

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics *Revised for 2016*

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Ethics

What is ethics?

Ethics is about answering the question:

“What ought I to do?”

Whenever you are faced with this question, you are dealing with ethics.

It should be obvious that this is an immensely practical question which confronts all of us whenever we have a choice or decision to make.

It is also a question that is extremely difficult to avoid.

<http://www.ethics.org.au/>

Almost all the decision we make have a moral [or ethical] dimension, in the sense that, one way or another, they will effect the wellbeing of other people.

Hugh Mackay 2006: XV

Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do.

Potter Stewart



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Some history about the Code

- The original *Code of Ethics* was adopted by AECA in 1990 after significant national consultation undertaken by a working party headed by Anne Stonehouse.
- At the time, the Code was seen as a symbol of professional maturity.
- **It was hoped that the Code could help to bridge the unhelpful and false divide between the different sectors (care and education).**
- The revised Code, published in 2016, aimed to address contemporary dilemmas faced by early childhood professionals.



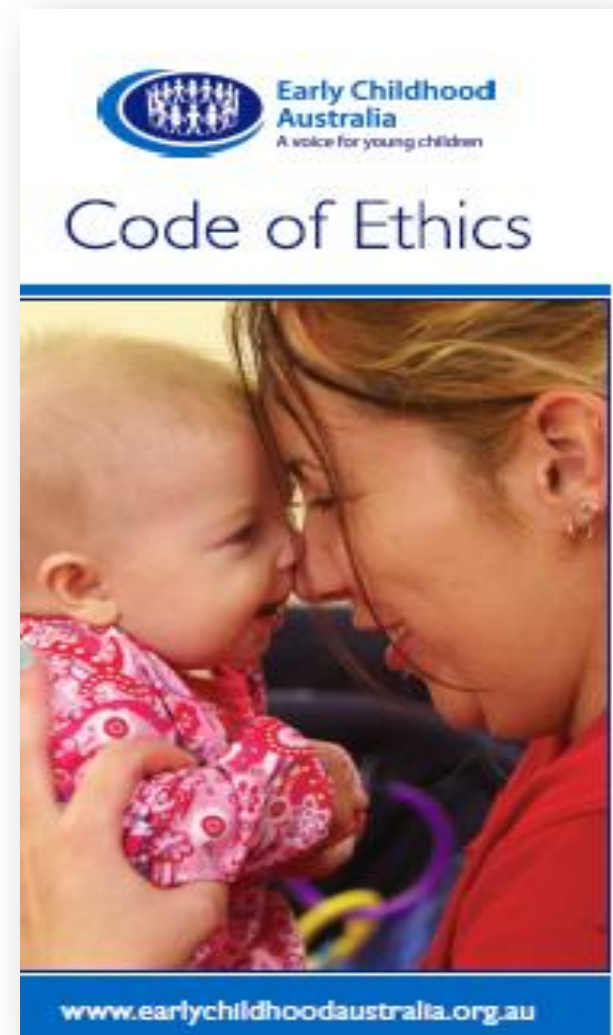
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ECA Code Of Ethics 2006

In relation to:

- Children
- Families
- Colleagues
- Communities
- Employer
- Students
- Research
- Myself as a professional



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Everyone helped...

ECA is grateful to everyone who has contributed to the development and ongoing review of the Code of Ethics including those who have participated in consultation surveys, forums and workshops over the years as well as those who have provided advice and oversight through their service on reference and advisory groups.

We would particularly like to acknowledge those engaged in this revision of the Code.

Stephanie Jackiewicz (Chair) Lennie Barblett, Annette Barwick, Carol Burgess, Anne Kennedy, Catharine Hydon.



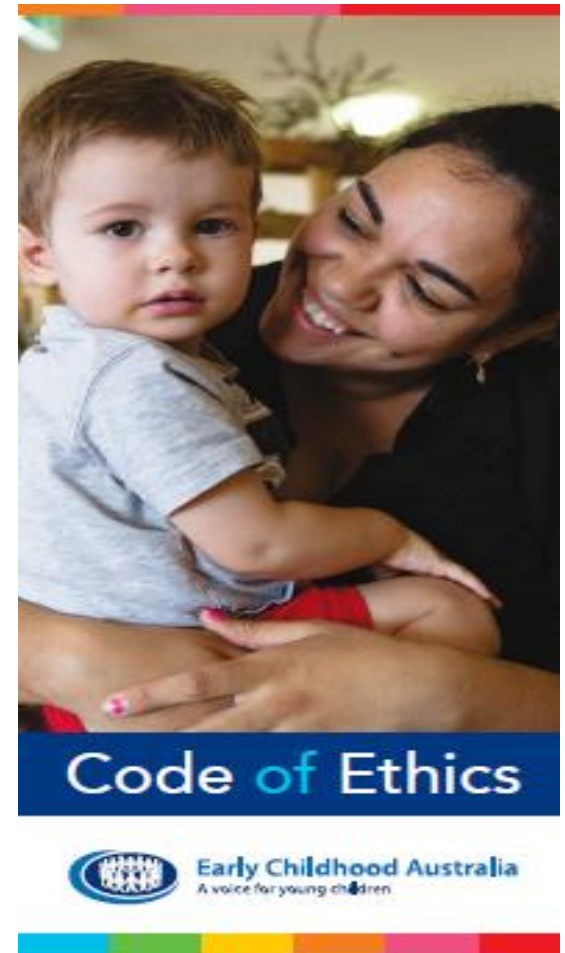
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ECA Code Of Ethics (2016)

In relation to:

- Children
- Families
- Community and society
- Colleagues
- The profession



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ECA Code of Ethics – revised 2016

Core Principles

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



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So far in 2016...

- We have sold 34,506 copies of the Code in the brochure format
- We have sold 1,795 copies of the poster
- We have had 48,000 visitors to the web page



Developing Ethical approaches

Foundational

practical strategies are used to bring the *Code of Ethics* to everyone's attention.

Embedded

ethics are explicitly embedded in all aspects of the work undertaken in the setting. Children, families and staff experience the Code's commitments and principles in action.

Transformational

ethics are embedded and there is genuine commitment to and action taken to ensure fairness, inclusion and equity in all aspects of policy and practice.



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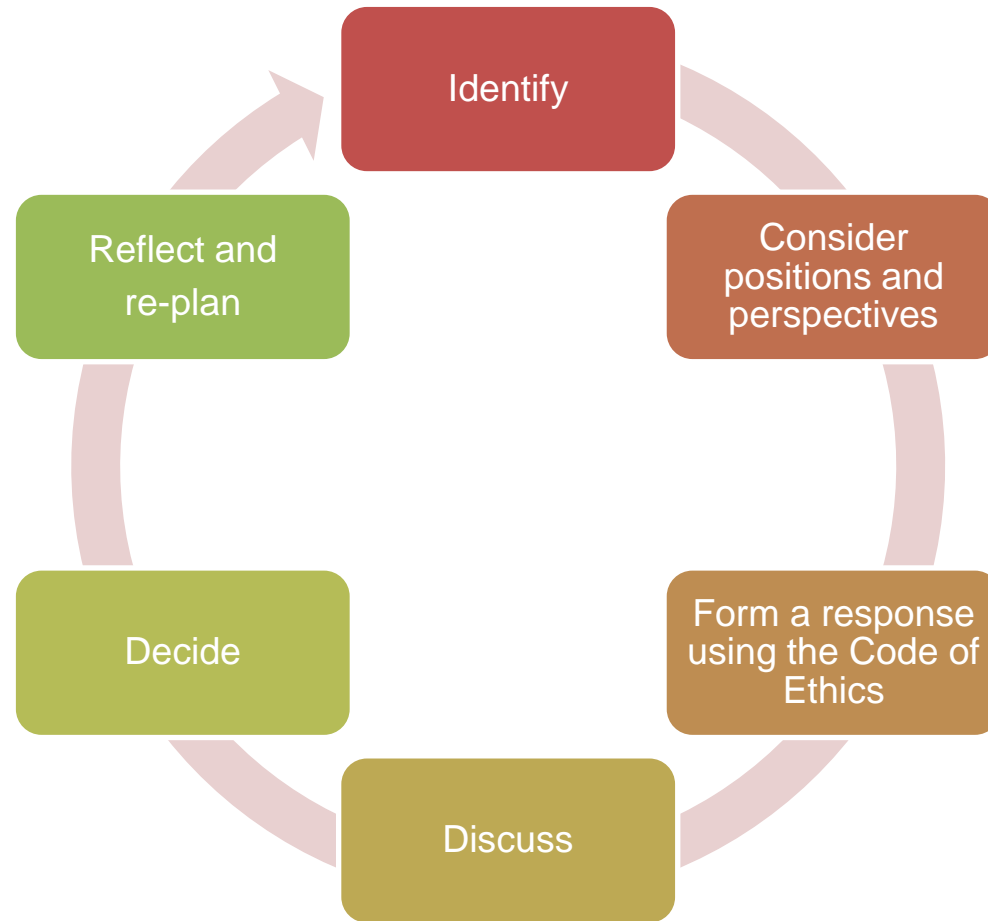
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The Ethical Decision Making Cycle

Ethical dilemmas are complex issues. An ethical dilemma occurs when there are competing obligations and several possible responses or ways of acting in relation to an issue and each of them seem 'right.'



Core Principles underpinned by Values

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

Identify two core values that underpin the way you work.

What practices enact those values?



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Ethical Dilemma?

Susie took some beautiful photos of the children playing in a boat made out of boxes that she and the children made over a fortnight. Susie had planned the experience with the children and each child had contributed to the plan. She documented the entire process of planning, building and playing in the boat. Susie felt very proud of what they had achieved and she could see how much pleasure the children had playing in the boat. She was so excited about this learning experience that she shared some photos of the children playing happily in the boat with all her friends on Facebook.

Is this an ethical issue, given that the children were happy and portrayed in a positive way and Susie believed that she had the children's best interests at heart?

What parts of the Code could help your course of ethical action?



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Want to know more?

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>



Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics

This new version of the *Code of Ethics* is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of early childhood professionals. It reflects current pedagogical research and practice, providing a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals.

Designed especially for early childhood education and care environments, and based on the principles of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1991) this code of ethics has followed a national process of consultation, with the emerging standards indicative of the values we share as early childhood professionals in Australia.

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



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