

Additional Needs Policy

Including children with additional needs required 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.

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
1.1.1	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	
3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
5.1.2	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2.1	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnership with families and communities	
6.2	Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	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

Early Years Learning Framework

Learning Outcome 1	
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

PURPOSE

To be responsible for each child irrespective of their additional needs and abilities with a supportive and inclusive environment that sanctions each child to fully participate in their 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.

In accordance with The National Quality Standard, our service positively responds to and welcomes children with additional needs who -

- Are Aboriginals 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- Along with external agencies the indoor and outdoor environment and equipment is designed or adapted to ensure access and participation for all children to support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- The program and curriculum is inclusive and meets the individual needs of children with additional needs.
- The service works with external professionals and families to certify the educational program and learning environment is most suited to each child with additional needs and children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds. We will keep a copy of any specific plans or instructions provided by external resource providers and professionals for children with additional needs.
- Children’s sensory sensitivities to pressure, texture, smell, noise or visual expectation of the environment or colour is considered within the environment.

- Encourage children 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.
- Encourage families to meet with the Educators who will be working with the child to converse and comprehend the child's needs and to certify the suitable resources and support provided to both the family and the child is appropriate.
- Support educators through professional development and networking with professional agencies to certify educators are meeting the needs of each child with additional needs.
- Seek assistance, training and where possible, financial funding from inclusive support agencies to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs.
- Ensure confidentiality for children and families is maintained

Educators will:

- Treat children equally and fairly regardless of perceived dissimilarities.
- Create an inclusive program, which is adaptable and supportive of all children.
- Advocate for children's rights.
- 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, encouraging children to explore and participate
- Listen carefully to children's concerns and discussing diverse perspectives on issues of inclusion and exclusion and fair and unfair behaviour.
- Work with other professionals who play a role in supporting the child's development.
- Seek specific professional intervention and training in order to meet the individual child's needs
- Develop an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) for each child that will be kept on file at the service and shared with families, the child's medical practitioners and/or professional support services.
- 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

Source

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015,
- ECA Code of Ethics.
- <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood/about-mental-health/about-mental-health-and-wellbeing-children-additional-needs>
- Early Years Learning Framework
- National Quality Standards
- Putting Children First, Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Issue 23 September 2007
- Children’s Services Central – Early Identification of Children with Additional Needs

Review

Policy Review Date
February 2019

Additional Needs Procedure

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.