

## ADDITIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Supporting children with additional needs requires Teachers & Educators to extend upon the strategies they already use in providing quality education and care for children. It is imperative for Teachers & 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.

The Early Years Learning Framework- Inclusion 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 Preschool's Teachers & Educators view all children as active Participates & decision makers, our practices and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning.

We believe that working in partnership with families and other professionals allows children with additional needs access and participation in the educational program by using children's interest and strengths to choose appropriate teaching strategies to support and work towards positive learning outcomes.

### 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, 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 COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
157	Access for parents

## RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy Behaviour Management Policy Code of Conduct Policy Early Childhood Intervention Practitioner Management Policy Educational Program Policy	Enrolment Policy Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy Medical Conditions Policy Orientation of Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Respect for Children Policy
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## PURPOSE

To be responsive to 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 Preschool. Educators will remain encouraging, unprejudiced and supportive, 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 Preschool.

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
- Families provide information in regard to their child's Inclusion Support Workers – Key Worker's name and contact so that Preschool can access information and support about the Inclusion Support Program/NDIS Goals
- work in collaboration with the child's Support team to provide information to support the *child's NDIS Plan* which will identify any barriers preventing a child's inclusion and implement strategies to assist the child's Individual learning program
- seek assistance, training, and where possible, financial funding from the NSW Department of Education to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs
- educators are meeting the needs of each individual child, by providing educators with professional development and opportunities to network with Early Childhood Early Intervention professionals/agencies
- parents provide written consent for information about their child to be shared between the Preschool and any Inclusion Support workers
- 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 Preschool 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 Preschool by developing trusting relationships with teachers and educators, other children, and the community.
- inclusive strategies and practices are embedded in the delivery of quality education and care
- 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 will be considered within the environment.

## Teachers and 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 Individual Education Plan IEP 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.

## Disability & Inclusion Program

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education Disability and Inclusion Program is to provide funding and support to enable children with disability and additional needs in community preschools to participate in a quality early childhood education program on the same basis as all children.

The Nominated Supervisors/Director and Teachers will refer to the Disability & Inclusion Guidelines and consult with families to submit the application for funding to the NSW Department of Education. The objectives of the Disability and Inclusion Program include:

- supporting Early Childhood Education and Care Services to increase their capacity and capability to provide quality inclusive practices for all children
- provide priority of access to a quality preschool program for children with disability and additional needs in community preschools
- support equitable education outcomes for children with disability and additional needs
- 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 Preschool 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 Preschool 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
- accessing support through the TSTEI – Transition Support Teacher Early Intervention - to visit Preschool
- complete Transition to School Referral Form for Children with Learning & support Needs or to support families to access further support for their child by applying for an Early Intervention Support Class (Lismore PS)

- 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 Preschool and the School where the child will be attending the following year.

## Families will:

- work collaboratively with our Preschool, especially when requested to provide information in regard to their child's diagnoses (paperwork must be kept up to date and be provided at the time of enrolment, unless the child is diagnosed after they enroll).
- 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 Preschool accessing external professional support if required to assist teachers and educators manage the diagnosed, or undiagnosed additional needs of their child
- collaborate with external professional support agencies and teachers/educators to implement plans to support inclusion
- provide written consent for information about their child to be shared with all Allied Health Workers, Early Intervention workers, schools to support their child to engage in the educational learning Preschool program
- adhere to our policies that should the safety of other children and staff be compromised enrolment may be suspended or terminated. What this means is any child who become aggressive, abusive, or violent towards Teachers, Educators, or other children regardless of disability, or learning difficulty will be placed on a Behaviour management program which will be reduced hours of attendance, reduced days of attendance and then the child maybe suspended for a time, if the behaviour continues after they return then the child will be asked to leave the preschool. Safety of All children, Teachers, Educators, and staff will always be the first consideration of our Preschool.

## 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-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*
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).  
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 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).
- Child Care Centre Desktop Policies & Procedures [www.childcarecentredesktop.com.au](http://www.childcarecentredesktop.com.au)

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	APRIL 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2022
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of policy- Moved Families will.... to end of policy</li> <li>sources checked for currency</li> <li>Updated information for Inclusion and funding – Disability &amp; Inclusion Program -NSW Department of Education</li> <li>Families' information added in regards to children who become aggressive, violent or abusive towards, teachers, educators or other children – Behavioural plan</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
APRIL 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional information for Approved provider and educators added</li> <li>Adjustments for inclusion added</li> <li>- Family responsibilities</li> <li>- Inclusion Support Program</li> <li>- High Potential and Gifted children</li> <li>- Transition to School</li> <li>New references added</li> </ul>	APRIL 2021	