

# Additional Needs Policy

Including children with additional needs requires Educators to extend upon the strategies they already use in providing quality care for children. It is imperative for Educators to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's interests and abilities and implement a program and environment that is receptive to their needs and inclusivity.

Inclusion is stipulated in the Early Years Learning Framework as 'taking into account all children's, social cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographical location) in curriculum decision making processes.' *Belonging, Being and Becoming* (2009) p. 45.

Our Service will work in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure specific consideration and adaptations allow children with additional needs access and participation and achieve positive learning outcomes.

## National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice		
1.1.1	<b>Approved learning framework</b>	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
3.1	<b>Design</b>	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service
3.1.1	<b>Fit for purpose</b>	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2.1	<b>Inclusive environment</b>	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	<b>Resources support play-based learning</b>	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children		
5.1	<b>Relationships between educators and children</b>	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	<b>Positive educator to child interactions</b>	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	<b>Dignity and rights of the child</b>	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities		
6.1	<b>Supportive relationships with families</b>	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	<b>Engagement with the service</b>	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	<b>Parent views are respected</b>	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2	<b>Collaborative partnerships</b>	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	<b>Access and participation</b>	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program

### Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
<b>155</b>	Interactions with children
<b>156</b>	Relationships in groups
<b>157</b>	Access for parents

### Related Policies

Behaviour Guidance Policy  
 Code of Conduct Policy  
 Educational Program Policy  
 Enrolment Policy  
 Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy  
 & Procedure

Medical Conditions Policy  
 Orientation for Families Policy  
 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy  
 Respect for Children Policy & Procedure

### PURPOSE

To be responsible for each child, irrespective of their additional needs and abilities. We aim to provide a supportive and inclusive environment that sanctions each child to fully participate in its education and care at the Service. Educators will remain encouraging, unprejudiced and authentic, ensuring that all children are treated equally and fairly and have the opportunity to grow and develop to their individual potential.



## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

According to the Inclusion Support Program Guideline (Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment) March 2020, there is no national definition of 'additional needs'. This term is used within the policy to describe children who may need or require specific considerations or adaptations to participate fully in our Early Childhood Education and Care service.

Additional needs may include children who:

- Have a diagnosed disability or developmental delay – physical, sensory, intellectual, or autism spectrum disorder.
- Are presenting with challenging behaviours and/or behavioural or psychological disorders
- Have a serious medical or health condition
- Are presenting with trauma-related behaviours
- Are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- Are recent arrivals in Australia
- Have a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- Live in isolated geographic locations
- Are experiencing difficult family circumstances or stress
- Are at risk of abuse or neglect
- Are experiencing language and communication difficulties
- Have a diagnosed disability—physical, sensory, intellectual or autism spectrum disorder
- Have a medical or health condition
- Demonstrate challenging behaviours and behavioural or psychological disorders
- Have developmental delays
- Have learning difficulties
- Are gifted or have special talents
- Have other extra support needs.

We understand that additional needs may be temporary or permanent and ascend from diverse origins, which require different responses. Supporting children with additional needs enables them to have equitable access to resources and participation. This can lead to stronger skills in literacy and numeracy, social and emotional development and understanding of diversity. Strategies for supporting children with additional needs can differ significantly, because every child is unique.



## IMPLEMENTATION

### Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- Completed enrolment forms are used to gather information about children's additional needs.
- Equitable access is provided to support children with additional needs.
- Communication with families is consistent and supportive.
- They have a thorough understanding of the NDIS plan for each child (if applicable) and assist to help achieve goals and build skills and independence.
- That any barriers preventing a child's inclusion are identified and strategies to make improvements implemented.
- Families are encouraged to meet with Educators who will be working with the child to ensure an understanding of the child's needs, appropriate methods for communication, and to ascertain that suitable resources and support is provided to both the family and the child.
- The Service works in partnership with Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) professionals, allied health professionals and families to verify the educational program and learning environment is inclusive for each child with additional needs, including children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Specific plans and programs provided by external resource providers and professionals for children with additional needs are shared with educators and copies filed in the child's individual record.
- Children are encouraged to feel safe and secure during their education and care at the Service by developing trusting relationships with educators, other children and the community.
- They seek assistance, training, and where possible, financial funding from inclusive support agencies to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs.
- Inclusive strategies and practices are embedded in the delivery of quality education and care.
- Educators are meeting the needs of each individual child, by providing educators with targeted professional development and opportunities to network with professional agencies.
- The privacy and confidentiality for children and families is maintained.
- The indoor and outdoor environment and equipment is designed or adapted to ensure access and participation for all children, supporting the inclusion of children with additional needs. This may include the use of:
  - Portable ramps
  - Use of standing frames and support swings
  - Specialised inclusion toys such as sensory or switch toys
  - Specialized furniture such as chairs, tables and positioning equipment
  - Communication charts and Auslan dictionaries
  - Resources and books in languages other than English to support Indigenous children and children from linguistically diverse backgrounds.



- The program and curriculum are inclusive and meet the individual needs of children with additional needs, disability or developmental delay.
- Children's sensory sensitivities to pressure, texture, smell, noise, or colour is considered within the environment.

#### Educators will:

- Treat children equally, fairly and with respect.
- Create an inclusive program, which is adaptable and supportive of all children.
- Advocate for children's rights.
- Conduct specific observations of the individual child, outlining their interests, strengths, and developmental needs to support programming including open ended learning opportunities.
- Meet with families of children with additional needs to familiarize themselves with the specific communication needs of each child. Communication could include verbal and non-verbal communication skills and cues and may necessitate the use of systems such as sign language, the use of images, and/or learning key words in the child's home language.
- Establish a means for frequent communication with parents of children with additional needs through a communication book, verbal daily information exchanges, and/or formal and informal meetings.
- Work with all families to meet children's developmental needs in order to build strengths and capabilities.
- Develop an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) in collaboration with Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) professionals, other allied health professionals and parents for each child.
- Work with other professionals who play a role in supporting the child's development.
- Create a flexible environment, which can be adapted to each child's needs within the Service to support the inclusion of children with additional needs.
- Implement programming experiences and activities that are inclusive for all children to access, explore and participate.
- Listen carefully to all children's concerns and discuss issues of inclusion and exclusion, and fair and unfair behaviour.
- Act as role models by displaying appropriate behaviour and language, being consistently aware of and responsive to children who may require additional support, attention or assistance.
- Discuss a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively with the children within a supportive environment.
- Not judge or compare one child's development with another.
- Talk to children about differences and acceptance
- Provide opportunities for all children to play and learn together, promoting cooperative, caring and social behaviours.



#### Families will:

- Work collaboratively with our Service
- Share information about their child's specific needs – their interests, things they do well, strategies that are used at home to support their child, identify routines or situations that may cause physical or emotional challenges.
- Provide accurate information about their child's additional needs including relevant reports, documentation, NDIS plans, details about support services and other allied professionals.
- Help to identify possible barriers for inclusion and reasonable adjustments that may be required
- Consent to our Service accessing external professional support if required to assist educators manage the diagnosed, or undiagnosed additional needs of their child.
- Collaborate with external professional support agencies and educators to implement plans to support inclusion
- Adhere to our policies that should the safety of other children and staff be compromised enrolment may be suspended or terminated.

#### Inclusion Support Program (ISP)

To assist in the provision of an inclusive environment for children with additional needs, our Service may apply for additional support through the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) if the eligibility requirements are met.

The Nominated Supervisors and Educators will refer to the Inclusion Support Guidelines and consult with families to submit an application.

The objectives of the Inclusion Support Program include:

- Supporting Early Childhood Education and Care Services to increase their capacity and capability to provide quality inclusive practices for all children
- to address access and participation barriers
- support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- provide parents or carers of children with additional needs with access to appropriate ECEC services



### High Potential and Gifted children

Our Service will collaborate with families to support the needs of high potential and gifted children.

We will:

- respect the uniqueness of each child
- acknowledge the characteristics of high potential and gifted children
- be sensitive to the social-emotional needs of gifted children and assist them to feel a sense of belonging
- develop our capacity to cater for the needs of gifted children through professional development
- support children's transition to school
- assist educators cater for gifted children who also have a disability- 'Twice Exceptional' children

### Enhanced transition to school planning

Our Service will promote and support enhanced transition to school programs for children with additional needs by:

- starting the planning for transition to school aged care early
- liaising with key people at the school and other support services to ensure key dates for applications for support are noted
- sharing information about the child's strengths and completing *Transition to School Statements*
- supporting reciprocal visits to strengthen the transition to school for children and families
- provide continuity of learning between our Service and school aged care

### Source

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2009) *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2014) *Continuity of Learning: A resource to support effective transition to school and school aged care*.
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) *Inclusion Support Program (ISP)*
- Catholic Education Office Melbourne (2013) *Gifted and Talented Students A resource Guide for Teachers in Victorian Catholic Schools*
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA), & Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA). (2012). Position statement on the inclusion of children with disability in early childhood education and

care. [http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ECA_Position_statement_Disability_Inclusion_web.pdf)

[content/uploads/2014/06/ECA\\_Position\\_statement\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_web.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ECA_Position_statement_Disability_Inclusion_web.pdf)

- Early Childhood Intervention Australia *National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention* <https://www.ecia.org.au/Resources/National-Guidelines-for-Best-Practice-in-ECI>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)
- New South Wales Department of Education *High Potential and Gifted Education Policy* (2019)
- Raising Children *Supporting gifted and talented learning*  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/gifted-talented-children/supporting-learning>
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

### Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
April 2017	Minor changes and additions made	April 2018
October 2017	Updated the National Quality Standards references to comply with revised standards	April 2018
April 2018	Minor terminology and grammatical adjustments Included the list of related policies	April 2019
April 2019	Rearranged the order of points for better flow. Points added Sources/references updated and alphabetised.	April 2020
April 2020	Additional information for Approved provider and educators added Adjustments for inclusion added Added sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family responsibilities</li> <li>- Inclusion Support Program</li> <li>- High Potential and Gifted children</li> <li>- Transition to School</li> </ul> New references added	April 2021

Signature of Director: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Additional Needs Procedure

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Children with additional needs require support by using specialised strategies catering for their specific needs or circumstances. When planning for children with additional needs Educators are required to focus on their abilities and interests. It is essential that the program is flexible and allows children to engage in ways that are meaningful for them. Our Service wants children to develop to the best of their personal ability. We aim to promote and encourage this by:

1. Gathering information provided by families and other professionals who are working with the child, including psychologists, early intervention specialists, social workers and speech or occupational therapists.
2. Meeting with families to gain information about the strategies that support their child's learning in the home environment.
3. Conducting specific observations on the individual child, which outlines their interests, strengths and needs
4. Acquainting Educators with, and share knowledge about, the specific communication needs of each child. This will include verbal and non-verbal communication skills and cues. This may include a communication book, verbal daily information exchange, formal and informal meetings etc. Where applicable, this may include things such as sign language and or learning key words in the child's home language.
5. Developing an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) with families and support agencies, which is a live document and continuously evaluated by all parties involved.
6. Accessing external professional support services for children with additional needs.
7. Networking with the Nominated Supervisor to ensure the needs of each child are met throughout their education and care at the service.
8. Attending professional development workshops to enhance their understanding about the additional needs and how to meet the child's needs.
9. Encouraging families to update the Service with information throughout the year, promoting the continuity of learning for each child.
10. Working with local schools to help children with additional needs transition. We are open to sharing information about the additional needs of children to promote continuity of learning.
11. Remaining positive, unbiased and authentic at all times.

Signature of Director: \_\_\_\_\_

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