful experiences that support confidence, resilience, social interaction, language development, and a deep connection to the natural environment. The program aligns with the principles of the Early Years Learning and Development Framework V2.0, supporting children's agency, wellbeing, and connection to Country. Children are supported to engage with natural environments in ways that promote exploration, imaginative play, and risk-taking within a safe and supported framework. This program fosters strong relationships between children, families, educators, and the broader community, while also promoting positive attitudes towards risk and outdoor learning. The risk register now includes clearly defined safety procedures, including structured headcount protocols at multiple points during excursions. These include before departure, during transitions, on arrival, during the session, before leaving, and upon return to the centre. Multiple teaching teams are involved in confirming each headcount, ensuring that children are consistently accounted for and Following the incident review, additional safety measures were implemented, including the requirement that all Nature Explorers excursions are attended by permanent educators, including lead and senior teaching team, to ensure consistency, supervision, and accountability. Professional learning continues to support the team's understanding of risk management and emergency procedures. A mock excursion has been planned as part of ongoing training to strengthen educator confidence and preparedness. This reflects a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility. All incidents are documented and investigated thoroughly, with findings used to inform practice improvements. Statements are collected, and a structured investigation process is followed, ensuring transparency and accountability at all levels of the service.

	Through collaborative reflection, clear procedures, and ongoing professional learning, the Nature Explorers program demonstrates an exceeding approach to risk management. It balances children's right to explore and take risks with a strong commitment to safety, ensuring that all experiences are intentional, well-supervised, and aligned with regulatory requirements and best practice.
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community	An example of this collaboration is our Community Library initiative, inspired by educator Rhiannon. This shared resource encourages families and children to contribute to and access a range of books, strengthening home-centre connections and promoting a shared approach to learning. This initiative reflects our commitment to partnerships with families and supports children's engagement with literacy in meaningful and accessible ways. Children are actively involved in using natural materials, many of which are generously donated by families, to create art and engage in open-ended exploration. Materials such as leaves, sticks, stones, and bark are used to support creative expression, problem-solving, and fine motor development. Through these experiences, children explore texture, colour, form, and design while bringing their own ideas to life. This approach reflects our commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness, as children learn to value natural and recycled materials. It also supports a deeper connection to nature and Country, encouraging children to respect and care for the environment as part of their everyday learning. Families play a vital role in this process by contributing materials that reflect their own knowledge, experiences, and cultural backgrounds. This strengthens the connection between home and the Centre and enriches the learning environment with diverse perspectives. Children are supported to share and explore materials that represent their own and others' cultural identities, promoting inclusion and respect for diversity. These collaborative practices foster a strong sense of community, where families are active contributors to the educational program. Teaching teams-intentionally use these materials to extend children's learning, embedding sustainability, creativity, and cultural responsiveness into everyday experiences. Through ongoing reflection and shared decision-making, the Centre continues to strengthen partnerships with families and the wider community. This demonstrates an exceeding approach to collaborative practice, where children's learning is enriched through meaningful connections, inclusive practices, and a shared commitment to sustainability and respect for the environment. Within the Nature Explorers program, children actively participate in caring for their environment by picking up rubbish during their outdoor experiences. This intentional practice supports children to develop a strong sense of responsibility, environmental awareness, and respect for the natural world. Teaching teams-embed this learning through meaningful conversations, modelling, and intentional teaching, helping children understand the impact of human activity on the environment. Children are encouraged to take ownership of their surroundings and contribute to keeping shared spaces clean and safe, reinforcing a sense of community and collective responsibility.

At CPELC, sustainability is embedded in our daily practices through the ongoing maintenance and repair of resources, supporting a culture of reuse and environmental responsibility. A valued example of this is Emma's dad, who regularly assists the Centre by repairing and maintaining resources, extending their lifespan and reducing waste.

Community members regularly donate open-ended resources such as boxes and recyclable materials, which children use to construct, design, and bring their own ideas to life.

These resources support children's creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking by encouraging open-ended exploration and imaginative play. Children are empowered to lead their own learning, using loose parts to test ideas, build structures, and collaborate with peers.

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 3

Improvement Plan

Standard/ element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?	Progress notes
3.2.1 Inclusive Environment	Strengthens teaching team capability and confidence at nature explorers. Deepens sustainability and environmental learning	Enhance the <i>Nature Explorers / Bush Kinder Program</i> through improved resources, safety, and learning opportunities to support children's engagement, risk competence, and connection to nature.	L	• Learning stories and program documentation • Risk assessments and excursion records • Teaching team training certificates • Photos of environment and resources • Family feedback and communication records	✓ Increased frequency and quality of Bush Kinder sessions ✓ Observations show children: taking appropriate risks engaging in sustained outdoor play demonstrating environmental awareness ✓ Educator reflections show stronger intentional teaching ✓ Audit results show improved risk assessment and safety practices ✓ Family feedback reflects increased understanding and engagement	Term 1 2027	Bush kinder grant received New resources – new trolley, microscope, wet weather gear. Nature explorer training Booked for 6 Jan 2027 – Kathy walker – Bush Kinder - Early Life Foundations New sustainability team appointed 12 Aug 2026 Nakita, Kerry, Renee, Rita and Ella 8 September meeting notes – goals to be set by sustainability team. Aug 2026 new bins in staff room and kitchen to separate general waste and garden waste,



					✓ Documentation clearly links Bush Kinder experiences to VEYLDF outcomes		
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--

Quality Area 4: Teaching teaming arrangements

Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Area 4

Summary of strengths for Quality Area 4

Strengths	Columbia Park Early Learning Centre maintains educator-to-child ratios that exceed regulatory requirements, supporting consistent, high-quality care, education and supervision for every child. Our highly qualified and experienced teaching team holds a range of Cert 111, Diploma, Bachelor and postgraduate qualifications, including a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and a Master of Education (Early Years and Primary). Our Teaching model prioritises continuity of strong relationships with children and families, professional collaboration and a culture of ongoing reflective practice. Teaching team members are provided with dedicated opportunities for planning, documentation, professional discussion and reflection, enabling the team to continually evaluate and strengthen their practice. Coobaaroo planning time 9 hrs per week. Mirram planning time 9 hrs per week. Kinder Teachers plan everyday total of 12.5 hrs of non-contact time per week. Babajin co – teacher has 3 hrs non-contact time per week. Woolert co – teacher has 3 hrs non-contact time per fortnight. Mentoring is embedded within our approach to professional development and team wellbeing. Our structured induction and mentoring processes ensure that new educators and teaching team members feel welcomed, supported and connected to the centre community. Experienced educators provide guidance, modelling and feedback to build confidence, capability and consistency across the team. Our commitment to workforce quality is demonstrated through: • Exceeding educator-to-child ratios to strengthen supervision, relationships and learning opportunities. • A highly qualified and experienced teaching team, with Diploma, Bachelor and postgraduate qualifications. • Strong systems for compliance and credential monitoring, ensuring qualifications, checks and professional requirements remain current. • Consistent access to professional development, supporting educators to build knowledge, skills and contemporary pedagogical practice. • Embedded reflective practice and dedicated planning time, supporting intentional teaching and continuous improvement. • A positive and supportive team culture that values collaboration, respect, communication and shared responsibility. • Strong mentoring and induction processes that support new educators to develop confidence and become familiar with the centre's practices and expectations. • Active collaboration with families and external professionals, recognising the importance of shared knowledge and partnerships in supporting children's learning, development, inclusion and wellbeing. Through these practices, Columbia Park Early Learning Centre builds a capable, confident and collaborative workforce where educators are supported to continually develop their professional practice and provide responsive, high-quality outcomes for children and families. Columbia Park Early Learning Centre values the importance of continuity and consistent teaching teams in building secure, trusting and meaningful relationships with children and families. Our team has a strong history of service, with team members' experience at the centre ranging from 20 years and longer through to newer educators developing their professional practice. Consistent teaching teams provide children with familiar and trusted teaching team members who understand their individual needs, interests, strengths and challenges and learning journeys. This continuity supports a strong sense of belonging, emotional security and connection. Our professional culture is underpinned by: • Continuity of team members, supporting strong and sustained relationships with children and families. • Consistent teaching teams, providing stability and familiarity throughout the day. • Professionalism, with educators demonstrating respectful, ethical and responsible professional practice.
-----------	---

- **Collaboration**, where educators work together, share knowledge and contribute to collective decision-making.
- **High professional standards**, with expectations for educators to uphold the National Quality Standard, relevant legislation, the Early Years Learning Framework and the centre's policies and procedures.
- **Respectful communication**, supporting positive relationships between educators, children, families and external professionals.
- **Shared accountability**, with all team members taking responsibility for maintaining high standards of care, education, safety and wellbeing.
- **Reflective practice**, encouraging educators to evaluate their practice, respond to feedback and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

This strong foundation of continuity, professionalism and collaboration contributes to a stable and capable workforce and supports consistent, high-quality outcomes for children and families.

Permanent Team members –

- Lyn - 21 years retired
- Renee - 21 years
- Heidi - 20 years
- Tania - 16 years
- Cathy – 15 years
- Sonya - 15 years
- Emma - 14 years
- Chamari – 11 years
- Yee Ling - 11 years
- Kerry - 9 years
- Rhiannon - 6 years
- Nakita – 4 yrs (on and off parental leave)
- Fatima – 4 years
- Queenie – 4 years
- Kate – 4 years
- Eva - 4 years
- Serena – 3.5 years
- Liza – 3 years
- Ella – 3 years
- Allyssa – 2 yr
- Emily – 2 yr
- Lien – 2 yr
- Wendy – 2 yr
- Josefin – 3 mths
- Jia – 1 year
- Angelina – 1 year
- Rita – 1 yr

Casual Team Members

- Beata – on and off for over 20 years
- Vimmy – 2 Years
- Yenda – 1 yr
- Bow – 2 mths
- Fiona – 2mths

Standard 4.1 – Teaching teaming arrangements: Teaching teaming arrangements enhance children’s learning and development.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	Leadership and Management Structure • Centre Manager (Nominated Supervisor): Cathy • Assistant Manager Educational Leader Mentor Nominated Supervisor and PIDTDC: Nakita • Assistant Manager Educational Leader Senior Lead Educator & Child Safety/OHS Champion Nominated Supervisor and PIDTDC: Tania • OHS Rep – Tania and Sonya (wellbeing champion) 1. Room-Based Teaching Teams Coobaaroo Room • Serena (Diploma Lead Educator PIDTDC) • Queenie (Diploma Senior Educator PIDTDC) • Ella and Allyssa (certificate 111 educator) • Emily (Diploma Educator PIDTDC) Mirram Room • Lien (Diploma Lead Educator PIDTDC) • Renee (Diploma Senior Educator PIDTDC) • Fatima (Diploma Senior Educator PIDTDC) • Sonya and Yee Ling (certificate 111 educator) Woolert Room • Rhiannon (Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Teacher PIDTDC) • Kerry (Diploma Lead Educator PIDTDC) • Rita (Graduate Diploma Educator) • Jia (studying Bachelor/Grad Diploma Educator) In between rooms Champion – Yee Ling (Cert 111), Josefin, Liza (Diploma Educator) -PIDTDC) Babajin Room • Emma (Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Teacher and Educational Leader Mentor PIDTDC) • Wendy (Bachelor Kinder/Lead Educator in the absence of Emma PIDTDC) • Rita (Graduate Diploma Educator) • Heidi (Certificate 111 Educator/ISS) “Champions” • Eva • Kate • Chamari These teaching teams work flexibly across all covering breaks and planning in rooms, supporting continuity, relationships, and responsiveness to daily needs. Kitchen Chef – Angelina Casual Teaching teams– Beata, Vimmy, Yenda, Fiona and Bow

	In the absence of the Centre Manager and Nominated supervisor Cathy, the Person in Day-to-Day Charge (PIDTDC) is delegated in a clear and established order: Nakita and Tania Nominated supervisor and PIDTDC, followed by Emma, Rhiannon, Lead Educators, and then Senior and Diploma-qualified educators. This structured delegation ensures continuity of leadership, clear accountability and effective decision-making at all times. Educators are aware of leadership responsibilities and understand who to approach for support, guidance and decision-making when the Centre Manager is absent. Educator rosters are intentionally designed to promote continuity and consistency for children and families. Each room is supported through a consistent early, middle and late shift structure, enabling educators to maintain strong relationships with children throughout the day. This approach supports smooth transitions, predictable routines and children's sense of belonging, security and emotional wellbeing. All teaching team members maintain current and relevant qualifications and certifications, including First Aid, CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management, together with mandatory training such as Food Safety and relevant health, safety and child protection requirements. Rostering practices ensure that appropriately qualified and first-aid-trained educators are present across operating hours, supporting strong supervision and exceeding minimum regulatory requirements. The composition and placement of teaching teams are regularly reviewed through professional conversations, reflective practice and critical reflection. Decisions consider each educator's strengths, interests, qualifications, experience and professional capabilities, as well as the individual needs, dynamics and learning priorities of each cohort. This intentional approach to teaching teaming ensures that educator strengths are effectively utilised while maintaining consistency, collaboration and high professional standards. It supports the development of strong, trusting relationships between children, educators and families and contributes to a stable, responsive and high-quality learning environment.
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, critical reflection is an ongoing and purposeful process that drives continuous improvement and supports high-quality educational practice. Reflection, collaboration and shared professional dialogue are embedded within our centre culture and inform decision-making across all areas of practice. Our approach to critical reflection includes: • Scheduled professional learning and reflection nights, providing dedicated opportunities for educators to examine practice, challenge assumptions and consider new approaches. • Informal daily professional conversations, enabling educators to respond to emerging issues, share observations and reflect on children's learning, wellbeing and experiences. • Professional dialogue and collaborative reflection, where educators contribute different perspectives, knowledge and experiences. • Formal and informal feedback processes, supporting educators to identify strengths, areas for growth and opportunities for professional development. • Ongoing evaluation of practice, ensuring that decisions are reviewed for their effectiveness and impact. Teaching teams actively contribute to discussions about team structures, room placements and continuity of educators. These decisions are not made in isolation; they are informed by educator strengths and interests, professional experience, performance feedback, children's developmental and wellbeing needs, relationships with families, and the continuity requirements of the centre. This collaborative approach ensures that teaching teaming decisions are intentional, responsive and focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children. Critical Reflection During Change Critical reflection is particularly important during periods of change, including leadership transitions, changes to teaching teams or adjustments to room structures. Educators work collaboratively to identify potential impacts on children and families and develop strategies to maintain consistency, stability and secure relationships. New educators and teaching teams are supported through structured induction and mentoring, with experienced Lead Educators providing guidance, modelling, professional discussion and feedback. This supports smooth transitions, strengthens team integration and ensures continuity of care and educational practice.

	Professional Learning as a Reflective Practice Professional learning nights are a key component of our continuous improvement culture. These opportunities support educators to strengthen their: • Professional identity and confidence • Critical and reflective thinking • Understanding of contemporary early childhood practice • Shared understanding of professional standards and best practice • Capacity to critically examine and improve their own practice Professional learning is intentionally connected to the centre's Quality Improvement Plan, identified practice priorities, child safety responsibilities and emerging needs within the centre community. Learning is then reflected upon and translated into everyday practice, ensuring professional development results in meaningful improvement rather than being viewed as a stand-alone training activity. Critical Reflection in Action – Nature Explorers A strong example of critical reflection in practice occurred when children in the Babajin Room identified environmental concerns within the local Nature Explorers area, particularly the issue of littering. Rather than simply discussing the problem with children, educators used the children's observations as an opportunity to support child agency, problem-solving and community engagement. Through conversations and collaborative investigation, children considered why litter was occurring and what they could do to contribute to a solution. The children developed ideas for encouraging responsible waste disposal and worked with educators to create and display community signage promoting responsible disposal of rubbish. Educators reflected on the children's responses and the impact of the experience beyond the classroom. Feedback from families indicated: • Reduced litter being observed in the local area. • Children transferring their learning and environmental awareness into their homes. • Increased conversations about sustainability and responsible waste disposal within families. • Children demonstrating greater awareness of their role and responsibility within the community. This example demonstrates how critical reflection can move from observation → professional inquiry → collaborative action → implementation → evaluation of impact. Most importantly, the experience positioned children as capable and active contributors to their community, demonstrating that children's ideas can influence real-world change. It reflects CPELC's commitment to embedding child agency, sustainability, community participation and meaningful learning within everyday practice.
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community	Columbia Park Early Learning Centre maintains highly qualified, consistent and collaborative teaching teams across all rooms. Teaching teaming structures are intentionally designed to support continuity of care, secure relationships and high-quality educational practice. Teaching teams are thoughtfully selected and positioned based on their qualifications, strengths, experience, professional capabilities and interests, ensuring that educator expertise is effectively utilised to support positive outcomes for children and families. Teaching teaming decisions are informed by reflective practice, professional collaboration, critical reflection and meaningful engagement with families and the wider community. This ensures that our practice remains responsive, inclusive and aligned with the individual needs, interests, cultures and strengths of children and their families. Educator profiles and room team structures are shared with families to promote trust, transparency, connection and confidence. Orientation and transition processes provide opportunities for families to develop relationships with educators from the beginning of their child's enrolment, supporting a strong sense of belonging and partnership. Family knowledge, feedback, observations and contributions directly inform: • Curriculum planning and intentional teaching • Room programs and learning experiences • Individual children's learning and development

- Educator reflective practice and critical reflection
- Transitions and continuity of care
- Inclusive and culturally responsive practice

Partnerships with Families and the Community

Our teaching teams recognise that families are children's first and most important educators. Family insights provide valuable knowledge about children's interests, strengths, culture, experiences, relationships and learning outside the centre. Educators use this knowledge to extend children's learning and ensure experiences are **meaningful, culturally responsive and relevant to each child's life**.

Community engagement further strengthens our professional practice through:

- Collaboration with **local services, schools, agencies and community organisations**.
- Culturally responsive practice informed by **community knowledge and local perspectives**.
- Multilingual communication and access to diverse communication approaches within our educator teams.
- Partnerships with external professionals to support children's **inclusion, learning, development and wellbeing**.
- Opportunities for families and community members to contribute their knowledge, skills and experiences to the educational program.

Evidence of Strong Family Connections

The strength of our relationships with families is reflected in feedback shared with the Centre Committee. One parent spoke with the President at the Easter Meet & Greet about their child, who had recently commenced in the **Babajin Room**. The parent shared that their child had settled into the room very well and that the family felt genuinely welcomed by the child's peers and the wider centre community.

This feedback provides meaningful evidence of the positive relationships established between **children, families, educators and the broader CPELC community**.

It also recognises the ongoing work of our teaching teams in creating a **warm, welcoming and inclusive family environment** where children and families feel a strong sense of belonging from the beginning of their journey with Columbia Park Early Learning Centre.

This reflects our commitment to building genuine partnerships where families feel **heard, respected, welcomed and valued as active contributors to their child's learning and development**.

From the president – Sheyam I was speaking with a parent yesterday at the Easter Meet & Greet whose child recently joined in the Babajin room this year. They were reflecting on how their child had settled in well into the room and how the family had felt welcomed by the child's peers and centre community.

Another important reminder and recognition for the amazing work you all do to continue to instil a warm, welcoming and family environment - keep up the amazing work!

Standard 4.2 – Professionalism: Management, teaching teams and teaching team are collaborative, respectful and ethical.

Exceeding themes

1. Practice is embedded in centre operations

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, we are committed to developing a **collaborative, respectful, ethical and accountable professional culture** where educators are supported to grow, lead and continually strengthen their practice. Professionalism is demonstrated through the way educators interact with children, families, colleagues and the wider community and through their commitment to high-quality, child-centred practice. Our professional culture is underpinned by **reflective practice, shared leadership, mentoring, professional accountability and continuous improvement**. Educators are encouraged to take responsibility for their professional learning, contribute to decision-making and confidently share their knowledge, skills and perspectives.

Professional practice is aligned with the **National Quality Standard, Child Safe Standards, relevant legislation, the Early Years Learning Framework and CPELC policies and procedures**. Ethical decision-making, respectful communication and child safety are central to our professional expectations.

Leadership and Mentoring Structure

CPELC has established a **distributed leadership model** that recognises the knowledge, experience and professional strengths of educators across the service. Leadership responsibilities include:

- **Educational Leader Mentor – Nakita:** Supporting educators through mentoring, professional conversations, reflective practice and capability development.
- **Educational Leader – Tania:** Providing pedagogical leadership and supporting the development and implementation of the educational program.
- **Lead Curriculum Design Officer – Emma:** Supporting curriculum development, intentional teaching and consistency across learning environments.
- **Senior OHS and Child Safe Advocate – Tania:** Promoting occupational health and safety, child safety and a strong culture of shared responsibility.
- **OHS Wellbeing Champion – Sonya:** Supporting educator wellbeing and contributing to a positive and sustainable workplace culture.
- **Lead Educators:** Embedded across learning environments to provide day-to-day pedagogical guidance, role modelling, mentoring and support.
- **Senior Educators:** Supporting daily operations, continuity of care, collaboration and professional practice within teams.

These roles provide educators with **accessible leadership, guidance and mentoring within their everyday practice**. Leadership is not limited to formal positions; educators are encouraged to demonstrate leadership through initiative, professional knowledge, advocacy for children, collaboration and contribution to continuous improvement.

Mentoring and Professional Growth

Mentoring is an integral part of our professional culture. Experienced educators support colleagues through **modelling, observation, professional conversations, feedback, reflective questioning and shared problem-solving**.

New educators and team members are supported through structured induction and mentoring, while experienced educators are encouraged to continue developing their leadership capabilities. This creates opportunities for knowledge sharing across the centre and supports consistency in professional expectations and practice.

Through this approach, CPELC builds a workforce that is **confident, capable, reflective and committed to ongoing professional growth**. Strong professional relationships and distributed leadership contribute to a positive team culture and, most importantly, strengthen the quality of learning, development, safety and wellbeing outcomes for every child.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	Monthly Professional Meeting Nights (in-person and online) support: ○ critical reflection ○ collaborative planning ○ professional dialogue ○ shared decision-making • Digital collaboration tools enhance accessibility and engagement across the team • Open communication is encouraged through an open-door leadership approach These structures ensure all teaching teams have opportunities to contribute, reflect, and grow professionally. Professional growth and accountability are supported through: • structured 3-month induction reviews • mid and year evaluations • ongoing feedback conversations • reflective practice discussions These processes: • support continuous improvement • strengthen alignment with Child Safe Standards • ensure clarity of expectations • promote professional accountability Leadership Capability and Culture Leadership at Columbia Park ELC is characterised by: • consistency and emotional regulation • clear communication and expectations • calm and solution-focused leadership approaches • support for educator wellbeing and confidence Lead Teaching team members play a key role in creating stable, predictable environments that foster trust, psychological safety, and high performance.
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, meaningful, respectful and ongoing engagement with families and the wider community is central to our professional practice. We recognise families as the primary influence in children's lives and value their knowledge, experiences, culture and perspectives as essential contributions to children's learning, development and wellbeing. Family engagement directly informs our educational program, curriculum planning, reflective practice and continuous improvement. Educators actively seek and respond to family knowledge, recognising that children's learning extends beyond the centre and is enriched by the experiences, relationships and interests they bring from home. Family and community contributions include: • Family feedback informing program planning and curriculum extensions, ensuring learning experiences reflect children's interests, strengths and emerging needs. • Family reflection - Children's home experiences being shared by families, providing opportunities for educators to develop meaningful emergent learning experiences and extend children's learning. • Cultural knowledge and family perspectives informing inclusive teaching practices, supporting respectful representation of children's identities, cultures, languages and family backgrounds. • Community-based experiences supporting real-world learning and exploration, allowing children to connect their learning to the broader community and develop a sense of belonging and responsibility.

- **Family participation in centre experiences and events**, strengthening relationships between children, families, educators and the wider CPELC community.

Accessible Communication and Family Partnerships

CPELC provides families with a range of **consistent, accessible and meaningful communication opportunities**, including:

- Daily conversations and informal interactions.
- Orientation and transition processes.
- Educator profiles and introductions to teaching teams.
- Newsletters and centre communications.
- Digital communication platforms.
- Family surveys and feedback opportunities.
- Formal meetings and individual discussions.
- Opportunities to contribute to children's learning and development information.

These approaches ensure families are not simply informed about what happens at the centre but are **active contributors to professional dialogue, decision-making and continuous improvement**.

Community Partnerships and Professional Practice

Community engagement also strengthens the professionalism and capability of our teaching teams by broadening educators' perspectives and providing opportunities to learn from the knowledge and expertise of others.

Partnerships with **external professionals, local services, community organisations and cultural representatives** support shared understanding and coordinated approaches to children's learning, inclusion, development and wellbeing.

These relationships contribute to:

- Strengthening **culturally responsive and inclusive practice**.
- Building educator knowledge and professional capability.
- Supporting children and families with identified needs.
- Connecting children's learning to authentic community experiences.
- Strengthening partnerships and referral pathways with relevant services.
- Supporting educators to reflect on and continually improve their practice.

Through genuine community engagement, CPELC creates a culture where **families, children, educators and community partners are valued as contributors to learning and improvement**. This collaborative approach strengthens children's sense of belonging and ensures that our educational practice remains responsive, relevant and connected to the lives of the children and families.

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 4

Improvement Plan

Standard/ element	Issue identified during self- assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?
4.2.2	Embedding PACE in Professional Collaboration PACE principles (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) across	Practice is strengthened through shared knowledge about PACE. Mentoring and leadership practices incorporate PACE	M	Teaching teams-work together and share knowledge Teaching team reflect on ethical practice during professional meetings and daily interactions to ensure consistency in	Embedding PACE training strengthens professional collaboration by: • improving communication and emotional understanding between teaching teams	Term 4

	all team interactions and reflective practices. Following PACE training, teaching teams are intentionally applying these principles to support consistent, respectful, and emotionally responsive teamwork.	strategies to guide reflective discussions, strengthen emotional understanding, and support solution-focused thinking. Leaders model PACE-informed communication to promote psychological safety, respectful dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving within the team.		professional behaviour and decision-making.	• supporting respectful and reflective team culture • increasing consistency in approaches to behaviour guidance and wellbeing • enhancing educator confidence in responding to complex situations • strengthening psychological safety within the team	
Progress Notes	professional Practice, Emotional Literacy and Child Safety (10/04/2026) Following professional learning in the Journey of Emotional Literacy, The Resilience Project, trauma-informed practice training, Child Safe Standards, Reportable Conduct requirements, and Child Safety training, there is clear evidence that this learning is being embedded into daily practice across the service. Teaching teams are consistently demonstrating respectful, ethical, and responsive interactions with children, reflecting a stronger shared understanding of emotional regulation, trauma-informed responses, and child-safe practice. This is evident in calm communication, supportive co-regulation strategies, and intentional teaching that supports children's emotional wellbeing and resilience. We can hear and observe teaching teams using empathetic, child-centred language, validating children's feelings, and responding with patience and curiosity. Interactions between teaching teams and children reflect a strong commitment to psychological safety, emotional connection, and respectful relationships. Professional collaboration has strengthened as teaching teams engage in shared reflection about emotional literacy, trauma-informed approaches, and child safety responsibilities. This has supported consistency across rooms and reinforced a unified understanding of ethical practice and child-safe principles. Continuing on emotional training to build teams and children and Community emotional resilience, literacy and learn problem solve, communication skills and positive thinking. August 2026 (Emma's kinder teacher implementation) The Zones of Regulation framework uses four colour-coded zones to help children identify and understand their emotions, body signals and levels of alertness. The approach supports children to develop emotional awareness, self-regulation and strategies for managing their emotions. 2. What was the result? There is clear evidence that professional learning is being translated into everyday practice across the service. Teaching teams are consistently demonstrating: • calm, respectful and empathetic communication • greater awareness of children's emotional needs • increased use of co-regulation and emotional coaching • validation of children's feelings before addressing behaviour • greater patience and curiosity when responding to challenging situations • trauma-informed and child-centred responses • a shared language for discussing emotions and regulation • increased consistency in supporting children's emotional wellbeing across rooms. The introduction of the Zones of Regulation has provided children and teaching teams with a common language to identify emotions, recognise changes in regulation and discuss strategies for managing different emotional states. 3. What impact did it have?					

The professional learning and implementation of emotional regulation strategies have strengthened **psychological safety, emotional connection and respectful relationships** across the service.

Children are increasingly supported to:

- identify and communicate their emotions
- recognise physical and emotional signs of dysregulation
- understand that all emotions are valid
- seek support when they need help to regulate
- use appropriate strategies to return to a regulated state
- develop problem-solving and communication skills
- build resilience and positive relationships with others.

The approach has also strengthened the teaching team's ability to respond consistently to children's behaviour as a form of communication rather than simply focusing on the behaviour itself.

By **validating first, regulating second and reasoning later**, children are given the opportunity to feel heard and emotionally safe before reflecting on an experience or discussing alternative strategies.

Professional collaboration has strengthened as teaching teams share a common understanding of emotional literacy, trauma-informed practice and child-safe, respectful interactions.

4. What evidence demonstrates this impact?

Evidence demonstrating the impact includes:

- professional learning completed in **Journey of Emotional Literacy**
- **The Resilience Project** implementation
- trauma-informed practice training
- **Child Safe Standards** and **Reportable Conduct** training
- Child Safety training and professional discussions
- teaching team observations of calm, empathetic and child-centred interactions
- evidence of emotional coaching and co-regulation in daily practice
- use of the shared language **“Validate first, regulate second, reason later”**
- implementation of the **Zones of Regulation** framework in August 2026
- children's ability to identify and communicate emotions using the Zones
- children's developing use of regulation strategies
- professional reflection and discussions within teaching teams
- room planning and documentation demonstrating emotional literacy and wellbeing
- evidence of children developing communication, problem-solving, resilience and positive relationship skills
- observations of teaching teams responding to children's emotional needs with patience, empathy and curiosity.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Area 5

Summary of strengths for Quality Area 5

Strengths	Consistent routines and predictable environments provide children with a strong foundation of security, trust and emotional safety. Educators work collaboratively to provide consistency in expectations, transitions, communication and behaviour guidance while remaining responsive to individual children's needs. Strong and secure attachments with teaching team members support children to confidently explore their environment, participate in learning and develop positive relationships with others. Our practice contributes to: • Strong, secure attachments with educators. • Increased emotional regulation and resilience. • Improved communication and social skills. • A stronger sense of belonging and inclusion. • Greater engagement and confidence in learning experiences. • Positive peer relationships and community connections. Reflective and Trauma-Informed Practice Our educators regularly reflect on their interactions with children to ensure relationships remain positive, respectful, responsive and meaningful. Professional learning, mentoring, team discussions and critical reflection support educators to continually evaluate how their interactions, environments and responses influence children's wellbeing and learning. Our commitment to trauma-informed practice encourages educators to consider children's individual experiences and emotional needs and to create environments that promote safety, predictability, connection and trust. Ongoing observations, documentation and critical reflection enable educators to make informed decisions about children's learning, development and wellbeing. This ensures that assessment and planning are responsive rather than simply recording what children have done. Our practice is guided by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF V2.0), the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), the National Quality Standard, Child Safe Standards and the principles of children's rights. Our Strengths Our strengths are demonstrated through the meaningful relationships educators build with children and families and through our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, respectful and responsive learning community. We are particularly strong in: • Building trusting relationships with children and families. • Listening to and responding to children's voices and perspectives. • Maintaining consistent routines and predictable environments. • Embedding emotional coaching and positive behaviour guidance. • Applying PACE principles to everyday interactions. • Supporting diverse communication needs and home languages. • Promoting children's agency, participation and sense of belonging. • Using mentoring, professional learning and reflective discussions to strengthen educator capability. • Applying trauma-informed approaches to support children's emotional wellbeing. • Using observations, documentation and critical reflection to inform curriculum and practice. • Working collaboratively as a teaching team to provide consistency and continuity of care.
-----------	---

Through these practices, CPELC continues to build a culture where **every child is known, heard, valued and respected** and where educators are committed to understanding the whole child and supporting their learning, development, wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Standard 5.1 – Relationships between teaching teams and children: Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, we are committed to fostering respectful, equitable, responsive and reciprocal relationships with every child. Educators prioritise the development of strong, trusting relationships that enable children to feel safe, secure, confident, valued and included. These relationships provide the foundation for children's emotional wellbeing, sense of belonging, identity and engagement in learning. Educators take the time to understand each child's individual personality, interests, culture, communication style, relationships and emotional needs. This knowledge informs how educators interact with children and ensures that responses are individualised, respectful and responsive. Supporting Transitions and Emotional Wellbeing Children are offered meaningful choices throughout the day, including during transitions. Providing children with appropriate choices supports agency, independence and decision-making, while helping to reduce anxiety and create greater predictability. Educators intentionally support children during moments of separation and transition by: • Providing comfort, reassurance and emotional support. • Using calm, respectful and responsive communication. • Recognising and responding to each child's individual emotional cues. • Allowing children appropriate time and space to regulate. • Maintaining predictable routines and familiar relationships. • Working collaboratively with families to understand strategies that support individual children. Where additional support is required, management and experienced educators are available to assist, ensuring children experience consistency, security and responsive care during challenging moments. Children's Voice, Agency and Participation At CPELC, children's voices are recognised, respected and valued. Educators actively listen to children's ideas, opinions, feelings and perspectives and incorporate their contributions into everyday experiences, routines, environments and decision-making. Children are encouraged to: • Express their ideas and opinions. • Make meaningful choices. • Contribute to group discussions. • Influence aspects of their learning experiences. • Communicate their feelings and needs. • Participate in problem-solving and decision-making. • Develop increasing independence and confidence. Educators recognise that children's participation may be expressed through words, gestures, actions, facial expressions, behaviour and other forms of communication. All forms of communication are valued and considered when developing responsive practice. Belonging, Being and Becoming Our approach to relationships is guided by the principles and practices of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF):

- **Belonging** – children develop secure relationships and feel connected, welcomed and included within their learning community.
- **Being** – children's identities, individuality, culture, ideas and experiences are respected and valued.
- **Becoming** – children are supported to develop confidence, independence, resilience, social skills and a strong sense of themselves as capable learners.

Educators regularly reflect on the quality of their interactions and relationships with children to ensure practice remains **respectful, inclusive, equitable and responsive**.

Children's Rights and Dignity

Children's **rights, dignity, privacy and individuality** are upheld across all learning environments. Educators ensure that every child is treated with respect and that their individual identity, culture, family background, abilities, communication style and perspectives are recognised.

Through consistent, respectful and responsive relationships, CPELC creates an environment where children know that they are **safe, heard, valued and respected**. Our relationships-based approach supports children to develop secure attachments, confidence, emotional resilience and a strong sense of belonging within the centre community.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, **critical reflection on relationships between educators and children is an ongoing and intentional process** that supports continuous improvement in emotional wellbeing, secure attachments, inclusion and teaching practice. We recognise that the quality of relationships is fundamental to children's learning, development, identity and sense of belonging.

Teaching teams regularly reflect on the quality of their interactions with children and consider whether their practice is consistently **respectful, responsive, equitable and supportive of each child's individual needs**. Reflection occurs through:

- Professional and teaching team meetings.
- Professional learning and reflective practice discussions.
- Mentoring and coaching conversations.
- Educational leadership discussions.
- Informal daily professional dialogue.
- Observations, documentation and critical reflection on children's responses.

Reflecting on Emotional Regulation and Behaviour Guidance

Teaching teams critically examine how effectively they support children's **emotional regulation and wellbeing throughout the day**. Educators reflect on the strategies they use, including emotional coaching, co-regulation, positive behaviour guidance, problem-solving and relationship-based approaches.

Educators consider questions such as:

- What is the child communicating through their behaviour?
- How have we responded to the child's emotional needs?
- Did our response support connection and regulation?
- Are our strategies consistent across the teaching team?
- What could we do differently or more effectively?
- What additional support or professional learning may be required?

Educational leadership supports these conversations by providing guidance, modelling practice and helping educators connect reflection to contemporary approaches such as **PACE, attachment-informed and trauma-informed practice**.

This process strengthens consistency across rooms and ensures children experience **stable, predictable and supportive relationships**, regardless of which educator they are interacting with.

Reflecting on Children's Voice and Agency

An important component of our critical reflection is examining how effectively children's **voices, ideas, feelings and perspectives** are heard and valued. Teaching teams reflect on both verbal and non-verbal communication and consider whether educator responses genuinely promote children's:

- Agency and participation.

- Dignity and respect.
- Sense of belonging.
- Inclusion and equity.
- Emotional safety.
- Independence and confidence.

Educators consider whether children are genuinely influencing their experiences and whether opportunities for choice and participation are meaningful rather than simply offered as routine practice.

This reflection aligns with the principles of the **Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)**, particularly **Belonging, Being and Becoming**, and supports children's rights to be heard, respected and included.

Reflection Leading to Improvement

Critical reflection is used to identify **what is working well, what may need to change and what impact changes are having on children**. Where reflection identifies an area for improvement, educators work collaboratively to develop strategies, implement changes and evaluate their effectiveness.

Through this ongoing process, teaching teams continue to strengthen their understanding and application of:

- Secure attachment and relationship-based practice.
- PACE and emotional coaching.
- Trauma-informed and responsive approaches.
- Co-regulation and emotional regulation.
- Respectful communication.
- Children's agency and participation.
- Inclusive and equitable practice.

This ensures critical reflection is not simply a discussion but a **continuous cycle of reflection, action, evaluation and improvement**.

Most importantly, relationships remain at the centre of our decision-making. Through ongoing professional reflection, CPELC educators continually strengthen their capacity to create **safe, trusting and respectful relationships where every child feels known, heard, valued and supported**.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, **educator-child relationships are strengthened and shaped through meaningful partnerships with families and the wider community**. We recognise families as the primary source of knowledge about their children and value their insights, experiences and perspectives as essential to understanding each child's identity, needs and wellbeing.

Family knowledge is actively used to inform **educator responses, relationship-building strategies, emotional support and everyday practice**.

Educators seek to understand each child's routines, interests, temperament, communication style, cultural background, family experiences and preferred strategies for comfort and regulation.

Family Partnerships Informing Practice

Teaching teams maintain ongoing communication with families through:

- Daily conversations and informal interactions.
- Orientation and transition processes.
- Parent collaboration meetings.
- Digital communication platforms.
- Family feedback and surveys.
- Sharing information about children's experiences, interests and learning.

This information enables educators to develop a deeper understanding of each child and respond in ways that are **consistent, respectful and individually tailored**.

For example, families may share information about how their child responds to separation, what helps them settle, particular comfort strategies, communication preferences or changes occurring at home. Educators use this knowledge to create greater consistency between **home and the centre**, supporting children's emotional security and smoother transitions.

Family contributions also inform how educators respond to children's individual characteristics, including their **temperament, interests, communication styles, strengths and challenges**. This strengthens secure attachments and supports educators to develop responsive strategies for emotional regulation and wellbeing.

Community Knowledge and Cultural Responsiveness

Engagement with the wider community broadens educators' understanding and strengthens relationship-based practice. Connections with **local services, cultural representatives, external professionals and community organisations** provide opportunities for educators to develop their professional knowledge and consider different perspectives.

Community engagement supports educators to:

- Strengthen **culturally responsive practice**.
- Develop greater understanding of diverse family backgrounds and experiences.
- Support inclusive communication and interactions.
- Recognise and respect different cultural perspectives and ways of being.
- Access professional knowledge that supports children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Strengthen connections between children's experiences at the centre, home and within the wider community.

These partnerships encourage educators to continually reflect on how their own perspectives and practices influence relationships with children and families.

Partnerships that Strengthen Belonging

Through meaningful engagement with families and the wider community, educator-child relationships are continually strengthened. The knowledge shared by families and community partners enables teaching teams to respond to children in ways that are **informed, respectful, culturally responsive and individualised**.

This collaborative approach ensures that relationships remain centred on each child's **wellbeing, identity, rights, agency and sense of belonging**.

Children benefit from experiencing consistency between the important environments in their lives and from knowing that the adults around them communicate, collaborate and work together to support them.

At CPELC, community engagement is therefore not viewed as an activity separate from teaching practice; it is an integral part of building **secure relationships, inclusive practice and a strong sense of belonging for every child**.

From a family who left the centre in 2026 - As Leo said goodbye to the centre after four years, I just wanted to take a moment to express our heartfelt thanks.

It's hard to believe how quickly time has passed. From his very first days at the centre to now, you have all played such an important role in his growth, learning, and confidence. The care, patience, and dedication you've shown over the years have meant so much to our family, and we are incredibly grateful for the safe, nurturing, and happy environment you've provided.

Thank you for all the love, encouragement, and wonderful memories. This centre will always hold a special place in our hearts, and we will truly miss seeing you all. We trust that we will see your wonderful team again in the future.

Wishing the team all the very best and thank you again for everything you have done for Leo.

Standard 5.2 – Relationships between children: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, we are committed to supporting every child to develop and maintain sensitive, responsive, respectful and reciprocal relationships with their peers. Educators intentionally create inclusive and emotionally safe environments where children feel confident to connect with others, develop friendships, collaborate and participate as valued members of the group. Supporting Social Connections Children are provided with opportunities to engage in a range of social groupings, including individual, small-group and large-group experiences. These experiences enable children to build social confidence, practise cooperation and develop the skills needed to establish and maintain positive relationships. Educators intentionally support children to: • Initiate and develop friendships. • Share ideas, interests and experiences. • Cooperate and work collaboratively. • Practise turn-taking and negotiation. • Listen to and respect the perspectives of others. • Recognise and respond to others' feelings. • Resolve disagreements respectfully. • Develop empathy, fairness and understanding. • Participate confidently within their peer group. Intentional Teaching and Emotional Coaching Educators scaffold children's social development through intentional teaching, modelling, emotional coaching and guided problem-solving. Educators model respectful communication and demonstrate strategies children can use when navigating social situations. When conflict or disagreement occurs, educators support children to understand what has happened, recognise their own emotions, consider the perspectives of others and work towards appropriate solutions. Rather than simply resolving conflicts for children, educators provide guidance that builds children's independence, emotional literacy, problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. PACE principles are also incorporated into relationship-based practice, supporting educators to approach children's behaviour with playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy. Inclusive Peer Relationships Predictable routines, consistent expectations and warm educator guidance provide children with a secure foundation for developing peer relationships. Educators observe children's interactions closely and respond when support is required to promote: • Inclusion and participation. • Empathy and kindness. • Fairness and respect. • Safe and respectful communication. • Recognition of individual differences. • Positive conflict resolution. Educators are mindful of ensuring that every child has opportunities to participate and develop relationships, while also recognising and respecting children's individual personalities, communication styles, interests and preferences. Learning Through Play

	Play provides an important context for children to develop and strengthen friendships. Educators intentionally design environments and experiences that encourage collaboration, negotiation, shared problem-solving, communication and turn-taking. Children are supported to connect through shared interests while also having opportunities for independent and solitary play when they choose. Educators recognise that positive peer relationships develop at different rates and provide appropriate support without unnecessarily directing children's interactions. Children's Voice and Agency Children's voices are valued within their peer relationships. Educators encourage children to express their ideas, feelings, preferences and perspectives and support them to listen to and respond to the perspectives of others. These everyday interactions provide opportunities for children to develop emotional literacy, understand different viewpoints and become increasingly confident in communicating their needs and negotiating social situations. Through consistent educator support, intentional teaching and responsive environments, children develop the confidence, empathy, resilience and social skills needed to form and maintain meaningful relationships with their peers. Our approach supports children to experience themselves as capable, respected and valued members of their learning community, while developing the skills to build positive relationships now and throughout their lives
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, critical reflection on relationships between children is an ongoing and intentional process that supports the development of inclusive, respectful and socially connected learning environments. Educators regularly reflect on how children form, maintain and navigate peer relationships and consider how our environments, interactions and teaching strategies can be strengthened to better support children's social and emotional development. Reflecting on Children's Peer Interactions Through teaching team meetings, professional discussions, mentoring and daily observations, teaching teams analyse patterns in children's interactions, including friendship formation, cooperation, conflict, inclusion, communication and participation. Educators consider: • Who is participating and who may be finding it difficult to join in? • How are children initiating and maintaining friendships? • What happens when disagreements occur? • Are children being given opportunities to negotiate and problem-solve? • How effectively are educators supporting children's emotional regulation? • Does the environment encourage positive social interactions? These reflections inform intentional teaching strategies that support empathy, communication, cooperation, turn-taking, negotiation and problem-solving. Scaffolding Conflict Resolution A key area of critical reflection has been examining how educator scaffolding influences children's capacity to resolve conflicts independently. Teaching teams have reflected on the balance between providing appropriate guidance and allowing children sufficient time and space to negotiate their own solutions. This has resulted in more intentional use of emotional coaching and guided problem-solving rather than educators immediately resolving conflicts on children's behalf. Educators support children to identify emotions, communicate their perspectives, listen to others and consider possible solutions. This approach strengthens children's confidence, independence, emotional literacy and conflict-resolution skills. Educators continue to evaluate whether their level of intervention is appropriate and adjust their approach according to children's ages, developmental capabilities, communication needs and individual circumstances. Reflecting on Inclusion and Participation Critical reflection also examines whether peer interactions are genuinely inclusive and accessible to every child. Teaching teams consider how:

- Environment design and resource placement influence social interactions.
- Group size affects children's participation.
- Educator positioning supports or limits peer engagement.
- Children's interests can be used to develop friendships.
- Children with different communication or social needs are supported.
- Individual and small-group experiences can provide safer entry points into larger social experiences.

Where reflection identifies barriers to participation, educators make intentional adjustments to environments, groupings, routines and teaching strategies.

Supporting Children Who Need Additional Guidance

Teaching teams collaboratively reflect on how best to support children who require additional guidance when developing peer relationships. Strategies may include:

- Modelling appropriate social language.
- Supporting children to identify and communicate their feelings.
- Pairing children in supported play experiences.
- Using visual cues and social prompts.
- Providing smaller group experiences.
- Supporting children to enter ongoing play.
- Explicitly teaching friendship, cooperation and conflict-resolution skills.

Educators evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and adapt them according to each child's response and changing needs.

Consistency Across Teaching Teams

Critical reflection has reinforced the importance of **consistency across rooms and between educators** when supporting children's social development. Shared expectations, common language, consistent behaviour guidance and collaborative approaches provide children with predictable and supportive responses.

Professional conversations ensure that educators share information about successful strategies and consider how these can be applied consistently across the service.

Reflection Leading to Improvement

Critical reflection is used to identify **what is working, what needs to change and what impact changes are having on children's relationships and wellbeing**. Educators implement strategies, observe children's responses and revisit their decisions to determine whether further adjustments are required.

Through this ongoing cycle of **observation, reflection, action and evaluation**, teaching teams continue to strengthen their understanding of social learning, peer relationships, emotional regulation and inclusive practice.

Our goal is not simply for children to participate alongside one another, but to develop the skills and confidence to **form meaningful friendships, communicate respectfully, resolve conflict, include others and contribute positively to their learning community**.

This ensures every child is supported to build and maintain **respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships with their peers**.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, children's relationships with their peers are strengthened through **meaningful partnerships with families and engagement with the wider community**. Families are recognised as important partners in understanding children's social and emotional development, and their knowledge and insights are used to support children to build and maintain respectful, inclusive and positive relationships with others.

Family Knowledge Informing Peer Relationships

Teaching teams maintain regular communication with families through **daily conversations, learning stories, orientation and transition processes, family meetings and digital communication platforms**. Families share valuable information about their child's temperament, friendships, interests, cultural background, communication style and social experiences.

This information helps educators develop a deeper understanding of children's peer relationships and informs intentional teaching strategies that are responsive to individual needs.

For example, family observations about a child's friendships, difficulties entering group play or challenges with social interactions may inform strategies such as:

- Guided and supported play experiences.
- Intentionally pairing children with peers who share similar interests.
- Modelling positive communication and friendship skills.
- Supporting children to enter and sustain play.
- Providing smaller group experiences.
- Using emotional coaching and guided problem-solving.

Educators observe the impact of these strategies and continue to reflect and adjust their approach as children's relationships and social capabilities develop.

Continuity Between Home and CPELC

Family input also supports **continuity between children's experiences at home and within the learning environment**. When educators and families share consistent approaches to communication, emotional regulation and social problem-solving, children experience greater predictability and security.

This partnership supports children to develop:

- Stronger emotional regulation.
- Greater confidence in social situations.
- Increased understanding of others' perspectives.
- Positive communication skills.
- Confidence to develop and maintain friendships.
- A stronger sense of belonging within the group.

Community Engagement and Social Learning

Engagement with the wider community further enriches children's social learning by providing opportunities to encounter **different cultures, perspectives, people and experiences**.

Community experiences enable children to practise respectful communication and cooperation beyond the immediate classroom environment. They support children to develop **empathy, respect for diversity, curiosity and an understanding of their role within the broader community**.

Educators use community experiences as opportunities to extend conversations about friendship, inclusion, fairness, kindness and respectful relationships.

Inclusive Participation

Through meaningful partnerships with families and the community, teaching teams gain broader perspectives that strengthen their ability to support **inclusive peer relationships**.

Educators use this knowledge to ensure that every child has opportunities to participate, connect and contribute, including children who may require additional support to enter play, communicate with peers or navigate group experiences.

Our collaborative approach ensures that children's social learning is not limited to planned experiences. It is embedded throughout everyday interactions, relationships, play and community participation.

Through these partnerships, CPELC creates a learning environment where children are supported to **connect with others, appreciate diversity, develop friendships, resolve differences respectfully and thrive as valued members of their learning community**.

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 5

Pace training

Improvement Plan

Standard/ element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?	Progress notes
5.2.2	children are supported to regulate behaviour and emotions	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to others, and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts, evidenced by increased use of emotional language, improved peer conflict resolution, and consistent educator implementation of co-regulation and emotional coaching strategies.	M	Teaching Team will embed their learning by: - Using co-regulation strategies to support children during moments of strong emotion - Applying emotional coaching language (naming feelings, validating emotions, guiding responses) - Modelling calm, respectful, and solution-focused communication during conflict situations - Supporting children to use problem-solving steps to resolve peer conflicts - Maintaining predictable routines and supportive transitions to reduce emotional stress - Using PACE principles to respond with empathy, curiosity, and acceptance rather than judgement	Teaching will intentionally model self-regulation by: - Demonstrating calm responses during challenging situations - Verbally naming their own emotions appropriately (e.g., "I feel frustrated, so I will take a breath") - Showing respectful communication and active listening between teaching teams - Modelling apology, repair, and reconciliation after conflict - Using consistent language across all rooms to support children's understanding	Term 4	In 2026 Feb and March, the team participate in a 4.5 sessions PACE training by Berry Street 10/4/2026 The teaching team implements and models self-regulation practices through co-regulation, emotional coaching, and PACE-informed interactions, ensuring consistent approaches across the centre that support children's emotional development, conflict resolution, and resilience. The resilience project embedded in babajin and Woolert room including coobaaroo and Mirram room implementation of the colour monsters. Ongoing embedding of PACE in our everyday interaction with the children at CPELC. Teaching team reflected on how PACE has changed their interaction and relationship with children.

Age Group	Percentage
18-24	35%
25-34	28%
35-44	22%
45-54	18%
55-64	15%
65-74	12%
75-84	8%
85+	2%

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Quality Area 6: Standards and elements

Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Area 6

Summary of strengths for Quality Area 6

Strengths	Columbia Park Early Learning Centre is committed to building strong, respectful, reciprocal and collaborative partnerships with children, families and the wider community. These relationships are central to our philosophy and inform decision-making, curriculum planning, children's transitions, professional practice and continuous improvement. Families are recognised as key partners and an important source of knowledge about their children. Their perspectives, experiences, cultural knowledge and feedback are actively incorporated into the educational program and contribute to children's learning, development, wellbeing and sense of belonging. Building Partnerships from Enrolment Strong family partnerships begin from the first point of contact. Management conducts comprehensive Centre tours and provides families with information about the educational program, policies and procedures, fees, Child Care Subsidy (CCS), routines, expectations and individual family needs. Our orientation and transition process provides children and families with multiple opportunities to visit and develop relationships before and after commencement. Families are encouraged to remain with their child during settling periods where appropriate, supporting secure attachment, emotional security and confidence. Families are invited to share information about their child's: • Background and family experiences. • Interests, strengths and abilities. • Culture, language and identity. • Routines and preferences. • Communication style. • Learning and developmental needs. • Strategies that support comfort and emotional regulation. This information is used by teaching teams to develop responsive relationships and inform individualised educational planning and practice. Meaningful and Ongoing Family Communication CPELC maintains open and accessible communication with families through a range of formal and informal approaches, including: • Daily conversations and reflections. • Photos, learning narratives and educational documentation. • Newsletters, notices and foyer displays. • Family contributions to children's portfolios. • Digital communication platforms. • Phone and email communication. • Parent-teacher meetings. • Surveys and feedback opportunities. • Formal and informal discussions with management and educators. Parent-teacher meetings provide opportunities to discuss children's progress, establish goals, share observations and collaboratively plan for children's learning, development and wellbeing. For kindergarten children, formal meetings occur at least three times throughout the year, with similar opportunities for collaboration embedded across the other learning environments.
-----------	---

Families are also encouraged to contribute to **policy development, centre decisions, feedback and continuous improvement**, supporting genuine shared ownership of the Centre's direction.

Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing – The Resilience Project

A significant strength of CPELC's partnership approach has been our ongoing work supporting children's **resilience, emotional literacy and social and emotional wellbeing**.

In 2024, the kindergarten program accessed **School Readiness Funding** to implement *The Resilience Project*. Emma and Rhiannon completed professional learning and supported the integration of the **GEM principles – Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness** into everyday teaching and learning.

Reflection and evaluation involving the **teaching team, children and families** demonstrated positive outcomes, including:

- Increased emotional awareness.
- Greater confidence in expressing and managing emotions.
- Increased empathy and understanding of others.
- Improved resilience when experiencing challenges.
- Increased confidence in resolving peer conflicts respectfully.
- Greater family understanding of children's social and emotional development.

The Centre identified the importance of continuing to strengthen children's resilience, emotional regulation and conflict-resolution skills while also supporting families to understand and reinforce these strategies at home.

The kindergarten rooms continue to embed *The Resilience Project* principles throughout the educational program and everyday practice. As an extension of this work, **Colour Monster resources have been purchased for each room**, providing educators and children with consistent visual and practical tools to explore emotions and develop emotional literacy.

Current evidence of impact includes:

- Children confidently identifying and expressing their emotions using appropriate strategies.
- Children demonstrating increasing resilience, empathy and confidence when managing challenges and resolving peer conflict.
- Teaching teams consistently embedding resilience and emotional wellbeing strategies into practice.
- Families reporting increased understanding of resilience and emotional wellbeing and using related strategies at home.
- Critical reflection, educational documentation and family feedback demonstrating ongoing development in children's social and emotional capabilities.

This demonstrates how CPELC uses **reflection, evidence, family feedback and professional learning to sustain and extend successful practice**.

Partnerships with Schools and the Wider Community

CPELC maintains strong connections with the local and wider community to provide children with meaningful opportunities to learn beyond the Centre environment.

Community connections include:

- Excursions to **museums, libraries, traffic schools, parks, farms and local shops**.
- Incursions involving **police, fire services, dental health professionals, science programs, cultural performers and sustainability educators**.

- Transition programs and school-readiness partnerships with local primary schools. Commenced in 23 July 2026 - Waverley Meadows primary school partnership where the woolert and babajin have opportunities to visit the school across the road, visit the library, visit veggie patch and children feeding.



- Professional networking between educators, kindergarten teachers and school teaching team.
- Collaboration with external professionals and community services.

The Kindergarten Teacher Emma develops detailed **School Transition Statements** and liaises directly with schools to support continuity of learning, development and wellbeing as children transition to school.

Management and teaching teams actively participate in professional networks across the municipality and wider sector, strengthening professional knowledge and ensuring current practice informs our work with children and families.

Cultural Inclusion and Reconciliation

CPELC is deeply committed to cultural inclusion, respect and reconciliation. This commitment is embedded through our **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP – fifth iteration)** and ongoing relationships with Aboriginal community members and cultural educators.

Our practice includes:

- Ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal community members and cultural educators.
- Integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the educational program.
- NAIDOC Week and Indigenous Children's Day experiences.
- Harmony Day and multicultural celebrations.
- Language, storytelling, art, music and symbol exploration.
- Opportunities to learn from Elders and community members.
- Respectful recognition of Aboriginal histories, cultures and perspectives.

These experiences support children to develop **respect, cultural awareness, curiosity and appreciation for diversity** while strengthening their connection to the local community.

Family Culture and Community Knowledge in Practice

Families and educators contribute their cultural knowledge and traditions to the educational program, creating authentic opportunities for children to learn about and celebrate the diversity within our community.

Examples include:

- **Lunar New Year:** Wendy, Eva, Rita and Serena prepared dumplings with children.

- **Holi:** Awtani supported a Holi celebration and provided T-shirts for the children, with Babajin and Mirram children participating in a celebration of colour on the oval in March 2026.
- **Orthodox Easter:** Wos family shared their tradition of making coloured eggs with the Babajin group.

Wos family mum 9/4/2026 Written by Nakita (Ed leader)

The Orthodox Easter egg-dyeing experience provided children with an opportunity to explore cultural traditions and develop an understanding of diversity within their community. Through hands-on participation, children engaged in meaningful learning Children developed a sense of belonging as they shared in Will's family tradition. This experience supported children to feel respected and valued while also recognising the importance of family and cultural practices. By learning about Orthodox Easter, children began to understand that different cultures celebrate special occasions in unique ways. This fostered respect for diversity and encouraged inclusive attitudes. Children actively participated in dyeing eggs and exploring the concept of egg cracking as a traditional game. This hands-on experience promoted curiosity, problem-solving, and engagement in new learning.

- **Greek cultural learning:** Kougioumtzis family and Koukouras family week 13-17 April celebrated Greek easter with the Babajin they children out the visual steps for children to shape the dough. The children were engaged in conversations about the meanings of images and print. They enjoyed the yummy cookie as



afternoon tea.

- **Tamil New Year:** Chamari prepared coconut rice with Babajin and Woolert children in April 2026.

Friday 17 April Tribe (Wignarajah) family mum – visited the Woolert Kinder group to share and teach the children about Tamil New Year. She engaged the group with a story and introduced traditional clothing, that they wore.

- Ongoing celebrations and learning experiences recognising **Lunar New Year, Holi, Diwali, Eid, Christmas, Easter, Greek and Orthodox Easter, Tamil and Vishu New Year, St Patrick's Day, ANZAC Day, NAIDOC Week and other significant cultural events.**

These experiences are valued as opportunities for children to learn directly from the people within their community and to see their own cultures and those of others represented respectfully within the Centre.

Sustainability and Community Responsibility

Sustainability is embedded into everyday practice through:

- Composting and recycling.
- Nature-based learning.
- Vegetable gardening and environmental projects.
- Community sustainability programs.
- Environmental incursions and real-world learning experiences.
- Children's participation in caring for their local environment.

These experiences support children to understand **responsibility, sustainability and their role as active members of the community.**

Family and Community Events

CPELC provides regular opportunities for families and the community to connect, celebrate and contribute to the Centre community, including:

- Mother's Day evening.
- Father's Day evening.
- Families' Christmas Party.
- Art exhibitions.
- End-of-year concerts.
- Meet and Greet events.
- Easter Hunt and community celebrations.
- Cultural celebrations.
- Fundraising and community awareness events.
- Family-supported excursions and incursions.

These events create opportunities for families to build relationships with educators and one another and strengthen children's sense of **belonging, connection and community identity**.

Family and community participation has also supported fundraising initiatives. For example:

- **Mirrums Good Friday Appeal bake sale in 2026 raised \$295.00.**
- The **Easter Hunt/Meet and Greet raised \$984.00.**
- The **Christmas fundraiser raised \$2,325.00.**
- Coobaaroo raised dollars for red nose \$424 and raised awareness for safe sleep practices.

These initiatives demonstrate the willingness of families and the wider community to contribute to the Centre and support causes that are meaningful to children and families.

Our Strength

Our key strength is that **partnerships are embedded into everyday practice rather than being limited to special events**. Family knowledge informs curriculum planning, children's transitions, emotional wellbeing strategies and individualised practice, while community partnerships broaden children's learning and educators' professional knowledge.

Through these strong relationships, CPELC creates a connected community where **children, families, educators and community partners contribute to learning, culture, decision-making and continuous improvement**. This collaborative approach strengthens children's wellbeing, identity, belonging and learning while ensuring that families feel welcomed, respected, heard and valued as genuine partners in their child's education and development.

Summary of strengths in practice where there is evidence of Exceeding NQS themes

Notes:

- This Exceeding NQS section is to be completed when there is evidence of one or more of the Exceeding NQS themes demonstrated in the practice at your service.
- Additional information about the Exceeding NQS themes is available on ACECQA's [Exceeding the NQS](#) webpage.

Standard 6.1 – Supportive relationships with families: Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, respectful, trusting and reciprocal relationships with families are central to our practice. We recognise families as children's first and most influential educators and value the knowledge, experiences, culture and perspectives they bring to their child's learning and development. Strong partnerships are intentionally developed and maintained to support children's learning, wellbeing, inclusion and sense of belonging. Educators work collaboratively with families to ensure that children experience consistency, security and continuity between home and the Centre. Open and Meaningful Communication Teaching teams prioritise open, consistent and meaningful communication with families through a range of accessible approaches, including: • Daily conversations and informal interactions. • Learning documentation and educational narratives. • Digital communication platforms. • Newsletters, notices and foyer displays. • Phone and email communication. • Scheduled parent-teacher meetings. • Surveys and feedback opportunities. • Individual discussions with educators and management. These communication strategies ensure families are informed about their child's learning, development, experiences and wellbeing, while also creating opportunities for families to share their knowledge, ask questions and contribute to decisions about their child's learning. Educators value two-way communication and recognise that meaningful partnerships require families to be heard, respected and actively involved, rather than simply receiving information from the Centre. Supporting Families in Their Parenting Role CPELC recognises that strong partnerships include supporting families in their important parenting role. Families are provided with information, resources and connections that can assist with children's development, behaviour, health, safety and wellbeing. Where appropriate, educators and management share information about relevant community supports and services, including The Orange Door, Raising Children Network and Parent line, as well as other appropriate local services and professional supports. Information is shared respectfully and sensitively, recognising that every family's circumstances, strengths and needs are different. Enrolment, Orientation and Transitions The enrolment and orientation process provides an important foundation for building relationships with families. Families are invited to share detailed information about their child's: • Interests, strengths and abilities. • Culture, identity and family background. • Routines and preferences. • Communication style.

- Learning and developmental needs.
- Health, wellbeing and support requirements.
- Comfort and settling strategies.

Educators use this information to develop a deeper understanding of each child and create **continuity between home and the Centre**.

Families are encouraged to participate in orientation and settling experiences, allowing children and families to build trusting relationships with their teaching team before and during the transition into the Centre. This supports children to feel **safe, secure, welcomed and confident**.

Individualised Support and Inclusion

Teaching teams work collaboratively with families to develop **individualised approaches** that support children's inclusion, participation, learning and wellbeing.

Where additional support is required, educators and management work in partnership with families and, with appropriate consent, relevant professionals and community services. This may include referrals and connections with specialists or other support agencies.

Families' knowledge and expertise are valued throughout this process, ensuring that decisions are collaborative and responsive to the individual child rather than based solely on the Centre's perspective.

Families as Active Contributors

Families are encouraged to contribute to the life and direction of CPELC through:

- Sharing cultural knowledge, traditions and family experiences.
- Contributing to curriculum planning and children's learning.
- Providing feedback about programs and centre practices.
- Participating in policy review and centre decision-making.
- Attending family events and celebrations.
- Contributing to excursions, incursions and community experiences.
- Sharing information that supports children's individual learning and wellbeing.
- Participating in meetings and collaborative planning.

These opportunities strengthen **shared responsibility, trust and genuine partnership** between families and the Centre.

Through these practices, Columbia Park Early Learning Centre creates a culture where families feel **welcomed, respected, informed, heard and valued**. Our partnerships support children to experience continuity between home and the Centre and ensure families remain active and respected participants throughout their child's learning and development journey.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, **critical reflection on relationships with families is an ongoing and embedded practice** that informs how we develop, maintain and strengthen respectful, reciprocal and collaborative partnerships. Regularly reflect on the effectiveness of our communication, family engagement practices and the ways in which families are supported in their important parenting role.

Critical reflection enables the team to consider not only **what we are doing**, but also **how effectively it is working, whose voices are being heard, who may be experiencing barriers to participation, and what changes may be needed**.

Reflecting on Communication

Through teaching team meetings, professional discussions, mentoring and daily professional conversations, educators reflect on how effectively families access information about their child's learning, development and wellbeing.

The team considers the **clarity, consistency, accessibility and usefulness** of communication methods, including:

- Daily reflections and conversations.
- Learning documentation and educational narratives.
- Newsletters and notices.
- HubHello documentation and digital communication.

- Phone and email communication.
- Arrival and departure conversations.
- Parent–teacher meetings.
- Surveys and feedback opportunities.

Reflection considers whether communication is genuinely **two-way** and whether families have meaningful opportunities to contribute information, ask questions and influence decisions.

Where reflection identifies barriers or opportunities for improvement, communication approaches are adjusted to ensure families feel **informed, included, heard and confident in engaging with the Centre.**

Reflecting on Inclusion and Diverse Family Needs

A key focus of critical reflection is examining how effectively CPELC responds to the diverse needs, circumstances, cultures and communication preferences of families.

Educators consider:

- Are all families able to access and understand our communication?
- Are cultural and linguistic differences being respected?
- Are families provided with different ways to contribute?
- Are there barriers preventing families from participating?
- Are we adapting our approach to meet individual family circumstances?

This reflection has strengthened the use of **varied communication methods and multiple opportunities for family participation**, supporting more inclusive and accessible partnerships.

Reflecting on Supporting Families

The team also critically reflects on how effectively families are supported in their parenting role. Educators evaluate the relevance, accessibility and usefulness of information shared with families, including:

- Child development information.
- Emotional wellbeing and resilience strategies.
- Positive behaviour guidance approaches.
- Health and safety information.
- Community resources and support services.

The team considers whether information is meaningful and respectful rather than overwhelming, and whether families are being connected with appropriate supports when additional assistance is required.

Reflecting on Enrolment, Orientation and Transitions

Critical reflection has highlighted the importance of building strong family partnerships **from the very first contact with the Centre.**

Educators and management regularly consider how effectively our enrolment, orientation and transition processes support children and families to feel welcomed, secure and connected.

Reflection has informed ongoing refinement of these processes, including providing families with opportunities to visit, share detailed information about their child and develop relationships with teaching teams before and during commencement.

This supports greater **continuity between home and the Centre** and strengthens children's emotional security during transitions.

Family Voice Informing Practice

An important component of our critical reflection is examining how effectively **family voice influences actual practice.**

Family feedback, observations and contributions are considered when making decisions about:

- Curriculum planning.
- Individual learning goals.
- Children's wellbeing and support strategies.

	• Transitions and routines. • Cultural inclusion. • Centre practices and policies. • Family events and community engagement. • Continuous improvement priorities. Educators reflect on whether family contributions are simply collected or whether they are actively used to influence decisions and improve outcomes for children. Reflection Leading to Improvement CPELC uses a continuous cycle of listening, reflecting, acting and evaluating. When reflection identifies an area for improvement, educators and leaders work collaboratively to determine appropriate changes, implement them and evaluate their impact. This ongoing process strengthens our capacity to develop relationships that are: • Respectful and reciprocal • Responsive to individual family needs • Inclusive and culturally responsive • Open and transparent • Collaborative and trusting Through critical reflection, CPELC continues to strengthen genuine partnerships with families and ensure that family knowledge and voice remain central to decision-making. Ultimately, these strong partnerships enhance children's learning, wellbeing, inclusion, continuity of care and sense of belonging.
3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, practice is shaped by meaningful, respectful and ongoing engagement with families and the wider community. Families are recognised as children's primary caregivers and most influential educators, and their knowledge, experiences, perspectives and cultural backgrounds are actively incorporated into the Centre's philosophy, educational program and decision-making processes. Family Voice Informing Practice Teaching teams maintain regular, respectful and two-way communication with families through: • Daily conversations and interactions. • Digital communication platforms. • Learning documentation and educational narratives. • Newsletters and notices. • Scheduled parent–teacher meetings. • Surveys and feedback opportunities. • Family events, information sessions and consultations. This ongoing engagement ensures families are informed about their child's learning, development and wellbeing, while also creating meaningful opportunities for families to share information that informs educator practice. Family feedback is used to guide: • Curriculum planning and extensions. • Individual learning goals and planning. • Transition processes. • Emotional wellbeing and behaviour support strategies. • Cultural inclusion and representation. • Children's routines, interests and experiences.

- Service improvement and decision-making.

Teaching teams reflect on family contributions to ensure learning experiences are **responsive, culturally inclusive and connected to each child's interests, strengths, needs and experiences at home.**

Evidence of Family Voice – Parent Survey

CPELC uses family feedback and survey data to understand what families value when selecting and engaging with the Centre.

When families were asked "**Why did you select the Centre?**", responses included:

- **19%** – Quality of the program and teaching team.
- **18%** – Close to home.
- **13%** – Cost and reputation.

Families were also asked which aspects of the Centre were most important to them. The strongest themes identified were:

1. **Teaching team**
2. **Quality educational program**
3. **Community-run service**
4. **Social aspects and relationships**
5. **Parent involvement in the program**

This feedback provides valuable evidence that families recognise the importance of **educator quality, educational practice, community connection and family participation.**

The Centre uses this information as part of ongoing reflection to ensure that our strengths are maintained and that family expectations continue to inform service improvement.

Responding to Family Feedback – Bringing Learning to Life

An example of family feedback directly influencing practice was the **Centre information session held on 10 September 2025**, focused on the *Bringing Learning to Life* program.

The session was developed as part of the Centre's critical reflection on feedback from the **DET Kindergarten Parent Survey**, where families identified a need for greater understanding and information about **school readiness.**

Rather than viewing the survey feedback simply as information, the Centre used it to identify an opportunity for improvement. An information session was provided to families to strengthen their understanding of:

- What school readiness means.
- How children develop the skills and capabilities needed for school.
- How everyday learning experiences contribute to school readiness.
- How families can support learning at home.
- How the kindergarten program prepares children for their transition to school.

This demonstrates CPELC's commitment to feedback → **reflection** → **action** → **evaluation** cycle, where family feedback contributes directly to professional practice and family engagement.

Community Partnerships

The Centre also engages with the broader community to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing. Connections with **local services, schools, cultural groups, community organisations and support agencies** provide access to relevant knowledge, resources and professional expertise.

These partnerships support:

- Continuity of learning and transitions to school.
- Inclusive practice and participation.
- Cultural learning and understanding.
- Children's health, wellbeing and safety.
- Family access to relevant community supports.

- Educator professional knowledge and capability.
- Meaningful connections between children and their local community.

Where appropriate, educators work collaboratively with external professionals and services to support individual children and families, ensuring that information and approaches are shared respectfully and in partnership with families.

Community Participation and Shared Experiences

Community events, cultural celebrations, excursions and incursions provide opportunities for children and families to participate in shared learning experiences.

These experiences include opportunities for families and community members to share **culture, knowledge, skills, traditions and experiences** with children. They strengthen relationships between families, educators and the wider community and support children to see connections between their experiences at **home, the Centre and within the broader community**.

Community participation also supports children's development of:

- A strong sense of belonging.
- Respect for diversity.
- Cultural awareness.
- Social confidence.
- Community responsibility.
- Curiosity and connection with the world around them.

Impact on Practice

Through ongoing engagement, feedback and reflection, CPELC ensures that family and community participation is not viewed as an additional activity but as an **integral part of professional practice and continuous improvement**.

The Centre listens to families, reflects on what they tell us, responds through intentional action and evaluates the impact of those changes. This ensures our practice remains **dynamic, responsive, inclusive and connected to the diverse needs, perspectives and aspirations of the children and families within our community**.

Parent survey in 2024

Why did you select the Centre?	19% - Quality of the program and teaching team 18% - Close to home 13% - Cost & Reputation
--------------------------------	--

	Which aspects of the centre are most important to you?	1. Teaching team 2. Quality educational program 3. Community run 4. Social aspects 5. Parent involvement in the program	
		Please elaborate below on any responses above -  The word cloud contains the following phrases: happy with the centre, parents about every activity, center leadership, staff are wonderful, mum to the centre, staff are very experienced, intelligent staff, parents and the community, actually love, Timmy updates, great value year, children, new classes, program and staff, staff and staff, activity, parents, and staff.	The centre hosted an information session for families on 10 September 2025, focused on the 'Bringing Learning to Life' program. This session was part of our critical reflection on the DET Kindergarten Survey, in response to families expressing a need for more information about school readiness. • The slides and video link from the recent parent sessions was shared with all families. • Video link https://youtu.be/Jz5m_BqhSy0

Standard 6.2 – Collaborative partnerships: Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Exceeding themes

1. Practice is embedded in centre operations

Inclusive practice is a key priority at Columbia Park Early Learning Centre. Our educational program is continually evaluated and adapted to ensure every child has genuine opportunities to **participate, engage, learn and succeed**, regardless of their individual abilities, developmental needs, circumstances or eligibility for additional funding.

Teaching teams recognise that equity does not always mean providing every child with the same support. Instead, our approach focuses on providing children with the **individualised support and reasonable adjustments they need to participate meaningfully**.

Proactive Inclusion Strategies

Where additional support is identified, the Centre takes a proactive approach to strengthen children's inclusion and participation. This may include:

- Allocating additional educators to support children's participation and engagement.
- Adjusting group sizes and learning experiences.
- Providing individualised strategies and reasonable adjustments.
- Modifying environments and resources to support accessibility.
- Using visual supports and alternative communication strategies.
- Providing additional support during transitions and routines.
- Collaborating with families and external professionals.
- Reviewing strategies through observation, documentation and critical reflection.

Where additional teaching teaming is required, CPELC seeks to provide appropriate support **regardless of whether additional funding has been approved**, recognising that inclusion is a shared responsibility and an essential part of high-quality practice.

Family Partnerships in Inclusion

Families are actively involved in discussions about children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing. Educators seek family knowledge about children's strengths, interests, communication, culture, routines and support needs and use this information to develop responsive approaches.

Families are involved in discussions about:

- Individual support strategies.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Participation in group experiences.
- Communication approaches.
- Emotional regulation and wellbeing.
- Transitions and changes in routine.
- Referrals and external professional support.

This collaborative approach promotes **transparency, shared decision-making and consistency between home and the Centre**.

Partnerships with Professionals and Community Services

CPELC maintains strong partnerships with community services and professionals to strengthen children's learning, development, inclusion and wellbeing.

These partnerships include:

- **Preschool Field Officers (PSFO).**
- **Maternal and Child Health Nurses**, including onsite assessments where appropriate.
- **Local primary schools and Foundation teachers.**
- **Monash City Council and early years networks.**
- **Allied health and support services.**
- Other relevant professionals and community agencies.

These partnerships provide opportunities for shared professional knowledge, early identification of support needs, coordinated approaches and improved transition pathways.

Professional Networking

	Teaching teams actively participate in the DET Monash Early Years Network, strengthening professional knowledge, sharing effective practice and developing connections with other early childhood professionals. Participation in professional networks supports educators to remain informed about emerging approaches to inclusion, child development, transitions, family engagement and community partnerships. Connections with local schools also support continuity of learning as children transition to Foundation. Educators and kindergarten teachers share relevant information and collaborate with school teaching team to support children and families through this significant transition. Our Commitment to Equity and Inclusion Through proactive support, family collaboration, professional partnerships and ongoing reflection, CPELC works to ensure that every child is recognised as capable, valued and entitled to participate fully in the life of the Centre. Our inclusive approach is responsive rather than one-size-fits-all. Educators continually evaluate what each child needs to access learning and relationships and make adjustments where required. This commitment strengthens children's participation, belonging, confidence, wellbeing and learning outcomes, while ensuring families and community professionals are valued as active partners in creating inclusive environments.
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	RAP in review April 2026 Annual significant dates added to our RAP are Invasion Day 26 Jan, ANZAC day 25 April, National sorry day 26 May, National Reconciliation Week 3 June, NAIDOC week First week in July, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 4 Aug. We are committed to engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our learning activities. Having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in learning environments is vital when teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. We seek out ways to connect our reconciliation vision and plans and Early Years Learning Framework principles, practices and outcomes. Our efforts mean reconciliation is embedded in everyday early learning environments. We commit to providing opportunities for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to celebrate their cultural identities. These opportunities positively impact the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and children and create shared pride for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, contributions, identities and histories in the wider early learning centre community. School Readiness Funding Initiative – Parent Engagement and Support In response to feedback gathered through the Government survey, which highlighted that families are seeking more information about school readiness, our centre is proactively addressing this need by planning a dedicated information evening. Parent/Caregiver Information Session focused on school readiness: Bringing Learning to Life – Parent/Caregiver Information Session Booked for Wednesday, 10 September 2025 Online session facilitated by Nillumbik Community Health Service This session will introduce families to the Bringing Learning to Life program, which provides evidence-based strategies to support school readiness. The program equips both teaching teams and families with practical techniques to help children develop key foundational skills, including language, emergent literacy, and fine motor skills. This initiative supports our commitment to building strong partnerships with families, enhancing children's transition to school, and aligning with our use of School Readiness Funding to deliver meaningful outcomes for children and the community.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, critical reflection is an important part of ensuring that our commitment to **reconciliation, cultural inclusion and respectful partnerships** is meaningful, authentic and embedded in everyday practice.

Reconciliation Action Plan – Review April 2026

Our **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)** was reviewed in **April 2026** as part of our ongoing commitment to evaluating how reconciliation is embedded across the Centre. The review provided an opportunity for educators to reflect on whether our RAP commitments were visible in everyday practice and whether children, families and the wider community were actively engaged in learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, identities and contributions.

As part of this review, the Centre strengthened the recognition of significant dates within our annual planning and RAP, including:

- **26 January – Invasion Day**
- **25 April – ANZAC Day**
- **26 May – National Sorry Day**
- **27 May–3 June – National Reconciliation Week**
- **First week of July – NAIDOC Week**
- **4 August – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day**

These dates provide opportunities for educators to engage in age-appropriate conversations, experiences and learning that support children's understanding of Australia's history and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Critical reflection has reinforced that reconciliation should **not be limited to significant dates or special events**. Our ongoing goal is to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, histories, cultures and voices throughout the educational program and everyday learning environment.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voices

Through reflection, we recognise the importance of ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are included authentically when teaching children about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

We are committed to seeking meaningful opportunities to engage **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, community members and cultural educators** in children's learning. This supports educators to move beyond tokenistic representations and develop learning experiences that are respectful, accurate and informed by community knowledge.

Our reconciliation work is connected to the principles, practices and learning outcomes of the **Early Years Learning Framework**, particularly children's developing sense of identity, belonging, connection and contribution.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Cultural Identity

A key area of reflection is ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have genuine opportunities to **see their culture, identity, history and community represented positively within the Centre**.

We recognise that supporting cultural identity contributes to children's wellbeing, confidence and sense of belonging. Our practice seeks to create an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can experience pride in their identities and where all children develop respect and appreciation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and contributions.

The team continues to reflect on whether cultural perspectives are meaningfully embedded across the program rather than being confined to particular events or calendar dates.

Family Feedback and School Readiness

Critical reflection also identified an opportunity to strengthen family understanding of **school readiness**. Feedback gathered through the Government kindergarten survey indicated that families wanted greater information about how the kindergarten program supports children as they prepare for school. Rather than viewing school readiness as solely the responsibility of the kindergarten program, the Centre reflected on how educators and families could work together to support children's transition.

In response, CPELC planned a dedicated **"Bringing Learning to Life – Parent/Caregiver Information Session"**, held on **10 September 2025** and facilitated online by **Nillumbik Community Health Service**.

The session introduced families to evidence-based strategies that support school readiness, including children's development of:

- Language and communication.

- Emergent literacy.
- Fine motor skills.
- Confidence and independence.
- Learning dispositions.
- Skills that support successful transitions to school.

This initiative formed part of the Centre's use of **School Readiness Funding** and demonstrated how family feedback can move directly into service action.

Reflection Leading to Improvement

These examples demonstrate CPELC's commitment to a continuous cycle of:

Listening → Reflecting → Planning → Acting → Evaluating

Through the RAP review, family feedback and professional reflection, the Centre continues to identify opportunities to strengthen cultural inclusion, reconciliation, family engagement and children's transition to school.

Our ongoing reflection asks whether our practices are:

- **Authentic and respectful**, rather than tokenistic.
- **Inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives.**
- **Meaningful and relevant to children's lives.**
- **Responsive to family feedback and community knowledge.**
- **Embedded throughout everyday practice rather than limited to special events.**
- **Supporting children's identity, belonging, wellbeing and learning.**

Critical reflection ensures that reconciliation and community engagement remain **living aspects of our practice**, continually evolving in response to children's voices, family perspectives, community knowledge and professional learning.

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre participated in the Narragunnawali Awards 2025.

Rebecca Cross (Wiradjuri Tribe) mum of Sophie in the Mirram room wrote a letter on our behalf and she wrote -

I Rebecca Cross endorse Columbia Park Early Learning Centre for the Narragunnawali Awards for their recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Their inclusive learning program includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and History.

I especially loved the incursion that involved an Elder teaching the children the names of animals in Indigenous language, playing with traditional instruments and touching possum fur.

Reconciliation week is celebrated throughout the centre by the children creating traditional artwork and cooking traditional foods.

Columbia Park Early Learning Centre proudly demonstrate their respect for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by flying/displaying their flag, displaying traditional art work throughout the centre and playground.

As a parent of a child currently attending Columbia Park Early Learning Centre it makes me incredibly proud to know that she has the opportunity to learn about her culture from the dedicated teaching team.



Sophie's from the Mirram room Great Great Great grandfather John Kelly

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, community engagement is embedded within our practice through **meaningful connections with local services, families, community members and cultural representatives**. These partnerships extend children's learning beyond the Centre and strengthen their sense of belonging, participation and connection to the wider community.

Wheeler Hill Library Partnership Nakita initiated an ongoing community connection with **Wheeler Hill Library**, providing children with regular opportunities to engage with a local community resource.

The library excursion commenced on **20 May 2026**, with Nakita and Tania attending with the group on **Tuesdays and Wednesdays once a month**. This initiative aligns strongly with **Quality Area 6**, as it strengthens connections between the Centre and the wider community through meaningful engagement with a local library. Regular visits provide children with opportunities to:

- Develop an understanding of community spaces and services.
- Develop a love of books, stories and literacy.
- Engage with librarians and community members.
- Practise social skills in a community environment.
- Develop confidence and independence outside the Centre.
- Connect learning within the Centre to real-world experiences.
- Develop a stronger sense of belonging within their local community.

The ongoing nature of the library partnership also provides continuity rather than being a one-off excursion, allowing children to build familiarity and confidence within the community. Family participation has also strengthened our approach to cultural inclusion. Following the Centre's **Africa Day Week**, Gunaratman family, from the Babajin Room, shared positive feedback recognising the Centre's commitment to cultural inclusion.



BABAJIN INDOOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM 10 June till 26 June 2026

Mwangala (Babajin family) acknowledged the opportunities provided for children to learn about the **African continent, its many countries, diverse cultures, traditions and celebrations**. She identified the experience as an opportunity to develop cultural awareness, geography knowledge and children's curiosity about the wider world.

Mwangala (Babajin family) also expressed her willingness to **volunteer in future**, offering to share stories, cultural experiences and learning opportunities with the children.

This feedback demonstrates the value of creating genuine opportunities for families to contribute their cultural knowledge to the educational program. It also provides an opportunity for CPELC to continue strengthening reciprocal partnerships by inviting family expertise and lived experiences into children's learning.

Mother's Day Evening – 7 May 2026 CPELC also creates opportunities for families to participate directly in Centre experiences and build relationships with educators and other families. On **7 May 2026**, mothers and their children were invited to a special evening at the Centre where they participated in making **bath salts together**.

The activity also incorporated a sustainability initiative developed by Emma, with jars collected throughout the month through family donations and reused for the activity.

This experience connected: **Family engagement + sustainability + shared learning + community connection**.

Feedback from Babajin Room families included:

"Loved it! Was such a beautiful evening. Thank you for spoiling us!" "Beautiful/enjoyed every bit!" This feedback provides evidence that family engagement opportunities are valued and contribute to positive relationships between families, educators and the Centre community.

Reconciliation and Cultural Inclusion

CPELC is committed to **embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives authentically throughout the educational program, learning environments and daily practices**, consistent with the Centre's Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our approach recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives should not be limited to significant dates or isolated experiences. Educators continue to reflect on how First Nations perspectives can be respectfully and meaningfully embedded across everyday learning.

This includes:

- Building relationships with Aboriginal community members and cultural educators.
- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the educational program.
- Incorporating First Nations perspectives within learning environments.
- Recognising significant dates such as National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.
- Providing opportunities for children to learn about Country, culture, stories, symbols and connection.
- Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to see their identities and cultures respectfully represented.
- Creating opportunities for all children to develop respect and appreciation for First Nations cultures, histories and contributions.

Evidence of QA6 in Practice

These examples demonstrate that community engagement at CPELC is **reciprocal, purposeful and connected to children's learning**.

The Centre actively creates opportunities for:

- Children to connect with their local community.
- Families to share cultural knowledge and expertise.
- Families to participate in Centre experiences.
- Community partnerships to extend children's learning.
- Sustainability to be incorporated into family engagement.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to be embedded authentically.
- Educators to reflect on how community connections influence practice.

Through these partnerships, children experience a learning environment that extends beyond the Centre walls and connects **home, family, culture, community and education**. This strengthens children's identity, belonging, curiosity, cultural awareness and understanding of their role as active members of their community.



NRW the Babajin 4 yrs kinder learnt about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as part of the Curriculum.



In the Mirram room (2–3.5 years), children explored playdough experiences enhanced with natural resources and Aboriginal animal symbol stamps, including koala and kangaroo, and additional materials such as tree branches. This supported creativity, sensory exploration, and engagement with Aboriginal perspectives.



Coobaaroo room 6mths to 2.5 yrs room. This sensory experience invites children to explore drawing and mark making in sand using their fingers or tools. Children are encouraged to create their own stories, pictures, and patterns, using their imagination to express ideas and communicate their thinking. As they draw and share their creations, children develop creativity, language skills, and confidence in storytelling. The tactile nature of the sand also supports sensory exploration, fine motor development, and early literacy.



Acknowledgement of Country

Woolert room 3 yrs kinder Learning the names of the rooms and the animals they represent and continuing to practice

On Wednesday, 5 August 2026 we had the wonderful opportunity to welcome our local Member of Parliament and representatives from Monash Council to Columbia Park Early Learning Centre.

It was a fantastic opportunity to showcase our amazing centre, our dedicated teaching team, and the high-quality educational program we provide for children and families every day. Our visitors enjoyed seeing our learning environments, hearing about our commitment to inclusion, sustainability, reconciliation, and community partnerships, and observing the meaningful experiences that support children's learning and development.

We are proud to share the exceptional work that takes place at Columbia Park ELC and appreciate the opportunity to strengthen our connections with our local community and government representatives. Thank you to everyone who helped make the visit such a positive and memorable experience.



In the photo -

Victorian State Government

- Eden Foster (State Member for Mulgrave)

City of Monash

- Shane McCluskey (City of Monash Councillor for Waverley Park Ward)
- Sarah Kleine (Manager Child, Youth and Family Services)

- Natasha Perkins (Coordinator Early Years)
- Sarah Spink (Team Leader Kindergarten Services)

CPELC committee member attended the day were President – Sheyam and Vice President Joanne.
Management Team members – Cathy, Nakita and Tania



As part of the visit, Jaeden led a traditional Welcome to Country with a Smoking Ceremony as we connected with Boonwurrung culture. *(Videos of this special experience will be shared with families via Vimeo or HubHello.)*

Using smouldering wattle, gum and cherry ballart leaves, Jaeden shared the significance of this important cultural practice with the community. The Welcome to country provided a meaningful opportunity for everyone to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and deepen their understanding of Aboriginal culture, history and traditions.

The children eagerly participated with curiosity and respect, embracing the experience as they learned about the importance of caring for Country, connection, and community. Experiences such as these foster a strong sense of belonging, promote cultural awareness, and support children to develop respect and appreciation for the First Nation Peoples of Australia.

From Jaeden *"Columbia Park Early Learning is a beautiful space with lovely energy. I loved the intimacy and their cultural engagement, their respect and openness to multiple cultural stories, and blending them to make a rich child-safe and focused environment"*
(Evidence see reflection Babajin room 31 July 2026, Mirram acknowledgement country 3 September 2026)

Following the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony, the children from Babajin and Woolert enjoyed a special question-and-answer session with our visitors from Monash Council.

The children confidently asked a range of thoughtful and engaging questions, including, *"What do you do for work?"* and *"What is your favourite football team?"* Their curiosity and confidence shone through as they interacted with the council representatives.

The children also enthusiastically shared their ideas for the local community, suggesting the addition of a new swimming pool and even some exciting new animals, including a giraffe and a shark! Their imaginative ideas sparked plenty of smiles and demonstrated the value of listening to children's voices and recognising them as active contributors to their community.

This experience provided a meaningful opportunity for children to develop their communication skills, build confidence in speaking with community leaders, and learn about the important role local government plays in supporting the community.

On Thursday, 6 August 2026, the children were excited to welcome the local Fire Rescue crew and their fire truck to Columbia Park Early Learning Centre.

The visit provided a valuable hands-on learning experience, giving children the opportunity to explore the fire truck, learn about the important role firefighters play in keeping our community safe, and ask questions about their equipment and daily responsibilities. The firefighters spoke with the children about fire safety, emergencies, and how they help people in times of need.

The children were engaged and enthusiastic throughout the visit, eagerly climbing aboard the fire truck, trying on some of the firefighters' equipment, and sounding the siren. Experiences such as these help children build confidence, develop an understanding of community helpers, and strengthen their awareness of health and safety in an engaging and meaningful way.

Please see photos and learning via the weekly reflection.

We sincerely thank the Tam and the Fire Rescue crew for taking the time to visit our centre and create such a memorable learning experience for our children.

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 6

Improvement Plan

Standard/element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?
6.1.1	Family feedback tools require strengthening for meaningful engagement and measurable input. Using Family data tool.	Improve family engagement and incorporate feedback into continuous improvement processes. Redesign feedback tools (survey/digital).	M	families actively contribute to centre decisions about their child. Educational leaders will lead this ongoing project – trial and error -feedback from families and teaching team. Provide multiple feedback channels. - Analyse and document trends biannually. - Communicate actions taken in response to feedback.	Survey results - Family communication records - Action plans responding to feedback	Term 4
Progress notes	Family Feedback & Participation – Critical Reflection What action was taken? - The Family Data Toolkit was trialled to collect and analyse family feedback and participation data. - The teaching team reflected on the effectiveness of the approach and identified that it was not achieving the desired level of family engagement. - In July 2026, the teaching team discussed an alternative approach based on direct conversations with families. - Educators now prioritise meaningful conversations with families about their child's learning, development, wellbeing, interests and experiences. - Key information from conversations is documented in: - Individual children's learning plans - Family reflections - Educational program documentation - Follow-up actions and planning - Educators use these conversations to identify family priorities and incorporate family knowledge and perspectives into the program.					

What was the result?

- Families have a more accessible and personal way to contribute to their child's learning.
- Educators have gained richer, more contextual information than could be captured through a standardised feedback tool.
- Family perspectives are more directly connected to individual children's learning and planning.
- Educators are able to clarify information, ask questions and respond immediately to family feedback.
- The approach strengthens **two-way communication and relationships between educators and families**.

What impact did it have?

- Increased opportunities for genuine family participation in the educational program.
- Stronger partnerships between families and teaching teams.
- Family knowledge and perspectives are more consistently reflected in children's learning documentation.
- Educators are better able to respond to children's individual interests, strengths, needs and family priorities.
- The approach supports a more **inclusive and relationship-based approach to family engagement**.
- It demonstrates that CPELC is willing to **evaluate whether an initiative is actually effective and change practice when it is not meeting its intended purpose**.

What evidence demonstrates the impact?

- Family conversations documented in children's learning plans.
- Family reflections recorded within planning documentation.
- Examples of family feedback influencing children's experiences and learning opportunities.
- Educator reflections discussing family engagement and participation.
- Team discussions and meeting records from July 2026.
- Evidence within children's portfolios/documentation showing family perspectives incorporated into planning.
- Follow-up actions recorded after conversations with families.
- Feedback from families and educators regarding the effectiveness of the new approach.
- Comparison between the original Family Data Toolkit trial and the revised conversation-based approach.

Strong NQS-style summary

Our reflection identified that the Family Data Toolkit did not achieve the level of meaningful family participation we intended. Rather than continuing with a process that was not effective, the teaching team critically reflected on family and educator feedback and identified that families preferred genuine conversations with educators. From July 2026, the Centre strengthened its approach by prioritising meaningful two-way conversations with families and documenting family perspectives and agreed actions within children's learning plans and family reflections. This has provided information about children's interests, strengths, wellbeing and family priorities and has strengthened the connection between family input and the educational program. Evidence includes documented family conversations, family reflections, learning plans, educator reflections and examples of changes to practice resulting from family feedback. This demonstrates CPELC's commitment to using reflection and evidence to evaluate practice, respond to feedback and make improvements that strengthen genuine family partnerships.

8/9/2026

Ed leaders will discuss with team about incorporating children's voices into educational plans? How is this documented and parent input documented?

Lead educator meeting

8/9/2026 discuss children voice implemented such as for consent for photos

Notes to be added

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

Quality Improvement Plan for Quality Area 7 –

Summary of strengths for Quality Area 7

Strengths	Governance, Leadership & Child Safety – Strengths • Strong governance, distributed leadership, accountability and child safety underpin all aspects of CPELC operations. • Clear organisational structure defining roles and responsibilities of: ○ Management Committee ○ Centre Manager ○ Leadership team ○ Coordinators ○ Lead Educators ○ Teaching team members • Collaborative leadership supports consistent decision-making and high-quality outcomes for children, families and teaching teams. • Strong systems for: ○ Induction and onboarding ○ Mentoring and professional support ○ Professional learning ○ Performance and development conversations ○ Reflective practice ○ Leadership opportunities ○ Dedicated planning and reflection time • Stable and experienced teaching teams support children's security, belonging, wellbeing and continuity of relationships. Distributed Leadership • Leadership responsibilities are shared across the service. • Dedicated leadership responsibilities include: ○ Educational leadership and curriculum development ○ Child safety and safeguarding ○ OHS ○ Teaching team wellbeing ○ Curriculum design ○ Lead Educator responsibilities ○ Daily operational leadership ○ Mentoring and professional development • Distributed leadership promotes: ○ Shared accountability ○ Professional ownership ○ Leadership capability ○ Continuity of decision-making ○ Greater educator participation in improvement Management Committee & Governance
-----------	---

- Management Committee provides strong governance aligned with the **NQF and National Regulations**.
- Committee members contribute diverse skills and expertise.
- Governance discussions regularly consider:
 - Service operations
 - Financial sustainability
 - Policies and procedures
 - Workforce matters
 - Child safety
 - Risk management
 - QIP priorities
 - Building and environmental needs
 - Family and community feedback
- Committee investment supports quality learning environments, resources and sustainable financial management.

Child Safety as a Core Priority

- Child safety is embedded in governance, leadership, policy and everyday practice.
- Practice aligns with:
 - National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
 - Child Safe Standards
 - National Quality Framework
- Strong systems for:
 - Safe recruitment and screening
 - WWCC compliance
 - Child protection and safeguarding training
 - First Aid, CPR, Anaphylaxis and Asthma training
 - Reporting and escalation
 - Incident and risk management
 - Professional boundaries
 - Active supervision
 - Children's voice and participation
 - Cultural safety and inclusion
 - Regular policy review
- Child safety is viewed as a **shared responsibility and organisational culture**, not simply compliance.

Child Safe Culture Self-Assessment

- Teaching team completed the **NQF Child Safe Culture Self-Assessment and Risk Assessment Tool**.
- Process was further reviewed and completed during the January 2026 Professional Development Day.
- Reflection considered:
 - Child safe culture
 - Leadership and governance
 - Policies and procedures
 - Children's voice and participation
 - Cultural safety
 - Protective behaviours

- Child safe pedagogical practice
- Recruitment and screening
- Induction
- Professional learning
- Risk identification and management
- The process enabled the team to identify strengths and areas for further improvement.
- Child Safety Professional Learning**
 - CPELC prioritises ongoing child safety professional learning.
 - Educators are provided **paid time to complete mandatory training**.
 - Child Safe Standards training completed during allocated work time.
 - Team members not rostered on were compensated for training time.
 - Management Committee funds mandatory qualifications including:
 - First Aid
 - CPR
 - Professional learning is recognised as an **organisational responsibility**.
- Professional Learning & Child Safety Focus**
 - Early closure and professional learning days provide dedicated opportunities for:
 - Child safety training
 - Reflective practice
 - Professional discussion
 - Policy review
 - Building shared understanding
 - May 2026 professional meeting focused on:
 - Active and dynamic supervision
 - Professional conduct
 - Professional boundaries
 - Appropriate discipline
 - Children's dignity and wellbeing
 - Mandatory reporting
 - Responding to disclosures
 - Cultural safety
 - Children's rights and agency
 - Consent and participation
 - Safe pedagogical practice
 - Educators reflected on respecting children's choices and consent, including photographs and videos.
 - Leadership creates a culture where educators feel confident to **ask questions, speak up and advocate for children**.
- Complaints, Feedback & Continuous Improvement**
 - Complaints Register provides valuable evidence for governance and continuous improvement.
 - Concerns are investigated and documented with consideration of:
 - Procedural fairness
 - Transparency
 - Factual information

- Children's safety and wellbeing
- Family perspectives
- Follow-up
- Practice improvement
- Educators are encouraged to gather factual information before drawing conclusions.
- Open-ended questions support children to communicate their experiences without being led.
- Family communication is strengthened through timely, factual, respectful and transparent responses.
- Complaints are used to identify **broader practice improvements**, not simply resolve individual concerns.

Behaviour Guidance & Children's Voice

- Ongoing focus on:
 - Emotional coaching
 - Co-regulation
 - Resilience
 - Empathy
 - Perspective-taking
 - Conflict resolution
 - Open-ended communication
 - Respectful behaviour guidance
 - Consistent educator responses
- Families receive information about behaviour guidance and children's emotional development.
- Practice supports children's emotional literacy, agency and ability to resolve conflict.

Reflective Practice & QIP

- Reflective practice is embedded in:
 - Daily practice
 - Team meetings
 - Planning cycles
 - Professional learning
 - QIP processes
- Evidence used to inform improvement includes:
 - Child safety self-assessments
 - Risk assessments
 - Complaints and feedback
 - Incident and injury records
 - Family feedback
 - Educator observations
 - Professional discussions
 - Training
 - Policy reviews
 - QIP priorities
- Leadership and Committee use evidence to **implement, monitor and evaluate improvements**.

Workforce Retention & Stability

- CPELC recognises that workforce stability directly supports children's outcomes.

- Teaching team retention is supported through:
 - Above-award remuneration
 - Professional development
 - Mentoring
 - Leadership pathways
 - Positive workplace culture
 - Professional support
- Teaching team members receive remuneration **4% above the applicable Children's Services Award rate.**
- Eligible teaching team members receive the **Worker Retention Payment (WRP).**
- Investment in educators supports:
 - Consistent teaching teams
 - Secure relationships
 - Continuity for children and families
 - High-quality educational practice

Kindergarten Workforce

- Two full-time kindergarten teachers employed under VECTEA.
- Supports:
 - Continuity for children and families
 - Educational leadership
 - Dedicated planning and assessment
 - Transition-to-school processes
 - Collaboration with Foundation teachers and schools
 - Family communication
 - Consistent kindergarten programming
 - Curriculum reflection and development
- Demonstrates investment in **quality educational practice beyond minimum requirements.**

Professional Development & Capability

- CPELC provides ongoing professional learning across:
 - Child Safe Standards
 - Reportable Conduct
 - Trauma-informed practice
 - Emotional coaching
 - PACE
 - Child protection
 - First Nations perspectives
 - Key Word Sign
- Partnership with **It Takes a Village** strengthens trauma-informed practice, relationships and emotional regulation.
- SRF supports:
 - Emotional coaching
 - Resilience-based approaches
 - Emotional literacy
 - Self-regulation

- Positive relationships
- Allied health partnerships include:
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Speech Pathologists
 - Psychologists
- Professional learning is embedded into the **QIP and everyday practice**, rather than being viewed as one-off training.

Cultural & Inclusive Practice

- Professional learning strengthens cultural capability and inclusive practice.
- Boonwurrung curriculum supports children's:
 - Connection to Country
 - Culture
 - Identity
 - Community
- Key Word Sign training supports more inclusive communication and diverse communication needs.

Annual Professional Development Days

- Annual PD Day embedded since **2024**.
- Provides opportunities for:
 - Team building
 - First Aid and CPR training
 - Mandatory professional learning
 - Reflective practice
 - Shared goal setting
 - Professional connection
 - Wellbeing
- Dedicated in-service days support planning, reflection and continuous improvement.
- Centre has also closed for a teaching team in-service day following the children's final day of the year since 2023.

Investment in Environments & Resources

- 2020 Outdoor Redevelopment Grant supported redevelopment of the kindergarten outdoor environment.
- Natural play environment supports:
 - Connection to nature
 - Exploration
 - Inquiry
 - Imaginative play
 - Collaboration
 - Physical development
 - Appropriate risk-taking
- In 2022, Management Committee funded redevelopment of both:
 - Over-three outdoor environment
 - Under-three outdoor environment
- Staffroom and office redevelopment created dedicated spaces for:
 - Planning
 - Meetings

- Reflection
- Professional conversations
- Administration
- IT funding enabled secure access to:
 - Microsoft Teams
 - Educational planning systems
 - Individual CPELC email accounts
- Technology investment strengthened communication, collaboration, documentation, planning and professional learning.

Staff Wellbeing & Voice

- Employee satisfaction survey conducted in December 2025.
- Survey provides regular opportunities for teaching teams to provide feedback on:
 - Wellbeing
 - Workplace culture
 - Communication
 - Leadership
 - Professional support
- Results inform QIP priorities and wellbeing strategies.
- Employee Assistance Program provides confidential personal and work-related support.
- Professional memberships provide access to current research, sector information and professional learning, including:
 - Early Childhood Australia
 - Community Early Learning Australia
 - It Takes a Village
- ELAA governance resources support effective governance, compliance, decision-making and policy development.

Overall Governance Strength

- **Governance, leadership, workforce capability and child safety are interconnected.**
- Strong shared accountability across the Management Committee, leadership team and teaching team.
- Investment in people, professional learning, environments and technology demonstrates strong governance.
- Educators are supported to:
 - Speak up
 - Raise concerns
 - Question practice
 - Reflect critically
 - Advocate for children
 - Contribute to improvement
- **Child safety, children's rights, voice, dignity, wellbeing and agency remain central to governance and everyday practice.**
- CPELC demonstrates a strong culture of **continuous improvement, professional empowerment and shared responsibility.**

Standard 7.1 – Governance: Governance supports the operation of a quality centre that is child safe.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, child safety is a fundamental responsibility of governance and leadership and is embedded throughout all aspects of Centre operations. The Management Committee, Centre Manager, leadership team and teaching team share responsibility for creating and maintaining a culture where children's safety, rights, wellbeing, dignity and voice are prioritised in everyday decision-making. Clear Governance and Accountability CPELC maintains a clear organisational structure with defined roles and responsibilities across the Management Committee, Centre Manager, leadership team, coordinators, Lead Educators and teaching team members. This structure supports accountability for child safety by ensuring responsibilities for supervision, risk management, incident response, policy implementation, professional conduct and safeguarding are clearly understood. Governance and leadership decisions are guided by the National Quality Framework, Education and Care Services National Regulations, Child Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Management Committee actively participates in governance processes, including: • Policy and procedure review. • Risk management and safety considerations. • Child safety discussions. • Incident and complaint oversight. • Quality Improvement Plan development. • Workforce and professional learning decisions. • Financial decisions that support safe and effective environments. Child Safety Embedded in Leadership Practice Child safety is not treated as a standalone compliance requirement. It is considered when making decisions about teaching teaming, supervision, environments, professional learning, policies, risk management, curriculum and children's participation. Leadership promotes a culture where educators are encouraged and supported to: • Raise concerns. • Ask questions about practice. • Report risks and hazards. • Respond appropriately to disclosures. • Reflect on professional conduct. • Challenge unsafe or inappropriate practices. • Seek leadership support when concerns arise. • Contribute to child safety improvements. This supports a workplace culture where speaking up is encouraged and child safety is a shared professional responsibility. Child Safe Workforce The Centre maintains systems to support a child-safe workforce, including: • Current Working with Children Checks. • Appropriate recruitment and screening processes. • Structured induction and onboarding. • Child protection and Child Safe Standards training. • Ongoing professional learning.

- First Aid and CPR training.
- Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management training.
- Professional discussions regarding safeguarding.
- Clear expectations regarding professional conduct and boundaries.

Mandatory training is actively supported by the Centre, including providing educators with paid time to complete required training. This demonstrates that child safety capability is considered an **organisational responsibility**.

Child Safe Culture Self-Assessment

The teaching team completed the **NQF Child Safe Culture Self-Assessment and Risk Assessment Tool** during a professional meeting, with the process further reviewed and completed during the **Professional Development Day in January 2026**.

The self-assessment provided an opportunity for the team and leadership to critically examine child-safe practice across areas including:

- Child safe culture.
- Leadership and governance.
- Policies and procedures.
- Children's voice and participation.
- Cultural safety.
- Protective behaviours.
- Child safe pedagogical practice.
- Recruitment and induction.
- Teaching team training and professional development.
- Identification and management of risks.

The process strengthened shared understanding and identified opportunities to continue improving child safety across the service.

Child Safety Professional Learning

Child safety is regularly discussed through professional meetings and ongoing professional learning.

During the Centre's child safety professional meeting, the team examined:

- Active and dynamic supervision.
- Professional boundaries.
- Appropriate professional conduct.
- Inappropriate discipline practices.
- Mandatory reporting obligations.
- Responding to concerns and disclosures.
- Children's rights and agency.
- Cultural safety.
- Safe use of photographs and videos.
- Children's consent and boundaries.
- Child safe pedagogical practices.

Educators reflected on how everyday interactions can either strengthen or undermine children's sense of safety and dignity.

The team specifically discussed ways to support children to **express their views, make choices, communicate boundaries and participate in decisions affecting them**.

Children's Voice and Agency

Children's voices are actively sought and respected as part of the Centre's child safe culture.

Educators provide opportunities for children to:

- Express their ideas and feelings.
- Make meaningful choices.
- Communicate preferences.
- Say no or indicate when they are uncomfortable.
- Participate in decisions about their learning.
- Contribute to the development of experiences and environments.
- Have their concerns taken seriously.

Educators critically reflect on children's verbal and non-verbal communication and consider whether their responses genuinely support children's **rights, dignity, agency and participation**.

Safe Supervision and Risk Management

Leadership ensures that active and dynamic supervision remains a priority across all learning environments.

Risk assessments are regularly undertaken to identify hazards, foreseeable risks and potential child safety concerns. Educators are expected to remain alert to changes in children's behaviour, environmental risks and situations that may require additional supervision or intervention.

Supervision practices are reviewed through professional discussions, observations, incident reviews and critical reflection to ensure they remain effective and responsive.

Complaints, Concerns and Continuous Improvement

The Centre maintains processes for responding to complaints, concerns, incidents and disclosures. These processes support transparency, procedural fairness and the protection of children.

Information gathered through complaints, incidents, family feedback and educator observations is considered as part of the Centre's continuous improvement processes.

Leadership uses this information to identify broader themes and determine whether changes are required to:

- Policies and procedures.
- Educator practice.
- Communication with families.
- Behaviour guidance approaches.
- Supervision arrangements.
- Professional learning.
- Risk management.
- Child safety strategies.

This ensures that concerns are not simply addressed as individual events but can contribute to **service-wide learning and improvement**.

Reflective Governance

Reflective practice is embedded within governance through:

- Teaching team meetings.
- Professional learning.
- Leadership discussions.
- Policy reviews.
- Risk assessments.
- Incident and complaint reviews.
- Child safety self-assessment.
- Family feedback.
- Children's voices.

	• Quality Improvement Plan review. Leadership regularly considers whether current systems are effective, whether children's voices are genuinely influencing practice and whether there are any barriers preventing children or adults from speaking up. Our Strength A key strength of CPELC is that child safety is embedded within the Centre's governance culture rather than being viewed as a separate compliance responsibility. The Management Committee, leadership team and teaching team share accountability for creating environments where children are safe, heard, respected, valued and protected. Through clear governance, strong leadership, child-safe workforce practices, ongoing professional learning, active supervision, risk management, children's participation and critical reflection, CPELC continues to strengthen a culture in which every adult understands their responsibility to protect children, and every child is supported to know that their voice matters.
2. Practice is informed by critical reflection	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, critical reflection is embedded within governance and leadership practices and is used to strengthen systems, decision-making, child safety and outcomes for children and families. Reflection is viewed as an ongoing process of questioning, evaluating and improving practice rather than simply confirming compliance. Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement CPELC utilises the ACECQA Self-Assessment Tool to regularly evaluate practice against the National Quality Framework. The self-assessment process supports the Centre to identify: • Strengths and successful practices. • Areas requiring further development. • Emerging risks or challenges. • Evidence of impact. • Opportunities for innovation. • Priorities for the Quality Improvement Plan. Information gathered through self-assessment is considered alongside feedback, observations, incidents, complaints, children's voices, family perspectives and educator reflection to establish meaningful improvement priorities. The QIP is therefore a living document that reflects current practice and identifies the next steps required to strengthen outcomes. Critical Reflection Across Governance The teaching team, leadership and Management Committee participate in ongoing critical reflection through: • Professional meetings. • Teaching team meetings. • Management Committee meetings. • Leadership discussions. • Planning and review cycles. • Policy and procedure reviews. • Risk assessments. • Child safety self-assessments. • QIP review and evaluation. • Family and community feedback. Reflection extends beyond asking whether processes are being followed. The team considers whether current systems are effective, whether they achieve their intended outcomes and whether they continue to meet the changing needs of children, families and the community. Questions considered include:

- Is this process achieving the outcome we intended?
- Whose voice is represented in the decision?
- Are there barriers preventing participation?
- What evidence demonstrates that the strategy is effective?
- What could we do differently?
- How will we know whether the change has made a difference?

Child Safety and Critical Reflection

Child safety is a significant focus of ongoing critical reflection.

The Centre regularly reviews safeguarding practices against the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and Child Safe Standards**. Policies, procedures, supervision practices and risk assessments are examined to determine whether they effectively protect children and support their rights, dignity, voice and wellbeing.

The completion and review of the **NQF Child Safe Culture Self-Assessment and Risk Assessment Tool in 2026** provided a structured opportunity for educators and leadership to examine child safety culture across the service.

Reflection considers areas including:

- Children's voice and agency.
- Cultural safety.
- Protective behaviours.
- Professional conduct and boundaries.
- Active and dynamic supervision.
- Recruitment and induction.
- Child protection training.
- Risk identification and management.
- Responding to concerns and disclosures.
- Child safe pedagogical practice.

Where reflection identifies an opportunity for improvement, changes are implemented and monitored through professional learning, policy review, practice changes and QIP actions.

Management Committee Critical Reflection

The Management Committee actively participates in critical reflection regarding its governance responsibilities.

Committee meetings provide opportunities to review and question:

- Financial management and sustainability.
- Policy and procedure implementation.
- Child safety matters.
- Risk management.
- Teaching teaming and workforce considerations.
- Building and environmental issues.
- Complaints and feedback.
- QIP priorities.
- Regulatory and compliance requirements.
- Strategic planning.

Committee meeting minutes provide evidence of **ongoing discussion, decision-making, actions and follow-up**.

The Committee reflects on whether decisions remain aligned with the Centre's philosophy, children's best interests, community expectations and legislative responsibilities.

Using Multiple Perspectives

CPELC recognises that effective critical reflection requires more than one perspective. Feedback and information are gathered from:

- Children.
- Families.
- Teaching team members.
- Leadership.
- Management Committee members.
- External professionals.
- Community partners.

Children's voices are particularly important when reflecting on environments, relationships, safety and learning experiences. Family feedback contributes to decisions about communication, curriculum, transitions, wellbeing and service improvement.

Educator perspectives provide insight into the practical effectiveness of systems, while Committee and leadership perspectives support governance, accountability and strategic decision-making.

Reflection Leading to Change

Critical reflection is most effective when it results in **visible and measurable change**.

At CPELC, reflection informs actions such as:

- Updating policies and procedures.
- Strengthening child safety training.
- Refining supervision practices.
- Reviewing risk assessments.
- Improving communication with families.
- Adjusting educational practices.
- Strengthening behaviour guidance approaches.
- Enhancing children's participation and voice.
- Identifying professional learning priorities.
- Developing QIP improvement strategies.

The Centre evaluates the impact of these changes and continues to reflect on whether further action is required.

Our Strength

A key strength of CPELC is that **critical reflection is shared across all levels of the organisation**. Educators, leadership and the Management Committee contribute to an ongoing cycle.

This ensures that governance and leadership remain responsive, accountable and focused on meaningful outcomes rather than compliance alone.

Through this systematic approach, critical reflection strengthens **governance, child safety, professional practice, family partnerships and continuous improvement**, ensuring that decisions remain centred on the safety, wellbeing, learning and best interests of every child.

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, governance and leadership practices are strengthened through **meaningful, respectful and ongoing engagement with families and the broader community**. Families are recognised as important partners in governance, decision-making and continuous improvement, and their knowledge, experiences and perspectives contribute to the ongoing development of the Centre.

Family Voice in Governance

Families are provided with multiple opportunities to contribute to the Centre's governance and decision-making processes through:

- Family surveys.
- Daily conversations and informal feedback.
- Formal feedback processes.
- Parent meetings.
- Digital communication platforms.
- Participation in Centre events and consultations.
- Contributions to policy and procedure reviews.
- Participation in the Management Committee.

Family feedback is reviewed by leadership and the Management Committee and is used to identify priorities for improvement. Where appropriate, feedback contributes directly to **policy development, operational decisions, curriculum priorities, communication strategies and the Quality Improvement Plan**.

This ensures families are not simply informed about decisions but have genuine opportunities to influence the direction of the service.

Management Committee and Family Participation

The Management Committee provides an important connection between families, governance and the Centre community. The Committee encourages families to participate in governance and creates opportunities for families to contribute their knowledge, skills and perspectives. The Committee communicates information about Centre priorities and governance processes and welcomes feedback from the broader Centre community.

The Management Committee is structured to support effective governance, accountability and continuity through clearly defined leadership responsibilities, including:

- President – Sheyam
- Vice President – Joanne
- Secretary - Scott
- Finance responsibilities – Ellen and Joanne
- Human Resources - Gaya
- Policy – Shaunee and Emily
- Fundraising – Aimee and Kalli

A formal **succession planning approach** supports continuity of leadership, with the Vice President identified as the primary successor to the President. Opportunities are also provided for subcommittee members to develop governance and leadership capability.

This approach strengthens organisational stability and supports the development of future leaders within the Centre community.

Financial and Strategic Governance

The Finance Subcommittee supports responsible and sustainable financial management through oversight of:

- Budgeting.
- Financial reporting.
- Expenditure.
- Funding opportunities.
- Grant compliance.
- Financial planning.

The Fundraising Subcommittee actively supports the Centre to identify and pursue funding opportunities, including **Worker Retention Payment (WRP), IT grants and Bush Kinder grants**, working collaboratively with relevant subcommittees and Centre leadership.

These governance structures support the Centre's capacity to invest in **teaching teaming, professional learning, resources, environments and programs that benefit children and families**.

Community Partnerships

The Centre recognises that effective governance is strengthened when decisions are informed by knowledge beyond the service.

CPELC maintains connections with:

- Local schools.
- Monash Council.
- Early years networks.
- Aboriginal community members and cultural educators.
- Health and wellbeing professionals.
- Allied health services.
- Community organisations.
- Early childhood professional networks.
- Local libraries and community facilities.

These relationships provide opportunities to share knowledge, strengthen professional practice and connect children and families with relevant community resources.

Community engagement also supports the Centre to remain responsive to the changing needs, expectations and diversity of the local community.

Leadership Professional Learning – Child Safety

Centre Manager and Nominated Supervisor **Cathy** has participated in professional learning webinars facilitated through **Early Childhood Australia (ECA)** featuring Catharine Hydon, with a particular focus on strengthening child safeguarding.

Professional learning has included:

- **Strengthening Child Safeguarding in Early Education – Child Safe Recruitment and Onboarding Practices**
- **Teaching teaming and Rostering for Dynamic Supervision**
- **Learning Environment Safety Audits**
- **Grooming and Sexual Abuse Prevention**
- **Responding to Concerns Raised by Teaching Teams and Families**
- **Trauma-Informed Practice in Safeguarding**

The learning, resources and tools from these sessions are shared with the leadership and teaching teams to strengthen preventative safeguarding practices across the service.

Translating Professional Learning into Practice

Professional learning is not viewed as an isolated activity. Leadership uses the knowledge gained to support **professional discussion, critical reflection and changes to everyday practice**.

Key areas of focus include:

- Strengthening child-safe recruitment and induction.
- Maintaining effective teaching teaming and rostering arrangements.
- Supporting dynamic supervision.
- Reviewing learning environment safety.
- Identifying and responding to potential grooming behaviours.
- Strengthening responses to concerns raised by children, families and educators.

- Applying trauma-informed approaches to safeguarding.
 - Strengthening risk assessment and prevention strategies.
 - Supporting children's rights, voice and agency.
- The leadership team continues to share relevant resources and facilitate professional conversations so that safeguarding knowledge is embedded consistently across the service.
- Connecting Families, Community and Child Safety**
- Family and community engagement also contributes to the Centre's child-safe culture. Families are encouraged to raise concerns, provide feedback and contribute their perspectives about children's safety and wellbeing.
- Leadership reflects on this feedback alongside educator observations, incidents, complaints, risk assessments and children's voices to identify opportunities for improvement.
- A key strength of CPELC is the **connection between governance, family participation, community partnerships and professional learning**. The Management Committee provides strong governance and accountability, while families and community partners contribute knowledge and perspectives that help shape decision-making. Leadership actively invests in professional learning and translates new knowledge into practice, particularly in relation to child safety and safeguarding.
- Through these interconnected practices, CPELC ensures governance remains **transparent, responsive, collaborative and focused on the best interests, safety, wellbeing, rights and learning of every child**.

Standard 7.2 – Leadership: Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

Exceeding themes	
1. Practice is embedded in centre operations	At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, leadership practices are embedded in everyday operations and consistently shape the culture, direction and continuous improvement of the Centre. Leadership is not limited to formal positions; it is distributed across the Centre Manager, Educational Leaders, Lead Educators, Senior Educators and teaching team, creating a culture of shared responsibility for quality outcomes. Building Leadership Capability CPELC is committed to developing leadership capability across the teaching team and creating opportunities for educators to strengthen their professional knowledge and confidence. Nakita and Tania were successfully accepted into the Victorian Educational Leadership Program, commencing 20 April 2026. Their participation provides opportunities to further develop educational leadership capability and bring new knowledge, strategies and perspectives back to the Centre. Nakita embedding sustainability team (aug 2026) and Tania embedding child voice. The Centre also supports educators to progress professionally through mentoring and professional development. Emma has mentored Rhiannon and Wendy in progressing their Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration from provisional registration, supporting their professional development, confidence and progression within the early childhood sector. These opportunities demonstrate the Centre's commitment to developing educators as professionals and future leaders.



The Educational Leader and leadership team actively support the embedding of **reflective practice within the educational program**. Planning, documentation, assessment and decision-making are informed by:

- Children's voices and interests.
- Family perspectives and contributions.
- Observations and documentation.
- Educator reflection.
- Critical reflection.
- Current early childhood research and professional learning.
- The Centre philosophy and improvement priorities.

Leadership processes include regular professional meetings, allocated non-contact time, mentoring conversations, coaching and documented action plans. These structures support accountability and ensure agreed actions are followed through and evaluated. Coaching and mentoring are embedded within the Centre's leadership approach. Experienced educators support colleagues through:

- Professional conversations.
- Modelling effective practice.
- Reflective discussions.
- Observation and feedback.
- Curriculum and documentation support.
- New educator induction.
- Leadership development.
- Professional registration support.

This approach builds confidence, strengthens pedagogical practice and develops a shared understanding of what high-quality teaching and learning looks like. Teaching team members are supported to take responsibility for areas of practice and contribute to:

- Curriculum development.
- Child safety.
- Sustainability.
- Cultural inclusion and reconciliation.
- Occupational health and safety.
- Wellbeing.
- Professional learning.
- Quality improvement.
- Family and community engagement.

Continuous Improvement Leadership actively uses reflective tools and evidence to guide improvement. The **ACECQA Self-Assessment Tool, National Quality Framework and Quality Improvement Plan** are used to identify strengths, evaluate current practice and establish improvement priorities.

- Children's experiences and voices.
- Family feedback.
- Educator reflection.
- Observations and documentation.
- Complaints and feedback.
- Incidents and risk assessments.
- Professional learning.
- Self-assessment.
- Community engagement.

This ensures leadership decisions are evidence-informed and focused on meaningful outcomes rather than compliance alone. Safeguarding children is embedded throughout the Centre's culture, leadership and daily practice. Leadership ensures that child-safe expectations are clearly communicated, modelled and reinforced across the teaching team. Child safety is considered when making decisions about:

- Teaching teaming and rostering.
- Active and dynamic supervision.
- Learning environments.
- Risk assessment.
- Curriculum planning.
- Professional conduct.
- Behaviour guidance.
- Children's participation.
- Photography and media.
- Communication with families.
- Professional learning.

Practice is aligned with the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and Child Safe Standards**. Leadership also promotes a culture where educators feel confident to raise concerns, seek guidance and challenge practices that may compromise children's safety or wellbeing. Leadership recognises that a strong child-safe culture requires children to understand that **their voice matters**. Teaching teams support children to develop an understanding of:

- Personal safety.
- Body autonomy.
- Consent and personal boundaries.
- Trusted relationships.
- Expressing feelings and concerns.
- Seeking help from trusted adults.

- Making choices about their learning and experiences.

Children are encouraged to communicate when something does not feel safe or comfortable, and educators respond respectfully to children's verbal and non-verbal communication.

Leadership continues to strengthen safeguarding and pedagogical practice through professional learning, coaching, mentoring and professional discussions. Leadership also encourages educators to participate in observational visits, professional networks and external learning opportunities. Knowledge gained is shared with the broader teaching team and considered through reflective discussions to determine how it can be applied within the Centre. A key strength of CPELC is our commitment to **developing leadership capacity at every level of the organisation**. Through the Victorian Educational Leadership Program, VIT registration mentoring, coaching, professional learning, distributed leadership and child-safe practice, educators are supported to grow professionally and contribute meaningfully to the Centre's direction.

Leadership is therefore **visible, collaborative and practice-based**, strengthening educational quality, safeguarding, professional capability and positive outcomes for children, families, educators and the wider community.

2. Practice is informed by critical reflection

t Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, critical reflection has identified the value of **professional collaboration beyond the Centre** as an important strategy for strengthening leadership capability, broadening professional perspectives and supporting continuous improvement.

In 2025, CPELC **recommenced professional network meetings with other community-based early childhood services, including Ashwood and Brandon Park**. The decision to re-establish this network followed reflection on the importance of creating opportunities for educators to connect with colleagues outside their own service, share experiences and critically examine different approaches to practice.

The network provides a professional space for teaching teams to:

- Share successful practices and ideas.
- Discuss common challenges and emerging issues.
- Question and reflect on current approaches.
- Learn from different service contexts.
- Develop shared understandings of quality practice.
- Strengthen professional relationships.
- Identify opportunities for collaborative improvement.

Through reflection, the Centre recognised that professional learning is strengthened when educators have opportunities to **hear different perspectives and compare approaches across services**. Rather than relying solely on internal professional discussions, the Centre has intentionally created opportunities for educators to engage with colleagues from other community-based services. The network has provided opportunities for targeted professional learning across the participating services. Examples include:

- **Key Word Sign training at CPELC**, strengthening inclusive communication and supporting children with diverse communication needs.
- **“Yes Spaces” training at Ashwood**, supporting educators to consider how environments can promote children's agency, participation, safety and belonging.

- **Children's Rights training at Brandon Park**, strengthening educators' understanding of children's rights, voice and participation.

These shared learning opportunities have enabled educators to take new knowledge back to their own learning environments and consider how it can be embedded into everyday practice.

The network has strengthened professional dialogue and encouraged educators to reflect more deeply on **inclusion, children's rights, communication, agency and safe learning environments**.

Learning from other services is shared with the broader CPELC teaching team through professional conversations and reflection. Educators consider how new ideas align with the Centre philosophy, EYLF V2.0, VEYLDF and current QIP priorities before determining whether changes to practice are appropriate.

This ensures external professional learning is not simply attended but is **shared, critically considered and translated into practice**. Network meetings occur **three times per year with Ashwood children's centre and Brandon Park children's centre**, providing an ongoing structure for sustained professional collaboration rather than one-off networking.

The continuation of the network demonstrates how CPELC has responded to critical reflection by creating a sustainable mechanism for educators to: The Centre continues to evaluate the value of these network meetings and considers the professional learning, ideas and feedback generated through the network as part of its ongoing quality improvement processes.

A key strength is CPELC's willingness to **look beyond its own service and critically examine practice through collaboration with other community-based centres**.

Re-establishing the network has strengthened professional relationships, increased opportunities for shared learning and supported educators to challenge and extend their thinking. This collaborative approach contributes to a culture where continuous improvement is understood as an ongoing professional responsibility and where educators are encouraged to remain curious, reflective and open to new perspectives

3. Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families, and/or community

At Columbia Park Early Learning Centre, leadership is strengthened through **meaningful, ongoing engagement with families, community organisations, government agencies and external professionals**. These partnerships provide opportunities for shared knowledge, professional dialogue and collaborative decision-making, supporting the Centre to remain responsive to the diverse needs of children, families and the wider community.

Professional and Community Partnerships

CPELC maintains collaborative relationships with:

- Allied health professionals.
- Monash Council representatives.
- Department of Education (DET) personnel.
- Preschool Field Officers (PSFO).
- Maternal and Child Health professionals.
- Local schools and Foundation teachers.
- Community organisations.
- Aboriginal community members and cultural educators.
- Early childhood professional networks.

These partnerships provide access to specialised knowledge and different perspectives, strengthening leadership decision-making and supporting a coordinated approach to children's learning, development, wellbeing and inclusion.

Where children require additional support, collaboration with external professionals enables educators and families to develop a more **holistic understanding of children's strengths, needs and circumstances** and identify appropriate strategies and supports.

Department of Education and Professional Leadership

Leadership team members engage with Department of Education representatives and participate in professional learning and leadership opportunities. These experiences strengthen leadership capability and support the Centre to remain informed about current expectations, quality practice and regulatory requirements.

Engagement with **Preschool Field Officers (PSFO)** and other Department of Education professionals provides opportunities to discuss inclusion, children's learning and development, transitions and strategies for supporting children with additional needs.

Leadership reflects on information gained through these partnerships and considers how it can be translated into practice within the Centre.

Community Collaboration and Shared Learning

CPELC recommenced its professional network with **Ashwood Children's Centre and Brandon Park Children's Centre**, creating an ongoing opportunity for educators and leaders from community-based services to share practice and learn from one another.

On **9 June 2026**, the network meeting was hosted at CPELC. Visiting teams toured each learning environment before participating in professional development focused on **Phoenix Cups**.

The professional learning explored:

- Building resilience and wellbeing.
- Challenging unhelpful thinking.
- Understanding individual wellbeing needs.
- Identifying each person's Phoenix Cups profile.
- Strategies for effectively "filling your cup".
- Understanding the wellbeing needs of colleagues.
- Recognising how different team members may require different forms of support.
- Building stronger and more supportive professional relationships.

This professional learning provided an opportunity for educators to consider not only children's wellbeing but also **educator wellbeing and team relationships**.

Extending Learning from Children to Educators

The Babajin kindergarten children have been exploring the concept of **"filling your cup" and "emptying your cup"** as part of their educational program. Following the professional learning, leadership identified an opportunity to extend this concept into the teaching team. Educators are now encouraged to reflect on what supports their own wellbeing, what may contribute to their "cups being emptied" and how colleagues can support one another to maintain professional wellbeing and resilience.

This creates a meaningful connection between **children's learning and educator practice**, demonstrating how ideas explored within the educational program can also inform the Centre's professional culture.

Leadership Capacity Through Collaboration

The Centre recognises that leadership is strengthened when decisions are informed by perspectives beyond the immediate service.

External partnerships and professional networks provide opportunities to:

- Challenge existing thinking.
- Access current professional knowledge.
- Share successful strategies.
- Identify emerging issues.
- Strengthen inclusive practice.
- Improve child safety and wellbeing.

- Develop leadership capability.
- Strengthen educator wellbeing.
- Build consistency across community services.

Leadership reflects on these experiences and determines how relevant learning can be embedded within the Centre's policies, professional discussions, educational program and continuous improvement priorities.

Our Strength

A key strength of CPELC is the **strong connection between community engagement, professional learning and leadership development.**

Our partnerships with families, allied health professionals, Department of Education, Monash Council, local schools and other community-based early childhood services ensure that leadership decisions are informed by diverse knowledge and perspectives.

The Phoenix Cups professional learning is one example of how external collaboration has translated into practice, with learning first explored with children through the educational program and subsequently extended to strengthen **educator wellbeing, resilience and team relationships.**

Through these partnerships, leadership remains **connected, informed, collaborative and responsive**, strengthening outcomes for children, families, educators and the broader community

As leaders in our community Columbia Park Early Learning Centre has established a collaborative professional network with leaders from other community-based early childhood services. The network provides a structured opportunity to share professional knowledge, discuss current challenges and strengthen leadership and educational collaborative partnerships.

Centre include below will commence in 2027 meeting twice a year – 1 centre at time will host.

Brandon Park Children's Centre –

Ashwood Children's Centre –

Brine Street Children's Centre –

The Children's Centre (Body Shop) –

Monash Co-Op –

The participating Centres have agreed that the network will meet **twice each year**, creating a sustainable structure for ongoing professional collaboration. Hosting responsibilities will rotate between the participating services, providing each Centre with an opportunity to share its environment, practices, strengths and areas for improvement.

7:30–7:40pm – Feedback

Participants complete feedback surveys to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the meeting and identify future professional learning priorities.

7:45pm – Conclusion

The meeting concludes with key reflections, shared learning and consideration of opportunities for continued collaboration.

Critical Reflection and Continuous Improvement

The network provides a mechanism for leaders and educators to move beyond their own centre context and **critically examine different approaches to educational practice, leadership and service improvement.**

Participants are encouraged to consider:

- What is working well in other services?
- What challenges are shared across the sector?
- What strategies could be adapted within our own Centre?
- What evidence demonstrates that a particular approach is effective?
- What new ideas should be explored further?

Learning from these discussions is brought back to each service and considered through professional discussions, reflective practice and quality improvement processes.

The network therefore supports a continuous cycle of:

Connect → Share → Question → Learn → Apply → Reflect → Improve

Strengthening Leadership Capability

This cross-centre collaboration strengthens leadership capability by providing leaders with opportunities to develop professional relationships, share expertise and gain broader perspectives on contemporary early childhood practice.

For CPELC, participation in this network demonstrates our commitment to **collaborative leadership, professional learning, community connection and continuous improvement**.

The network also strengthens relationships between community-based services and creates opportunities for future collaboration, shared professional learning and coordinated responses to emerging challenges across the early childhood sector.

Key improvements sought for Quality Area 7

M

Improvement Plan

Standard/element	Issue identified during self-assessment	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome? (Steps)	Success measure	By when?
7.2	The roles and responsibilities of the Educational Leader and Leadership Team require clearer definition, with strengthened accountability mechanisms to ensure consistent oversight of practice, compliance, and quality outcomes across the centre	• Clearer understanding of leadership roles and responsibilities across the centre • Improved accountability and consistency in decision-making and practice • Strengthened educational leadership and reflective practice culture • Enhanced compliance and quality outcomes aligned with the National Quality Framework • Improved support for continuous improvement and teaching team development	H	• Leadership meeting minutes with documented action plans • Coaching and mentoring records • Performance review documentation • Evidence of allocated non-contact time • Updated role descriptions for Educational Leader and Leadership Team	• Clearly define and document the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the Educational Leader and Leadership Team to strengthen accountability and governance. • Allocate structured non-contact time to support the Educational Leader and leadership teaching team to effectively fulfil their responsibilities. • Implement monthly leadership meetings with formal agendas and recorded action plans to ensure consistency, follow-through, and accountability. • Establish ongoing coaching and mentoring cycles to support professional growth, reflective practice, and leadership capability within the team.	End of 2026

Progress Notes	Leadership meeting minutes • Coaching records • Performance reviews Meeting on the 10 Feb 2026 with Catharine Hydon – The meeting focused on reviewing current QIP priorities, with particular emphasis on strengthening educational practice ensuring that child safety is consistently embedded in curriculum decision-making, daily practice, and team reflection. Discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong connection between educational leadership, programming, and child-safe practices, ensuring these are not separate. It was agreed that a targeted improvement strategy would be developed to support ongoing enhancement of practice. This includes: • Strengthening the role and capability of Educational Leaders in supporting practice and curriculum decision-making • Providing targeted professional learning opportunities to deepen understanding of quality educational practice and child-safe approaches • Exploring opportunities for observational visits to high-quality settings to support reflective practice and continuous improvement • Embedding child safety more explicitly within planning, documentation, and reflective cycles • Develop a structured support plan for Educational Leaders • Identify and source relevant professional learning opportunities • Plan and schedule potential observational visits • Continue linking improvement actions to the centre's QIP and reflective practice cycles • Ensure child safety remains embedded in all educational decision-making processes This reflective process strengthens governance and leadership practices by ensuring continuous improvement is informed by external expertise, professional dialogue, and structured planning. It supports a more consistent and intentional approach to embedding child safety within the educational program and enhances alignment with the National Quality Framework and Quality Area 1 requirements. Achieved – Cathy completed online sessions for Child safety through ECA – • Child-safe recruitment and onboarding practices • Staffing, rostering for dynamic supervision & Learning environment safety audits • Grooming and sexual abuse prevention • This information was shared with the team during meetings, shared with families via emails and newsletter. Child Safety - Early Childhood Australia Tania – is attending the full day course of child safety - Wednesday 19th August 9.00am– 3.00 pm by Catharine Hydon, Kate McGill & Nicole Talarico. Each session will cover four topics: • Child-safe recruitment and onboarding practices • Staffing, rostering for dynamic supervision & Learning environment safety audits • Grooming and sexual abuse prevention
----------------	---

- Responding to concerns raised by educators and families

Catharine Hydor attended the centre on Wednesday 9 September 2026 add notes



CPELC governance practices are shaped by ongoing, meaningful collaboration with families. Families are actively invited to contribute to decision-making through informal conversations, feedback processes, and participation in governance structures. This ensures their perspectives directly influence policies, programming, and the Quality Improvement Plan. The teaching team consistently embeds children's rights and family perspectives into practice, ensuring that decision-making reflects shared input rather than being educator-led alone. Teaching teams' input is not only collected but actively used to inform change and improvement. Feedback are reviewed, reflected and embed into planning and professional meetings discussions.

Teaching teams feedback -

- "Listen to children's voices and ideas and implement it into our planning" (Yee Ling Lee, 14/04)
- "When children ask for something, it can be added to the program" (Sonya Ware, 14/04)
- "Observations and communication with families and children themselves" informing programming (Yee Ling Lee, 14/04)

The centre consistently seeks input from children, families, and the teaching team to inform governance and practice. Children's perspectives are captured through observation, documentation, and intentional listening practices.

As reflected by the teaching team:

- "Listening to the child's voice through observation and documentation... empowers us to listen to the child, respecting their needs and interests, growing our program to be child led" (Lisa Luu, 14/04)

Teaching teams also emphasise reflective collaboration:

- "Listen to other educators, chat, assess and reflect" (Ella Whitfield, 14/04)

This demonstrates that decision-making is informed by multiple perspectives across the centre community. Engagement with families and community is embedded in ongoing reflective practice and contributes to continuous improvement. Feedback and observations are regularly discussed within the teaching team and inform planning, curriculum adjustments, and governance processes.

The management committee also supports this by ensuring family input is considered in strategic decisions and the Quality Improvement Plan. Engagement with families is closely linked to supporting children's rights, safety, and wellbeing. The teaching team actively embeds child-safe practices and teaches children about boundaries and help-seeking. As noted in team reflection:

- "Embedding child safe standards... respecting children, teaching them about boundaries, who they can go to" (Kerry Clark, 14/04)

This demonstrates that engagement with families and children supports a shared responsibility for child safety and wellbeing.