# 4.2.2 Professional standards

Professional standards guide practice, interactions, and relationships.

Attitudes, values, and beliefs can impact practice.

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| To **MEET** QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) | To **EXCEED** the QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) |
| Please discuss some of the sources you access to ensure you meet professional standards in your practice. | Please discuss whether all interactions between educators and others in the community are respectful and promote a positive atmosphere within the service. |
| **Sources accessed for professional standards**: To ensure professional standards in practice, educators access multiple resources, such as weekly professional development, webinars, and training sessions. Policies and Procedures, including the Educator and Management Policy, guide conduct. The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics is another essential source, providing a framework for ethical and professional decision-making. | **Interactions within the community**: All interactions between educators and the community aim to foster respect and positivity. This is ensured through regular reviews of the Code of Conduct and managing staff performance when expectations aren’t met. Recruitment processes focus on cultural fit, and teamwork training and mentoring help staff develop strong community engagement. Community partnerships with local organisations and members further enhance a collaborative and supportive service environment. |
| Please explain how you recognise and reduce the impact of personal biases on your practice, and relationships with children, families, and other educators. | Please give an example of your discussions or notes that demonstrates you’re aware of the professional standards underpinning your practice. |
| **Recognising and reducing personal biases**: Recognising and reducing personal biases involves ongoing reflective practice, often done collaboratively with team members. Engaging in relevant professional development, such as workshops on cultural awareness or inclusion, helps educators examine their values and assumptions. This critical reflection allows them to actively minimise bias in their interactions with children, families, and colleagues, promoting fairness and respect. | **Professional standards awareness**: An example demonstrating awareness of professional standards involves regular reflective practice where staff cross-reference their behaviours with position descriptions and service standards. Discussions often centre around feedback from colleagues and adherence to the National Quality Standard (NQS) and Codes of Ethics. These reflections are documented in staff appraisals and performance management processes, ensuring that professional conduct is consistently maintained and evaluated. |
| Please give an example of a professional interaction or relationship with a child and a family, and explain how it demonstrates your understanding of professional standards. | Please give an example of the way you or your team consistently identify and implement culturally sensitive ways to communicate, support, and engage with families. |
| **Professional interaction with a family**: An example of professional interaction is greeting families by name and engaging in meaningful conversations that respect their views and expertise. For instance, involving families in discussions about their child’s learning and incorporating their cultural traditions into the program. Respecting privacy and maintaining confidentiality are essential, as is directing families to service policies when needed, such as during complaints or discussions about service operations. | **Culturally sensitive communication**: To ensure culturally sensitive communication, our team regularly partners with local organisations, Elders, or community members for guidance on cultural practices. We also engage directly with families to understand their cultural backgrounds and communication preferences, ensuring respect and inclusivity in all interactions. This approach helps us build strong, supportive relationships with diverse families, allowing us to tailor our communication and engagement strategies effectively. |
| Please give examples of service policies and procedures that promote professional behaviour and interactions and explain how they do this. | Please discuss how your approach to professional standards, and that of your team, is consistent with your service philosophy, and Code of Conduct or ethics. |
| **Policies promoting professional behaviour**: Service policies that promote professional behaviour include the Relationships with Children Policy, which outlines respectful interactions, and the Educator and Management Policy, which provides guidelines for conduct. The Dress Code ensures professional presentation, while the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy enforces the importance of safeguarding sensitive information. Together, these policies ensure educators maintain professionalism in all interactions. | **Consistency with service philosophy and ethics**: Our service philosophy and Code of Conduct align closely with our approach to professional standards. This is reflected in open, respectful communication with families, staff, and management, honesty in all interactions, and a commitment to promoting well-being and safety. Our service also values diversity and equal opportunity, ensuring that staff and families are respected and supported in accordance with our Educator and Management Policy. |
| Please give an example of you or your team responding in an ethical way to a situation involving a child, family, or community member/organisation. | Please give an example of a team reflection about an ethical issue at the service and any changes made to improve ethical practice. |
| **Responding ethically to a situation**: An example of responding ethically involves a situation where a family offers a gift in gratitude. While appreciating the gesture, educators politely decline to avoid conflicts of interest or perceptions of bias. In another instance, educators ensure fair treatment of children from diverse backgrounds, even when challenges arise. Ethical decision-making prioritises the child’s best interests, reflecting fairness, integrity, and compliance with service policies. | **Team reflection on ethical issues**: An example of team reflection involved addressing the issue of favouritism when providing support to certain children. Through discussion, the team recognised the need to ensure equal attention to all children. Changes included adopting a more inclusive approach, providing professional development on bias, and revising guidelines on the acceptance of gifts from families. This reflection led to improvements in ethical practice and consistency in how children and families are supported. |