Inclusion Support

Background

Children's relationships and experiences in their first five years affect their learning and development throughout life. Adults working with children require commitment, knowledge, and skills to support the children to form positive relationships with adults and other children, and to fully participate in the Services activities. For all children to be treated equitably and fairly, as defined by the National Quality Standard 2018 (Element 3.2.1, 3.2.2), the Service may require specific considerations and some adaptations to the environment.

As stated, these first five years are critical in the formation of attitudes and behaviours. Assumptions developed during this time usually continue into adulthood and can affect a person's life choices and decisions. Creaser and Dau (1995) argue that adults working with children should understand the importance of supporting children to: -

- Construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity
- Develop comfortable, empathetic, and just, interaction with diversity
- Develop critical thinking
- Learn how to stand up for oneself and others in the face of injustice

Policy statement

This policy outlines how the needs of all children who attend the Service are met fairly and inclusively, and how children are supported to fully participate in the program.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's philosophy is based on a commitment to equality and fairness for all children, particularly their right to fully participate in every aspect of the program. The philosophy, together with the *Inclusion Support Policy*, is reviewed regularly as part of the Services self-assessment and quality improvement process.

- The *Inclusion Support Policy* is explained to all staff, educators, students, and volunteers before they commence at the Service, and to all parents when they enrol their children. At that time, they are given the opportunity to ask any questions needed to clarify their understanding.

- Information about the operation of the Service and what it provides is available in an easy-to-read format. When necessary and wherever possible, it is also available to parents in their first language.

- The Service is committed to working with families to best meet the education and care needs of their children. This commitment is communicated to parents at enrolment and reinforced throughout the time their children attend the Service. Refer to the Services Interactions with Families Policy.

- The Services Enrolment Form requires parents to provide information about any additional needs their children may have. Parents are asked to update this information throughout the year and to pass on information from any professional support services accessed outside of the Service. Educators use this information to meet the education and care needs of the child.

- Parents are asked about their child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities, and interests at enrolment and throughout the time the child attends the Service. They are also asked about their child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language, and traditions. Educators use this information to help children feel secure, safe, and confident, and to develop the educational program. Refer to the Services Educational Program Policy.

- Parents are welcome at the Service at any time. In addition, parents are encouraged to be involved in decision-making and consultative roles within the Service.

- The Services physical environment and facilities are designed and, when necessary, adapted to ensure access and participation for every child in the Service.

- The décor of the Service reflects the diversity of the children, parents, staff, and educators in the Service. Where applicable, signs are displayed in languages other than English.

- Equipment and resources are selected to support and encourage the participation of all children. They reflect the lives of the children in the Service, their families, and the cultural diversity of the broader community. Learning materials e.g., books, puzzles, games, posters support positive inclusion by providing children with accurate and appropriate information about their own and other cultures. They also depict people with additional needs as active and contributing members of communities.

- Information gathered about children with additional needs is used to develop an individual support plan, in consultation with their parents. When appropriate, and with parents' knowledge and permission, this plan is shared with the child's medical practitioners and/or professional support services.

- Educators plan the program based upon their observations of children's play and the ideas, interests, and opinions that the children share with them. When planning the program, educators reflect upon the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and the learning environments they provide.

- The Service works with families, external professionals, and agencies e.g., paediatricians, child welfare workers, early childhood intervention services, and psychologists, to ensure that the learning environments are the optimal space for each child with additional needs. The child's input is also obtained in this process. Copies of any goals for the children, specific plans or instructions provided by these external professionals and agencies are kept at the Service and are incorporated into the child's individual program.

- The Service provides parents with information about support and resources available in the community. Where appropriate, parents are assisted in contacting the relevant professionals and agencies.

- The Service seeks support for any child with a disability or with ongoing high support needs through the Inclusion Development Fund Manager (IFDM) and/or Inclusion Agency (IA). An Inclusion Professional (IP) then visits the Service to assess the child and to collaborate with the Service in developing a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP). If appropriate, the Service will be provided with an Auskey to submit an online application though the IA Hub Portal for an Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) subsidy for an additional educator.

- The Services rosters ensure continuity of care so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel, and do. Further, the educators promote the children's wellbeing, self-esteem, and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful. Refer to the Services <u>Relationships with Children Policy</u>.

- All educators attend professional development on inclusive practices. This professional development is based upon evaluation of the professional knowledge and skills of individual educators and the team. When appropriate, they receive training on how to meet the additional needs of any child in their care.

- Educators are encouraged to reflect, individually and as a team, on the way their own beliefs, cultural background and attitudes to people may impact negatively upon their relationships with others, and educators' ability to promote the inclusion and participation of all children in the program.

- Educators consistently model equitable and fair treatment in their everyday interactions with other adults and children, and intentionally teach children to do the same.

- Educators view children as competent and capable, and support the development of their autonomy, independence, competency, confidence, and pride.

- Educators share their time equitably with children and listen to children's interests and concerns. They ensure that they know the specific communication needs of every child so that they can communicate respectfully and meaningfully with them.

- Educators facilitate children's relationships with one another and support them to work collaboratively together. They help children negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others. They intentionally teach children that it is not acceptable to speak or act unfairly to others, and to stand up for those who are being treated unfairly.

- The Service celebrates cultural traditions from around the world, especially those cultures represented by the children, staff, and educators. Parents and community members are encouraged to share particular aspects of their cultures and traditions e.g., songs, dances, recipes, creative arts, and to bring into the Service items from their culture. Refer to the Services <u>Interactions with Families Policy.</u>

- The Service shares information with the relevant local schools to assist in the transition of children with additional needs.

- Parent information sessions are held regularly to promote understanding of topics such as inclusion, children with additional needs, and multiculturalism.

- English as a Second Language (ESL) support is provided to children whose first language is not English. Children are also encouraged to talk to other children and staff using their first language.

- The Service follows the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity when recruiting staff.

Additional safe practices for babies

- No additional practices required.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide complete and accurate details about any additional needs their children may have, to update this information throughout the year and as details change, and to communicate information from any professional support services accessed outside the Service.

- To provide educators with up-to-date information about their child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities, and interests, together with any child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language and traditions that will help educators meet their child's education and care needs.

Procedures and forms

- N/A

Links to other policies

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	73	Educational program
	74	Documenting of a child assessments or evaluation for delivery of educational program
	75	Information about the educational program to be kept available
	90	Medical conditions policy
	105	Furniture, materials and equipment
	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups
	157	Access for parents
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
	168	Education and care service must have policy and procedures
	177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider

QA	1.1.1	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
	1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program

	1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback
	1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world
	1.3.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection
	1.3.2	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation
	1.3.3	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress
	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented
	3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child
	3.2.1	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, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning
	4.1.2	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service
	4.2.1	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills
	4.2.2	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
	5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included
	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
	5.2.2	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts
	6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
	6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing
	6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
	6.2.1	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities
	6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program
	6.2.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its community
	7.1.1	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations
	7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place
	7.2.3	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated, and individual plans are in place to support learning and development

Sources

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0 (2022)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018
- Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines 2019

Further reading and useful websites

- Derman-Sparks, L. and Olsen Edwards, J. (2010). Anti-bias education: For young children and ourselves (2nd Edition). National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC. accessed 23 June 2025
- National Disability Insurance Scheme – https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers/early-childhood-approach accessed 23 June 2025
- KU Children's Services – https://www.ku.com.au/childcare/about accessed 23 June 2025
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-inclusion accessed 23 June 2025
- Early Childhood Australia – Inclusion Resource Hub – https://inclusionhub.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au accessed 23 June 2025
- Raising Children Network – https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability accessed 23 June 2025

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Kaylene Harper	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018.	January 2019
2	4 February 2019	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	February 2020
3	30 January 2020	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed and updated.	January 2021
4	14 October 2020	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed.	October 2021
5	28 September 2021	Kaylene Harper	Policy reviewed	September 2022
6	6 October 2022	Linda Hollard	Policy reviewed Accessed sources.	October 2023
7	22 August 2023	Grace McKinstray	Policy reviewed. Sources and further readings accessed.	August 2024
8	1 July 2024	Tiffany Boeske	Policy reviewed Sources accessed.	July 2025
9	23 June 2025	Gen Mahaki	Policy reviewed, sources and websites updated.	June 2026