

# Play in, politics out for new early learning manifesto [AU]<sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

The federal Government has torn up its politically correct curriculum for children in daycare, quietly replacing it with a family-friendly guide for carers and parents.

The revised "early years learning framework", to be introduced nationally on July 1, bears little resemblance to the original version, which was criticised for its academic jargon and focus on social engineering.

In place of the original description of child's play as "a space for politics and power relations", the new document states that "play enables children to simply enjoy being".

"It can also provide opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine," it says.

"(They) use play to investigate, imagine and try out ideas."

The new version also scraps any reference to babies, toddlers and kindergarten kids discriminating on the grounds of sexuality.

And it removes the reference to toddlers "enacting custodianship of the planet and encouraging environmental sustainability".

Instead, it says children can care for the environment by recycling, gardening, turning off running taps and cleaning up litter.

Discussion of "civic participation" and "reconciliation" has vanished from the new version, which highlights the importance of playing outdoors, storytelling, drawing and singing nursery rhymes.

The federal Government is spending \$2.5 million to develop the curriculum - now being trialled in 29 childcare centres nationally - as part of a Council of Australian Governments agreement to ensure all children have access to 15 hours a week of free early learning education in the year before they start school.

The lead author, Charles Sturt University professor of early childhood education Jennifer Sumsion, said yesterday even the latest draft was being rewritten to reflect feedback from the childcare sector.

"Generally it was very positive, but we had suggestions that we could make the language more accessible," she said.

"The intent is still to have quite a focus on social justice issues, but perhaps the language doesn't reflect that so strongly."

A final curriculum is due to be handed to the Education Department by May 5.

Practical guides to tell parents and carers what children ought to be doing and learning at childcare are in the pipeline.

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The latest 24-page version is more detailed, yet clearer to comprehend, than the original, 12-page document.

It acknowledges families as "children's first and most influential teachers".

"Learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators and families work in partnership.

"Education is a responsibility shared between children, families, educators and communities," it says.

- reprinted from The Australian

**Region:** International<sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** curricula and pedagogy<sup>[3]</sup>

