



Inclusive Practice

Children's Services Policy No 3.3

Date issued: April 2015

Replaces issue: Anti-Bias Policy and Children with Additional Needs

Date effective: 10 November 2015

Date Revised: September 2019; and September 2020

Aim:

- To ensure that Council's Children's Services provide an inclusive program that allows all children genuine opportunities to participate and contribute in a group setting.
- To ensure that our services take into account the differing abilities and skills of the children when planning and implementing the programs, fostering the development of the feeling of belonging, being and becoming.
- To embrace and demonstrate the value of diversity.
- To support the inclusion of children with additional needs into Council managed Children's Services.

Background Information:

Children attending education and care services come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, experiences and with a variety of needs.

It is recognised that "*Inclusive practice occurs when educators make thoughtful and informed curriculum decisions and work in partnership with families and other professionals. This helps to ensure that all children - including those with a disability - have equitable and genuine opportunities to participate in and learn from the everyday routines, interactions and play and learning experiences that occur in early learning settings.*" (National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program – Curriculum decision making for inclusive practice).

Relevant Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations (Amendment 2018)
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- New South Wales – Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Resources:

- *Ten Reasons for Inclusion*, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, <http://www.csie.org.uk/resources/ten-reasons-02.pdf>.
- *The 10Cs: A Model of Diversity Awareness and Social Change*, Patti DeRosa and Ulric Johnson (2003).
- *Guidelines for Challenging Racism and other forms of Oppression*, Patti DeRosa of Cross-Cultural Consultation, <https://www.changeworksconsulting.org/Guidelines-Racism.pdf>.

- Child Care Provider Handbook, <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-provider-handbook>.
- *We Hear You, Breaking down the inclusion barriers*, ACECQA, <https://wehearyou.acecqa.gov.au/tag/inclusion/>
- *My Time, Our Place* – Framework for School Age Care in Australia.
- *Belonging, Being and Becoming* – The Early Years Learning Framework.
- *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*, Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards (2009), National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- National Quality Standards:
 - Quality Area 1 – Standard 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 – all elements;
 - Quality Area 5 – Standard 5.1 and 5.2 – all elements;
 - Quality Area 6 – Standard 6.1 and 6.2 – all elements;
 - Quality Area 7 – Standard 7.1, Element 7.1.1 and Element 7.1.3; Standard 7.2, Element 7.2.2.

Note: In this policy “staff” and “educators” refers to staff employed by Willoughby City Council.

Practice:

When a family enquires about enrolling a child with identified additional needs, the Nominated Supervisor will determine whether the service is able to accommodate the family’s request. This will involve a Risk Assessment and open dialogue with the family regarding the needs of the child.

Prior to commencement, the Nominated Supervisor/educator will meet with the parents/carers and the child to discuss the child’s particular needs and how the service can accommodate these. Where appropriate, an Inclusion Support Plan will be developed, clearly outlining the strategies the service will follow.

Prior to the child commencing at the service, the Inclusion Agency will be contacted to develop an Inclusion Support Plan and assist with further strategies to support the child, family and staff in the provision of care for the child. Funding assistance will be requested from the Inclusion Agency where additional staff support is required to meet the needs of the child within the context of the education and care service.

****NOTE** - Council has no role in the approval process for funding assistance.

Where a child with a current enrolment has not been formally identified with additional needs, and staff are concerned with a child’s progress, staff will ensure detailed records are maintained outlining their concerns. The Nominated Supervisor/educator will approach the parents/guardians to discuss concerns about the child’s development/specific area of need and determine if any follow up is required. This follow up may include the child being formally assessed by a medical practitioner and/or contact made with other support services such as:

- The NSW/ACT Inclusion Support Agency (1800 703 382); or
- The Child Development Service (Royal North Shore Community Health Centre, 2C Herbert Street, St Leonards; Phone: 9462 9288).

In all instances, permission will be sought from parents/carers for staff to contact other support services that may already be involved or that would be of benefit to become involved, in order to provide optimum care and education for the child, such as:

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS, 1800 800 110); or
- EarlyEd, Early Intervention of Children with Disability (9923 2727)

The type and number of support services involved will depend on the particular needs of the child.

Regular reviews of the Inclusion Support Plan will be conducted to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the child.

In respect to Vacation Care, the families of children with additional needs who have previously attended Council's services will be eligible to book into each Vacation Care service three weeks prior to commencement of the holiday period.

Whilst Council will endeavour to accommodate the needs of children and their families within the community, there may be times where a particular service is not able to meet the needs of a particular child, for example, if there are already several children with Additional Needs enrolled at the service. Should this occur Council will endeavour to assist the family to locate an alternative care type/service.

Inclusive Practices also refers to strategies for reducing bias and promoting values of fairness and equity. Positive inclusive practices may be demonstrated in a program that reflects:

- Gender equity (e.g. male educators);
- Respect and awareness for diversity of abilities;
- Respect and awareness for diversity of cultures;
- Respect and awareness for diversity of religion;
- Respect and awareness for diverse family backgrounds (e.g. LGBTQIA+ families);
- Respect and awareness for diversity of experiences and backgrounds (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from different linguistic, economic and cultural backgrounds; and
- Awareness of personal bias, values and beliefs.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff are positive role models for children of all ages and therefore should:

- Reflect on their own values, beliefs, background and experiences and the impact of these on their interactions with children, staff and parents/guardians.
- Promote an atmosphere of acceptance.
- Interact with children and families without bias or prejudice.
- Support children to recognise and reject biased or unfair behaviour towards others.
- Ensure they are aware of attributes of children's cultures, backgrounds and particular needs.
- Communicate with parents/carers to understand their expectations, values and beliefs.
- Access training and professional development opportunities to increase their understanding and awareness of anti-bias and equity issues and strategies.

The Program

The Program should:

- Provide for planned experiences that promote discussion and awareness of diversity, equality and acceptance.
- Encourage all children to have equal access to all activities in a way that is supportive of their developmental level, skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Reflect positive language.
- Be displayed in a manner that supports a variety of learning styles to enhance parents/guardians understanding of the program.
- Encourage involvement from parents/carers and the extended family.

The Physical Environment

Staff will ensure that:

- Images of people from diverse cultures and religions, and people of different ages and abilities are reflected in:

- Picture/story books
 - Play equipment such as home corner and puzzles
 - Picture displays such as posters, artwork, photographs and other media
 - Language used by staff and encouraged for use by the children
- Images that challenge traditional gendered identities and give positive messages about gender equity are reflected in:
 - Picture books
 - Play equipment such as home corner and puzzles
 - Activities that all children are encouraged to participate in
 - Picture displays such as posters, artwork, photographs and other media
 - Language used by staff and encouraged for use by the children
 - Activities such as dramatic play and stories are included to encourage children to empathise with others and to challenge stereotypes and bias.
 - Discussions are held with children to allow them to explore their own thoughts, stereotypes and bias.

Parents/carers and Families

Parents/carers will be provided with information regarding how the program is supporting the development of anti-bias ethics amongst the children.

Parents/carers are considered an important resource for staff to obtain information regarding a child's culture, religion, and other beliefs.

The parents/carers, families and staff relationship should:

- Provide enthusiastic exchange of information relating to family values and culture
- Foster a sense of collaboration
- Develop a sense of group identity
- Provide opportunities for parents/carers, families and staff to participate in the growth, development and well-being of children

Staff will respectfully acknowledge that parents/carers are the child's first teachers, therefore constant communication between parents/carers and staff is identified as an important aspect in a child's ability to develop an awareness of fairness and equity.