

1.4 Inclusion

Background

Children's relationships and experiences in their first five years affect their learning and development throughout life. Adults working with children require commitment, knowledge and skills to support the children to form positive relationships with adults and other children, and to fully participate in the Service's activities. For all children to be treated equitably and fairly, those with additional needs, as defined by the National Quality Standard 2011 (p. 202), may require specific considerations and some adaptations to the environment.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines how the needs of all children who attend the Service are met fairly and inclusively, and how children are supported to fully participate in the program.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's philosophy is based on a commitment to equality and fairness for all children, particularly their right to fully participate in every aspect of the program. The philosophy, together with its Inclusion Policy, is reviewed regularly as part of the Service's self-assessment and quality improvement process. QA 4.2.1, 6.3.3, 7.2.1, 7.2.3, 7.3.5
- The Service is committed to working with families to best meet the education and care needs of their children. This commitment is communicated to families at enrolment, and reinforced throughout the time their children attend the Service. Refer to the Service's *Interactions with Families Policy*. QA 6.1.1, 6.2.1
- The Service's Enrolment Form requires families to provide information about any additional needs their children may have. Families are asked to update this information throughout the year and to pass on information from any professional support services accessed outside of the Service. Educators use this information to meet the education and care needs of the child. QA 5.1.2, 6.1.1
- Families are asked about their child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests at enrolment and throughout the time the child attends the Service. They are also asked about their child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language and traditions. Educators use this information to help children feel secure, safe and confident, and to develop the program. Refer to the Service's *Educational Program Policy*. QA 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 5.1.3, 6.1.1, 6.2.1
- Families are welcome at the Service at any time. In addition, Families are encouraged to be involved in decision-making and consultative roles within the Service. QA 6.1.2, 6.2.1
- The Service's physical environment and facilities are designed and, when necessary, adapted to ensure access and participation for every child in the service. QA 3.1.1, 3.1.3
- Equipment and resources are selected to support and encourage the participation of all children. They reflect the lives of the children in the Service, their families and the cultural diversity of the broader community. Learning materials (e.g. books, puzzles, games, posters) support positive inclusion by providing children with accurate and appropriate information

about their own and other cultures. They also depict people with additional needs as active and contributing members of communities. QA 1.1.5, 3.2.2, 6.3.3

- Information gathered about children with additional needs is used to develop an individual support plan, in consultation with parents. When appropriate, and with parents' knowledge and permission, this plan is shared with the child's medical practitioners and/or professional support services. QA 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 5.1.2, 6.2.1
- Educators plan the program based upon their observations of children's play and the ideas, interests and opinions that the children share with them. When planning the program, educators reflect upon the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and the learning environments they provide. QA 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 7.2.3
- The Service works with families, external professionals and agencies (e.g. paediatricians, child welfare workers, early childhood intervention services, psychologists) to ensure that the learning environments are the optimum for each child with additional needs. The child's input is also obtained in this process. Copies of any goals for the children, specific plans or instructions provided by these external professionals and agencies are kept at the Service and are incorporated into the child's individual program. QA 1.1.5, 4.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 6.3.1, 6.3.3
- The Service provides families with information about support and resources available in the community. Where appropriate, parents are assisted in making contact with the relevant professionals and agencies. QA 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.3
- When a child with additional needs meets the pertinent criteria, the Service applies for the Australian Government funded Special Needs Subsidy Support (SNSS) available through the Inclusion Support Agency (ISA). If the application is successful, educators receive support from SNSS workers to assist in programming for the specific needs of that child. QA 5.1.3, 6.3.1, 6.3.3
- The Service's rosters ensure continuity of care so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel and do. Further, the educators promote the children's wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful. Refer to the Service's *Relationships with Children Policy*. QA 5.1.1, 7.1.3
- All educators attend professional development on inclusive practices. This professional development is based upon evaluation of the professional knowledge and skills of individual educators and the team. When appropriate, they receive training on how to meet the additional needs of any child in their care. QA 4.1.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 7.2.2
- Educators are encouraged to reflect, individually and as a team, on the way their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural background and attitudes to people may impact negatively upon their relationships with others, and educators' ability to promote inclusion and participation of all children in the program. QA 1.1.5, 5.1.2
- Educators consistently model equitable and fair treatment in their everyday interactions with other adults and children, and intentionally teach children to do the same. QA 5.2.2
- Educators view children as competent and capable, and support the development of their autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride. QA 1.1.5

- Educators share their time equitably with children, and listen to children’s interests and concerns. They ensure that they know the specific communication needs of every child so that they can communicate respectfully and meaningfully with them. QA 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 5.1.2, 5.2.1
- Educators facilitate children’s relationships with one another and support them to work collaboratively together. They help children negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others. They intentionally teach children that it is not acceptable to speak or act unfairly to others, and to stand up for those who are being treated unfairly. QA 1.1.6, 1.2.2, 3.2.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3
- The Service celebrates cultural traditions from around the world, especially those culture represented by the children, staff and educators. Parents and community members are encouraged to share particular aspects of their cultures and traditions (e.g. songs, dances, recipes, creative arts) and to bring into the Service items from their culture. Refer to the Service’s *Interactions with Families Policy* QA 6.1.2, 6.3.4
- The Service shares information with the relevant local schools to help transition children with additional needs. QA 6.3.4
- The Service follows the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity when recruiting staff.
- The service has a committee of staff, community and families to incorporate a RAP

Responsibilities of families

- To provide complete and accurate details about any additional needs their children may have, to update this information throughout the year, and to communicate information from any professional support services accessed outside the Service.
- To provide educators with up-to-date information about their child’s knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests, together with any child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language and traditions that will help educators meet their child’s education and care needs.

Links to other policies

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- My Time, Our Place 2009

Further reading and useful websites

- Australian Multicultural Council – <http://www.amc.gov.au/multicultural-policy.htm>
- Boschetti, C. with Stonehouse, A. (2006). *A piece of cake: Inclusive practices in early childhood settings*. Yooralla, Victoria.
- Derman-Sparks, L. and Edwards, J. (2010). *Anti-bias education: For young children and ourselves* (2nd Edition). National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC.
- Disability Care Australia – www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services – <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/>
- Global Kids Oz – <http://www.globalkidsoz.com.au/>
- Global Kids Oz. (2013). *Multicultural Dates - World Culture Celebrations 2012/2013* http://www.globalkidsoz.com.au/multicultural_articles.php accessed 24 November 2013
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2008). *Diversity in early care and education: Honouring differences* (5th Ed.). McGraw-Hill Education, USA.
- Indigenous Support Unit Western Australia – <http://www.ipсуwa.org.au/>

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