Parent/ Community Newsletter Information

A set of 18 brief articles about various aspects of the SACSA Framework, eg Essential Learnings, Learning Areas, Curriculum Bands, Curriculum Standards, etc. These items are designed for use in information sessions for parents and caregivers and in site newsletters.

Contents

• Introduction
• Essential Learnings
• The Early Years
• The Primary Years
• The Middle Years
• The Senior Years
• Equity
• The Certificate 1 in Information Technology
• Standards

• Learning Areas
  • Arts
  • Design and Technology
  • English
  • Health and Physical Education
  • Languages
  • Literacy and Numeracy
  • Mathematics
  • Science
  • Society and Environment
Introduction

South Australian government preschools and schools have a new curriculum called the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework. This curriculum represents the agreement reached from a broad consultation with the community, including educators, parents, advocacy and community groups and various experts and stakeholders.

Educators are becoming familiar with the new curriculum this year.

The SACSA Framework describes what the learners will be achieving, not what the educator will be doing.

It is divided into four Bands from birth to Year 12:
- Early Years covering birth to Year 2
- Primary Years covering Years 3, 4 and 5
- Middle Years covering Years 6, 7, 8 and 9, and
- Senior Years covering Years 10, 11 and 12.

These Bands describe the stages of achievement learners go through as they grow older.

The new curriculum outlines the learnings that are absolutely essential for every child and student to prepare them for the future. These are called the Essential Learnings (Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking and Communication). They are taught to all learners through their everyday experiences at preschool and school.

Skills such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are very important in the SACSA Framework and educators will continue to emphasise these throughout the learning opportunities they plan.

Equity is also a very strong focus. This means that educators ensure programs and strategies are in place so that all learners can participate as fully as they are able in the curriculum. It also ensures that all children and students learn about the many different perspectives in our diverse society. Through this, learners will develop knowledge, skills and understandings necessary to contribute towards a fairer world.

Learning about, and preparing for, the world of work is also important in the new curriculum. Through their care and education, children and students will be given opportunities to think and talk about their future and to develop the skills, understandings and values they will need to become successful citizens of the future.

Standards are an important part of the new framework. They describe outcomes that learners demonstrate as they progress through care and education programs. They give educators a checkpoint to use to assess learners’ progress, plan learning programs and report to parents.
Essential Learnings

Parents and educators face the challenges of helping learners develop personal resources required for a world that is rapidly changing.

We need to help them to apply knowledge, skills and understandings to new and different situations, and to be able to act responsibly in regard to others.

The new curriculum takes up this challenge, through identifying five Essential Learnings: Futures, Identity, Interdependence, Thinking and Communication (including Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technologies).

Through these five Essential Learnings, students:
- develop the flexibility to respond to change
- recognise connections with the past and think of solutions for the future
- develop a positive view of themselves and groups they belong to
- accept individual and group responsibilities
- respect individual and group differences
- work in harmony with others and for common purposes with and across cultures
- learn to be independent and critical thinkers with the ability to examine information, make decisions, be innovative and devise creative solutions
- learn to communicate powerfully.

All children and students from birth to Year 12 are involved in developing skills and understandings of the Essential Learnings, in every Learning Area.
The Early Years

The new South Australian curriculum is divided into four Bands from birth to Year 12:

- Early Years covering birth to Year 2
- Primary Years covering Years 3, 4, and 5
- Middle Years covering Years 6, 7, 8, 9, and
- Senior Years covering Years 10, 11, and 12.

These Bands describe the stages most learners go through as they grow older.

The Early Years Band - Overview

The Early Years Band of the new curriculum describes learning that occurs for children from birth to age 8.

Children in this age group have varied life experiences and learn and develop in a range of ways. The positive relationships formed between children and educators play an important role in children’s wellbeing and developing an interest in learning. Strong partnerships between families and educators support the ongoing learning and development of young children as they move between home and other settings.

This Band has three sections (phases):

- Birth to Age 3
- Age 3 to Age 5 and
- Reception to Year 2.

Each phase recognises the differing needs of children and their learning.

The Early Years Band: Birth to Age 3

Infants and toddlers rely on adults and educators to provide an environment where they will be safe and where their needs and interests will be met. Relationships with parents/caregivers/extended family and social group and educators are of great importance for children in this age group. Brain development during this time is rapid and children need a stimulating and safe environment to make sense of the world.

Educators observe and are responsive to the needs of individual children and their families. These observations are used to plan experiences in a relaxed environment for the children. This allows the child to fully explore opportunities through play that will promote their continued learning and development.
The Early Years Band: Age 3 to Age 5

The Age 3 to Age 5 phase encourages and enhances the development of children’s imagination and creativity. It supports their increasing language and communication skills.

Educators set up exciting/creative learning environments where children can be actively involved in new learning through play. These environments will create positive challenges and encourage the exchange of ideas with their educators and friends, and develop a curiosity for learning.

Children learn to work in small groups to discuss, share ideas, cooperate, experiment and ask questions. They take part in activities such as singing, story telling, painting, designing, building, water play and role-playing. They are also introduced to new ideas through symbols, books, numbers, and talking with others. Through these activities they learn to express their ideas and feelings in different ways, and develop positive attitudes towards learning.

Early Years Band: Reception – Year 2

The Reception to Year 2 phase is an exciting and challenging time as children learn and interact with a wider range of children and adults, often in more structured ways.

Together with the children, teachers will make decisions and plan for learning that involves individual, small group and whole class learning.

During this phase there is a clear emphasis on developing strong literacy and numeracy skills as well as continuing to develop more sophisticated social skills.
The Primary Years

The new South Australian curriculum is divided into four Bands from birth to Year 12:

- Early Years covering birth to Year 2
- Primary Years covering Years 3, 4, and 5
- Middle Years covering Years 6, 7, 8, 9, and
- Senior Years covering Years 10, 11, and 12.

These Bands describe the stages most learners go through as they grow older.

Primary Years Band

The Primary Years Band of the new curriculum describes the learning for students in Years 3, 4 and 5.

Learning for students in this age range reflects the latest research into child development and recognises that all learners are individuals with unique experiences and skills.

Particular attention needs to be paid to these students’ physical development. There is great variation in the height and weight of 8-11 year olds and their weight for height ratio is often lower at this age than at any other time of life. Therefore physical education programs for this group focus particularly on physical activity more than fitness.

We know that these students’ thought processes become more logical and the ability to remember and concentrate improves. Educators will develop learning programs that focus on the needs and capabilities of the individual child.

Students in the Primary Years begin to develop their own opinions and to understand that other people have different points of view. Therefore the curriculum provides many opportunities to be involved in discussions, problem solving and to develop thinking skills.

It is important to recognise that all learners learn through a variety of means including practical activities, discussion and debate, consulting books other written sources, the internet and multimedia sources, social interaction, reflection and imagination.

This variety of learning styles is reflected in the learning activities throughout the Primary Years Band.
The new South Australian curriculum is divided into four Bands from birth to Year 12:

- Early Years covering birth to Year 2
- Primary Years covering Years 3, 4, and 5
- Middle Years covering Years 6, 7, 8, 9, and
- Senior Years covering Years 10, 11, and 12.

These Bands describe the stages most learners go through as they grow older.

**Middle Years Band**

The Middle Years Band of the new curriculum describes the learning in Years 6, 7, 8 and 9. This Band provides the link between primary and secondary school settings.

Learning for students in this age range (10-15 years) reflects the latest research into adolescent development and recognises they are experiencing physical changes and are developing an awareness of sexuality. Their developing identities and values are influenced by the media and a range of youth subcultures.

Students in the Middle Years have an increasing desire to make personal decisions and assume more responsibility. Their interest in personal issues as well as social, political, ethical and moral issues grows.

The new curriculum enables teachers to plan learning which allows students in the Middle Years to explore these issues and to build on their interests. This means you will see learners working on a range of different topics, activities and investigations in a range of different ways.
The new South Australian curriculum is divided into four Bands from birth to Year 12:
• Early Years covering birth to Year 2
• Primary Years covering Years 3, 4, and 5
• Middle Years covering Years 6, 7, 8, 9, and
• Senior Years covering Years 10, 11, and 12.

These Bands describe the stages most learners go through as they grow older.

The Senior Years Band

The Senior Years Band describes learning for students in Years 10 to 12.

This learning can be organised in a number of different and more sophisticated ways. It includes the Year 10 curriculum which is generally designed by schools and Years 11 and 12 curriculum approved by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA (SSABSA).

Students can also choose Vocational Education and Training (VET) packages and the International Baccalaureate. These can be combined to provide flexibility to match the individual student’s needs.

Teachers in the Senior Years work with these outside programs and the new curriculum to support students develop skills, qualities and understanding that will prepare them for further study, work and success in life.
**Equity**

There is a strong focus on equity in the new South Australian curriculum.

Classrooms, preschools, playgrounds and centres reflect the social and cultural diversity that exists within our communities. All learners in these settings need to feel that they belong, that they are valued and are able to make the most of the learning opportunities provided.

The new curriculum brings the perspectives of a range of people and cultural groups into all of the curriculum. These cross-curriculum perspectives support all learners to actively take part in our diverse communities.

Research and data show us that some groups of learners perform better than others in particular aspects of the curriculum. A commitment to equity also means specific plans and strategies are in place for individuals or groups of learners to support their full participation and achievement in all areas of the curriculum. For example, English as a second language programs are in place for learners to develop English to support their access to the whole curriculum.

Learning about diversity is important for all students. That learning includes issues such as advantage and disadvantage and the impact on society and individuals of factors such as gender, socio-economic status, Aboriginality, cultural and language backgrounds, rural and urban location, ability and sexuality.
The Certificate 1 in Information Technology

High level skills in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) will be essential for all citizens to live and work in the world of the 21st Century.

Through the new curriculum, students will develop high level ICT skills and understandings that will be recognised in Year 10 with a formal qualification, the Certificate 1 in Information Technology.

Year 10 has been identified as the most appropriate level for assessing the ICT skills.

Students will then have a certificate that is recognised by industry and throughout Australia. They will be able to verify their ICT skills to employers.

Successful completion of the certificate enables students to be well placed for further education and employment opportunities.

Students wanting careers in the information technology industry will be able to build on the certificate and complete higher level IT Certificates through the SACE (South Australian Certificate of Education) in Years 11 and 12 or once they have completed schooling.
Standards

Standards in the new South Australian curriculum give educators a checkpoint to use when they are assessing learners’ progress, planning learning programs and when they are reporting to parents.

There are three types of Standards. They are

- **Developmental Learning Outcomes** – for children birth to age 3 years and from age 3 to 5 years. They describe what you will see these children learning during this phase of their development.

- **Curriculum Standards 1-5** - These are descriptions of reasonable levels of achievement that you will see students demonstrating at Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. Teachers will use these descriptions to track students’ progress, plan for individual and group activities, pass information on to other teachers as students move between year levels and schools, and to report to parents. They will help parents understand their children’s learning in relation to year levels.

- **Year 12 Standards** - describe the qualities and understandings students develop as they prepare for future study, work and to be successful citizens.
Arts

Arts learning plays an important role in helping us understand ourselves.

Arts express and celebrate our sense of identity and heritage in our multicultural society.

Many of the skills and attitudes that are learned in and through the arts contribute to the other learning areas.

In Arts students learn:

• to create arts works through practice and experience in dance, drama, media, music and the visual arts
• to look at, talk about and enjoy all kinds of arts experiences and arts works
• to develop particular arts skills and techniques
• how the arts look and feel different from one culture to another
• about the different histories and traditions of dance, drama, music, media and the visual arts
• how the arts are being changed by new technologies
• about the arts industry and the potential career pathways it offers.
Design and Technology

Design and Technology is about ‘making and doing’ and recognising the role people play in designing and creating new technologies to meet a need or solve a problem.

Design and Technology covers engineering, information and communication technology, agriculture, architectural studies, multimedia studies, electronics, robotics, food and textile studies.

Learners develop the skills to look critically at technologies and issues arising from their manufacture and use.

As learners ‘make’, they test their ideas and thinking against reality by applying skills and techniques in safe and responsible ways. They learn to be creative, designing solutions to problems. Through this they learn that they can effect change.
English

In English, learners develop their skills as listeners, speakers, readers, viewers and writers.

They learn about the power of language, how it is used in different ways for different purposes and how to communicate effectively and imaginatively in a wide range of situations.

In particular they learn to apply their skills in different ways to understand and produce multimedia texts emerging through the growth of information communication technologies.

Learners will learn to understand and use the English language appropriately in its many forms - spoken, written and multimedia - and as a result will be able to participate in a range of activities in the home, in the community and in the workplace.
Health and Physical Education

Through Health and Physical Education children and students learn about people’s physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social aspects.

In the new curriculum, this Learning Area focuses on:

- ‘participation in physical activity’ as compared to ‘fitness’
- the teaching and application of skills in a variety of physical activities
- the importance of safe and respectful behaviours within safe environments
- the importance of understanding oneself in different situations
- food and nutrition
- personal development and group skills.

Through these learners will:

- develop a positive outlook on lifelong participation in regular physical activity
- grow personally and socially in order to benefit themselves and others
- develop understandings and take action about health and its importance for both the individual and the community.
Languages

Through learning languages other than English, children and students gain knowledge, skills and values that enable them to:

- communicate in another language
- compare languages and cultures, to understand differences and similarities
- extend their understanding of themselves and their own language
- strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills
- develop skills to become global citizens.
Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy is not just reading and writing.

Literacy is the ability to understand, analyse, critically respond to and produce appropriately spoken written, visual and multimedia communications in different contexts.

Numeracy is the ability to understand, analyse, critically respond to and use mathematics in different contexts.

Literacy and Numeracy enable learning in all Learning Areas from birth to Year 12. The new curriculum addresses literacy and numeracy by ensuring they are part of every Learning Area for every child.

Together literacy and numeracy help us understand our world and to communicate effectively at home, school, in social situations and later in work.

Children’s skills and understandings of literacy and numeracy develop from birth to Year 12.

In the Early Years, literacy and numeracy is very much part of children’s play as they increase their ability to communicate with each other and manipulate materials.

As students move through the years of schooling, literacy and numeracy become essential ways to access the whole curriculum, and provide skills and understanding necessary for students to be more independent in their learning.

In senior secondary years, the use of literacy and numeracy becomes more sophisticated, and more like the literacy and numeracy essential in the world of work and lifelong learning.
Mathematics

Mathematics is a way of understanding the world through the use of number and space.

Learners investigate and analyse mathematical problems through investigating, comparing, reflecting, and testing information to work out possible answers.

They develop the mathematical skills and understandings that they need in all areas of their lives.

They explore and analyse data and numerical and spatial patterns, learn about measurement and number, and develop spatial understanding and geometric reasoning.

Senior students also learn about analysing and modelling data that represents change.
Science

The emphasis in science is on learners developing understandings of the physical and biological world in which they live, and an appreciation of the relationships they have with these worlds.

To do this, learners need an understanding of the use of scientific processes such as investigating, collecting and interpreting information, and communicating.

This, along with the ability to think critically and to measure the impact of science on society, is essential to learners’ success in this area.

Students learn about sciences involved with the earth in space, physics, biology and chemistry.
Society and Environment

In Society and Environment, children and students increase their understanding, knowledge and skills and develop attitudes and values to help them participate as active and informed citizens in their local and global society.

Learning takes place through a range of disciplines and studies including history, geography, economics, legal studies, Aboriginal studies, women’s studies, civics and citizenship, studies in religion and environmental education.

Through these studies, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- the society they live in
- other societies in the world
- the relationships between people and their society, and
- the relationship between society and the environment.