

The basics

1. Being an Educational Leader



The overview

The position of Educational Leader is established in law. This means that if you are appointed as an Educational leader, you are in a role defined by law and with duties that are outlined across the law.

The Educational Leader is defined by the Education and Care Services National Law:

An educator, co-ordinator or other individual who is suitably qualified and experienced must be appointed to lead the development and implementation of the educational program (or curriculum) in the service. This person may have suitable qualifications and experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework and/or the Framework for School Age Care (or other approved learning framework) to be able to guide other educators in their planning and reflection, and mentor colleagues in their implementation practices. ACECQA See: National Law: Section 169 National Regulations: Regulations 118, 148

There is an Educational Leader in every approved education and care service in Australia.¹
The 15 000+ Australian Educational Leaders are charged, under the Education and Care Services National Law to lead the development and implementation of educational programs for each child.

On average we

- Work in the role 1-2 days a week²
- Have a Diploma or degree
- Love what we do
- Need more support

In the Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA advises that the role of the educational leader is primarily to:

- collaborate with educators and provide curriculum direction and guidance
- support educators to implement the cycle of planning to enhance programs and practices
- lead the development and implementation of an effective educational program in the service
- ensure that children's learning and development are guided by the learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework and/or the Framework for School Age Care or other approved learning frameworks. ³

The requirement for an Educational leader is further supported through QA 7.2.2 of the National Quality Standard:

THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER IS SUPPORTED AND LEADS THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING CYCLE.

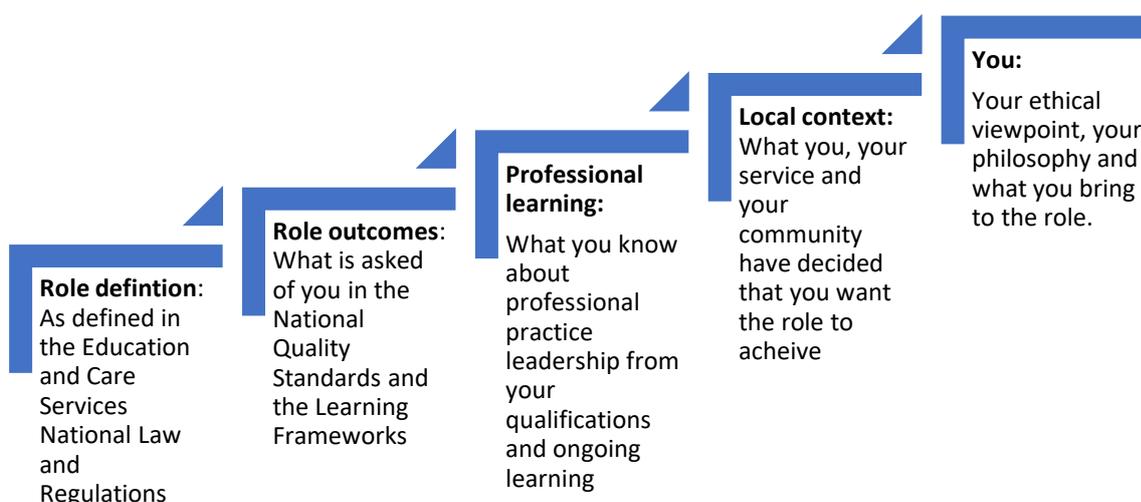
¹ Regulation 118 of the Education and Care Service National Regulations

² Survey Educational Leaders Association Facebook page 2017

³ <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-01/Guide-to-the-NQF.pdf>

The detail

The detail surrounding the role is being filled in through several pathways:



How do you get the complete picture?

With the National Quality Framework, the Educational Leader's role was implemented nationally, but there was no nationally agreed description of the role. Being clear about your role is critical to your professional work. Where do you begin?

The Educational Leaders Association (ELA) has consulted widely on how the role has been unfolding since its' inception and has just revised the first national position description to include the principle professional practice areas as well as some practical ideas for what the role looks like each day:

ELA's Educational Leader position description guide sheet [we developed this together]:

	What is required	What that looks like each day
Summary	<p>The Educational Leader is the pedagogical guide within the service and is responsible for delivering oversight of the curriculum and planning consistent with the requirements of the National Quality Framework, the Service philosophy, policies and procedures.</p> <p>As Educational Leader, you are expected to be an active leader of a team that provides high quality early childhood education and care to children.</p>	<p>Your qualifications, background and experience offer you a baseline for beginning in the role.</p> <p>Modelling your own professional growth within the service is a key function of your role. If you are a registered teacher you will have professional learning requirements.</p> <p>Note: ELA recommends a minimum 25 hours a year professional learning with at least 50% of that relating directly to how the role is done.</p>
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Educational Leader reports to the service Director or Manager Those in a combined role will report to their line manager. Those supporting groups of services or solo practitioners (FDC or IHC) will report to their line manager. 	<p>It is essential that an Educational Leader is clear on their reporting structure from the outset. The reporting process includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How you are going on each of the key requirements in your role

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In relation to Curriculum practice, implementation and review, the Education and Care practitioners report to the Educational Leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any plans you have developed and agreed to and need to report back on Any issues or concerns that you would like to draw to management attention.
Key responsibilities (see below for additional information)	Implementing the philosophy, policies and procedures of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies for leading, guiding and supporting Educators to implement the philosophy, policies and programs, focusing on the area of curriculum.
	Supporting partnerships with the children, their families and the communities you engage with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies for leading, guiding and supporting educators to maintain professional and ethical standards when dealing with families, educators and the children.
	Supporting planning and development of a curriculum and environment that supports every child's learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an overview of goals for the curriculum and programs at the service. Obtain agreement from the Director/Supervisor or Manager for the goals and the implementation plan. Describe the support for Educators as they work to achieve those goals. Reflect on the progress and operations of that plan and map the achievement.
	Mentoring, guiding and supporting Educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate mentoring plans and processes and map how they are used in the service.
	Tailoring actions acknowledging that Educators possess varying knowledge levels, capabilities and learning styles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needs and plan for those needs, consulting with the Director/Supervisor or Manager. Using the principles of adult learning*, creating learning opportunities where required. (*See Attachment 1)
	Facilitating the implementation of evidence and research-based practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the Director/Supervisor or Manager and Educators, identify issues for the service and utilise evidence and research to support practices.
	Working with Educators towards continuous improvement in their professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Educators understand the rationales for continuous improvement, supporting that learning with one on one coaching and mentoring.
	Engaging in professional conversations to enhance knowledge and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an understanding of the processes of structured professional conversation and engaging in those conversations with the aim of supporting Educators in room/area learning.
	Maintaining current knowledge of learning and development and undertaking ongoing professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent the service at Educational Leader network groups and sector learning opportunities. Reflect and report on learning explored and the outcomes. Attend staff meetings and contribute to these meetings as part of a program of engaged informal and formal learning.

Taking a walk through the Educational Leadership role

Implementing the philosophy, policies and procedures of the organisation.

- Making sure they are up to date, and if any work is needed, prioritizing any updating
- Planning the implementation, with focus areas as agreed
- Implementing with a focus on curriculum related areas related to the role

Supporting partnerships with the children, families and the communities you engage with.

- Understanding the elements that make up a successful partnership
- Support Educators as they learn those elements
- Support families as they develop relationships within an education and care service

Supporting planning and development of a curriculum and the environment that supports every child's learning.

- Understand and educate on learning and the curriculum
- Review all the elements of the curriculum and program and related systems
- Supporting Educators learn what is required for each of those elements

Mentoring, guiding and supporting Educators.

- Develop processes for mentoring and guiding
- Offer mentoring and support at identified need
- Keep records of mentoring offered and progress made

Tailoring actions acknowledging that Educators possess varying knowledge levels, capabilities and learning styles.

- Know where each of the Educators are at with their skills and knowledge
- Understand what learning they have chosen or have identified as a need
- Have a range of strategies available to modify for any individual or room's group

Facilitating the implementation of evidence and research-based practices.

- Undertake regular scanning of research, evidence and thinking relevant to the practices of interest
- Prepare change processes such as using action research, consulting-as-learning, guided explorations or others to support change as is appropriate



Working with Educators towards continuous improvement in their professional practice.

- Understand and utilize the principles of challenging own practice
- Develop Educator skills in reflective practice moving to critical reflective practice when ready
- Know where each Educator is with their continuous improvement capabilities

Engaging in professional conversations to enhance knowledge and practice.

- Create relationships in the service that support professional conversations
- Engage in a range of professional conversations on relevant topics
- Follow-through on these conversations at need

Maintaining current knowledge of learning and development and undertaking ongoing professional learning.

- Create own professional learning plan
- Ensure that the plan is developed in consultation with own Director/Supervisor/Manager
- Reflect on own learning periodically

