

Position Description

Title	Early Learning Program Manager (Region)
Business Unit	Early Learning
Location	As per employment agreement
Employment type	As per employment agreement
Reports to	Area Manager Early Learning

About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church. We've been supporting people and families for over 100 years. We work alongside people of all ages in local communities in Victoria and Tasmania. Our services reach to Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, the Wimmera region in the west, and across Tasmania.

We empower children, young people and families to learn and thrive. We're there for people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness. We support people with disability to live the life they choose. We assist older people to maintain their independence and enjoy life. We provide opportunities to access training and meaningful employment. We're proud to welcome and support asylum seekers to our community. We work to empower people with the information, skills and tools they need to live a healthy, happy life.

As an organisation, we work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Our purpose: To inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice

Our values: We are imaginative, respectful, compassionate and bold

1. Position Purpose

The purpose of this role is to efficiently coordinate and manage a group of children's services and funded programs.

Reporting to the Area Manager, the Early Learning Program Manager oversees and takes responsibility for a range of operational decisions and provides expertise in the early childhood pedagogy, service planning, community development, and management to ensure the delivery of high quality, sustainable and community focused early learning programs for children and families in childhood education, care services and funded programs.

2. Scope

Budget: TBC

People:

- Early Childhood Teachers, Educators and Administration Workers

Position Description

Early Learning Program Manager (Region)

3. Relationships

Internal

- Uniting Staff

External

- Children, families and guardians
 - Commonwealth and State Funding departments including Department of Education and Training, Tasmanian Education and Care Unit (as appropriate), Department of Health and Human Services
 - Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
 - Local Government Authorities and peak bodies
 - Church congregations and parent groups
 - Other Government and Community Service Organisations
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4. Key Responsibility Areas

Leadership and Professional Practice

- Lead the provision of high-quality services in collaboration with senior management teams to ensure programs are inclusive, flexible, comply with the Victorian Children Services Act 1996, National Legislative Framework including Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, as well as the National Quality Standards including the State and Federal Government Early Years Learning and Development Frameworks
- Ensure services operate effectively within the regulatory and legislative frameworks and funding guidelines to meet the needs of local families and communities
- Where applicable, make recommendations for the processing of all licensing applications in consultation with the area manager and practice manager.
- Implementation of organisational systems, policies, procedures and practice guidelines to ensure compliance and consistency of practice
- Provide high level practice advice, support and resources to each early learning service, staff and Parent Partnership Group and/or Committee
- Ensure that all educators are proficient in developing play based educational programs that meet the individual needs of the children within the programs, and all relevant legislative requirements
- Liaise with the Department of Education and Training, ACECQA, funding bodies and other professional services in relation to current early childhood issues.
- Represent Uniting at relevant functions, meetings and seminars both during and outside normal working hours as necessary
- Actively promote the services of Uniting to identify new opportunities, drive utilisation rates and increase performance, whilst maintaining excellent service levels
- Deliver practice leadership and mentorship through regular visits to observe practice at the early learning services

Service Delivery and Partnerships

- Develop constructive, respectful and positive relationships with children, parents, staff and the community
- Lead and engage in constructive communication with educators and stakeholders to advocate on behalf of children and families, especially those experiencing vulnerability to ensure children can fully participate in programs.
- Develop linkages between service groups and the early learning services of Uniting
- Develop and maintain effective, relevant sector and Local Government early learning networks

Position Description

Early Learning Program Manager (Region)

- Develops constructive, supportive and respectful relationships with Early Learning services outside of Uniting Years Management to support Uniting service delivery and inclusion of all children
- Liaise with parent partnership groups, local church groups and attend Church MOU meetings
- Positively promote and market the service to the community, governments, and other agencies, and facilitate staff involvement in promotional activities
- Provide mentoring or mediation to resolve complex issues that may inhibit children from participating or fully engaging in the program

Administration and Finance

- Monitor the program and/or service's financial performance and make necessary adjustments to ensure compliance with service's financial plans and budget
- Prepare reports and provide data on delegated programs for senior management and relevant funding bodies as required
- Contribute to the development of annual budgets and acquittal processes for all services in consultation with the Area Manager and finance team
- Where relevant, support the parental partnership groups/committees to manage service, and where appropriate, fundraising initiatives
- Coordinate funding and grant application opportunities to maximize income generation and quality outcomes
- Lead the application, expenditure, monitoring and acquittals of non-recurrent funding
- Oversee the service's compliance with government funding requirements
- Initiate processes to access additional funding and/or subsidies
- Closely monitor utilisation rates and ensure vacancies are addressed immediately

Legal Requirements and Quality/Risk Management

- Ensure all legal, funder and statutory requirements pertaining to the position are met including statutory reporting of all serious incidents, restrictive practices, reportable conduct and mandatory reporting (child safety)
- Foster, model and support a culture where the potential of serious risks is identified in a timely manner and appropriately managed.
- Report areas of serious risk to next level supervisor and work together to mitigate those risks
- Ensure the Area Manager / EO is informed of current issues within the program and/or service, including those that would affect the children, service approval or quality assurance rating, regulatory and legal compliance, or the smooth running of the service
- Participate in, and contribute to the policy review committee
- Regularly monitor to ensure OH&S, quality and legislative requirements are met and take proactive steps to mitigate any risks identified through a range of communication methods and service visits
- Provide pedagogical expertise and support to educators to plan, implement and evaluate strategies to resolve complex issues
- Lead and mentor teams to complete Quality Improvement Plans and participate in assessments and ratings processes
- Develop and implement Safety Action Plans to drive the achievement of the safety objectives and agreed safety goals.
- Support and mentor teams by undertaking regular service visits to ensure a full understanding of service standards and compliance objectives are met

People and Teams

- Establish, lead, coach and inspire an engaged and productive team
- Lead the team in leading practices and effective process governance
- Provide support, guidance, coaching, leadership, and empowerment to the team including feedback through performance reviews and regular supervision.
- Undertake regular supervision and performance review with line manager, providing feedback to promote collaborative working relationships
- Promote and maintain a positive, respectful and enthusiastic work environment

Position Description

Early Learning Program Manager (Region)

- Undertake proactive recruitment, selection and onboarding activities including succession planning and talent management to ensure appropriate staffing levels are maintained
- Ensure staff have a working knowledge of the National Quality Framework, in particular the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, and the National Quality Standard for Early Education and Care, and meet these requirements in their work practices
- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to professional learning to continually update knowledge of Best Practice Principles in early learning to build the capacity of all educators
- Demonstrate the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics in all interactions and relationships
- Facilitate the development of educators' skills and knowledge and address and manage any performance issues immediately if they arise
- Promote a healthy team environment and develop positive channels of communication to ensure a smooth-running program and/or service
- Conduct and document regular staff appraisals, and develop and document individual and team development plans which enhance staff abilities and practices
- Support and facilitate completion of mandatory training in accordance with Uniting Training Matrix
- In collaboration with Uniting People & Culture, plan and monitor Return to Work Plans for injured employees
- Lead, model and mentor outstanding professional behaviour and provide authentic team leadership to the highest level of conduct in alignment with Uniting's values

Personal Accountability

- Compliance with Uniting's values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.
- Cooperate with and initiate strategies to actively ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children who come into association with us.
- Ensure appropriate use of resources.
- Work collaboratively with Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) employees and external stakeholders in accordance with Uniting's values and professional standards of behaviour.
- Initiate and actively participate in strategies to introduce initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace.
- Identify opportunities to integrate and work collaboratively across teams.
- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and health and safety of others (to the extent required).
- Promote a positive safety culture by initiating and contributing to health and safety consultation and communication.
- Promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to line management
- Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e. equal employment opportunity, health, and safety) and mandatory training specific to position.
- Declare anything that you become aware of through the course of your engagement which may impede your suitability to work with children and/or young people.

5. Person specification

Qualifications

- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Care or other relevant ACECQA recognised Early Learning qualification

Experience

- A minimum three years' experience in a leadership role within early childhood education and care service sector (desirable)

Position Description

Early Learning Program Manager (Region)

Core selection criteria

- **Values alignment:** Ability to demonstrate and authentically promote Uniting's values; respect the uniqueness and value of every individual; establish and maintain right relationships that enable people to be influential in their own support arrangement and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect; build on strengths and abilities of all; demonstrate transparency and accountability
- **Child Safety:** Demonstrated ability to provide safe environments for children and young people and protect them from abuse and neglect.
- **Leadership** – Strong Early Learning leadership and management skills and knowledge within a complex service delivery environment; ability to contribute to strategic planning and ensure the achievement of strategic goals; ability to build strong, high functioning, multi-disciplinary teams and align teams with the organisational values and goals, particularly those related to consumer-centricity; role modelling expected behaviour; strong ability to establish credibility with staff and inspire a shared vision
- **Program and Service Development** – Significant experience in the leadership and development of programs and services in a complex environment; sound understanding of the principles of service delivery within Early Education and Care Services
- **Stakeholder Relationships** – Strong negotiation and influencing skills; ability to engage, build and maintain strong, mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders; track record of being able to sustain positive, collaborative and effective relationships; capacity to position Uniting as a trusted advisor to peak bodies and key stakeholders in the sector including government and funding bodies; promotes harmony and consensus through diplomatic handling of disagreements; builds trust through consistent actions, values and communication
- **Quality Assurance:** ability to mentor and promote the highest quality experiences of care, play and education through pedagogically based reflective practice; committed to continuing individual learning and development and improvement of inter-professional practice; ability to operate in an inclusive and supportive learning environment

Other Selection Criteria

- Comprehensive understanding of Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012/National Quality Standards.
- Demonstrated understanding and experience of the current State and Federal Government funding requirements and agreements
- Ability to analyse and evaluate service performance including measurement and reporting of service outcomes against service goals
- Competency in program administration and system development
- Ability to prepare comprehensive reports and to maintain concise records
- Strong leadership skills with demonstrated experience in facilitating change
- Ability to manage time effectively and to cope with rigorous deadlines
- Sound discipline knowledge including the underlying principles of early years gained through experience, education and training
- Demonstrated skills in effectively leading, coaching, mentoring and developing teams to meet and exceed set objectives

6. We are a child safe organisation

Uniting is a child safe organisation and is committed in everyday practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, at all times. As a child safe organisation, employment with Uniting is subject to a satisfactory national (and international where relevant) police check and relevant Working With Children Check (and NDIS Worker Screening Check where relevant) to your State prior to commencement of any paid or unpaid work and/or participation in any service or undertaking.

Position Description

Early Learning Program Manager (Region)

This position description is subject to review and may change in accordance with Uniting's operational, service and consumer requirements.

7. Acknowledgement

I have read, understood, and accepted the above Position Description

Employee

Name:

Signature:

Date: