

Supporting children with additional needs requires Educators to extend upon the strategies they already use in providing quality education and care for children. It is imperative for Educators to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's interests and abilities and implement an inclusive and equitable learning environment that supports their individual needs.

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 Centre 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.

### **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 their education and care at the centre. 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.

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 learning difficulties
- Are gifted or have special talents
- Have other extra support needs.

We understand that additional needs may be temporary or permanent with 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
- They contact their local Inclusion Agency to access information and support about the Inclusion Support Program (see: [Inclusion Development Fund Manager](#) for your state/territory organisation)
- They develop a *Strategic Inclusion Plan* in collaboration with the Inclusion Agency which will identify any barriers preventing a child's inclusion and implement strategies for improvement
- They access the Inclusion Support Portal (IS Portal) through PRODA
- Parents provide written consent for information about their child to be shared on the IS Portal if accessing support under the Inclusion Support Program
- Families are encouraged to meet with the 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 Centre 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 Centre 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
  - Specialised 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 and fairly and with respect
- Create an inclusive program, which is adaptable and supportive of all children
- Advocate for children's rights
- Conduct specific observations on 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 familiarise 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, 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 Inclusion Agency professionals, 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 Centre 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 Centre
- 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 Centre 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
- Provide written consent for information about their child to be shared on the IS Portal if accessing support under the Inclusion Support Program
- 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 Centre 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

### Enhanced Transition to School Planning

Our Centre 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 Centre and school aged care

### Professional Development for Educators

Our centre will access professional development for educators to help the centre meet the needs of each child with additional needs.

Offer training on two levels:

- **General awareness training**
  - General information about working with children with specific needs should be incorporated in the overall training of educator.
- **Specific Training for when a new child is to attend**
  - Training on issues of a child's specific disability should be made available to the relevant educator
  - Time should be made available – with the provision of relief educator – for educator to attend training or to visit/observe the child in other situation so as to best assess the requirements of the child.
  - Training offered by peers who have a knowledge of working with children with specific needs AND an understanding of the needs of the Centre, should be maximized as a means of Informing/training educator in this area.
  - Parents and other key informed people (integration aids, advocates, etc) would be seen as resources.
  - Provide information as support to families so as to achieve participation in the planning and evaluation of program decision that affect their child's settlement into the Centre. The process will as far as possible be collaborative and take into account parent expectations and the needs of the child.
  - Organize parent information or discussion nights where awareness of integration issues can be promoted

### The Centre's Responsibilities:

The centre will work in partnership with the ISF to ensure that all children's needs can be met. The centre management and educators will do this by:

- Discussing the concerns about individual children with parents or caregivers and together with them completing and lodging an ISF referral form;
- Sharing all relevant information with ISF's , including observations;
- Allowing for time out of children's rooms in which educators and managers can discuss issues with the ISF and work on inclusive practices;
- Developing the SSP with the support from the ISF;
- Support all educators to continually evaluate the SSP and use it for planning and to implement effective practices;
- Submitting applications for ISS when children are deemed eligible (with support from the ISF);
- Ensuring ISS workers are used in accordance with the guidelines;
- Managing ISS claims and keeping track of renewal dates;
- Encouraging and supporting all educators to access appropriate professional development.
- Always considering the values of "Being, Belonging and Becoming" as embodied by the National and Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Frameworks;



- Committing time and resources to inclusion. Including time to liaise with the ISF and other involved professionals.

**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/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/ECA\\_Position\\_statement\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_web.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wpcontent/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).

**Date Implemented:** 16/04/2012

**Review Completed:** 18/03/2021

**Schedule for Review:** 18/03/2022

**Authorised by COM:** Nov 2020

National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice		
1.1.1	Approved Learning Framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service
3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2.1	Inclusive environment	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	Resources support play-based learning	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	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
Quality Area 6: Partnership with families		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	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	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
<b>Education and Care Service National Regulations</b>		
155	Interactions with children	
156	Relationships in groups	
157	Access for parents	
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>		
<b>Learning Outcome 1 - Children have a Strong Sense of Identity</b>		
1.1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported	
1.2	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency	
1.3	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities	
1.4	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect	

