



ADDITIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

INTRODUCTION

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 (V2.0, 2022, p.66).

GOALS/ WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

Our Service understands and meets our obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to support children with disability and 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 Service. Educators 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.

DEFINITIONS

According to the Inclusion Support Program Guidelines (Australian Department of Education September 2023), 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:

- o have a disability or developmental delay- physical, sensory, intellectual, or autism spectrum disorder
- o are presenting with challenging behaviours and/or behavioural or psychological disorders
- o have a serious medical or health condition
- o are presenting with trauma-related behaviours

WHAT IS A DISABILITY

Disability is defined broadly in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and does not rely on formal diagnosis of disability. Disability can be visible or non-visible. Disability in relation to the DDA includes:

Physical; intellectual; psychiatric; sensory; neurological and learning disabilities as well as physical disfigurement.





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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 positive participation in early learning programs. 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.

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

THE APPROVED PROVIDER /NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

- obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) are met
- all staff, educators, students and visitors have knowledge of and adhere to this policy; understand and comply with the (DDA) including making reasonable adjustments to the program, practices and environment in collaboration with families and children
- all new employees are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity is considered to inform curriculum decision-making processes to provide an inclusive education
- Tours, questionnaires, completed enrolment forms and orientation visits are used to gather accurate and current information about children's additional needs and the current supports that may be in place and or required
- 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 (IDFM))
- that any barriers preventing a child's inclusion are identified and discussed with families prior to enrolling.
- they develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan and if required, Individual Support Plans in collaboration with the family, Inclusion Agency (IA) which will identify any barriers preventing a child's inclusion and implement strategies for inclusive practice.
- they seek assistance and financial funding from inclusive support agencies with the support of the family to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs
- educators may attend professional development opportunities and to network with professional agencies that are approved by Orchard ELC Head of Learning and Development or Head Office
- they access the Inclusion Support Portal (IS Portal) through PRODA





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- parents/guardians provide written consent for information about their child to be shared with relevant IA, IDFM and the Department if accessing support under the Inclusion Support Program
- families are encouraged to meet with the educators and Service Directors 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
- the Service works in partnership with Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) professionals, allied health professionals
- 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 Service by developing trusting relationships with 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/adjusted 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
 - 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.

EDUCATORS WILL:

Educators understand that as children grow and develop, self-regulation becomes an important aspect of social and emotional development as they begin to understand how their actions affect others.

We believe in providing clear, consistent guidelines for children's behaviour as part of a caring and trusting relationship with children and families to help them feel secure and self-confident. Children benefit from knowing that their environment is stable and that a competent adult is taking care of them.

- Creating a learning environments that are positive and supportive and provides developmentally appropriate experiences for children
- Implementing guidance strategies for building skills and strengthening positive behaviour based on age-appropriate behaviour expectations





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- Implementing strategies for guiding children's behaviour resulting in decreasing undesired behaviours.
- treat children equally and fairly and with respect
- create an inclusive program and environment, which is adaptable and supportive for all children to access and participate
- advocate for children's rights and their right to feel safe at all times.
- 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 children that have identified additional needs
- 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
- provide opportunities for all children to play and learn together, promoting cooperative, caring, and positive social behaviours.
- Challenging behaviours are documented and communicated with families in respectful conversations with families. This information will be kept confidential and in the individual child's file
- Strategies are implemented to re-direct a child who may be causing or about to cause harm to himself or herself, another child, or adult.
- Incidents may include a child who is kicking, spitting, biting, throwing furniture or toys, punching or hitting, or being disruptive.





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- Redirection may also include an incident where a child places him/herself in a dangerous situation, for example, climbing a fence or hiding in a potentially dangerous position. Safety is a priority, and this may mean using physical re-direction in which an educator will actually remove the child from the harmful situation if required.
- It may be necessary to remove other children from the area while the child calms down.
- Families are notified and the incident/behaviour is addressed sensitively. In an instance where a child or children's safety has been jeopardised, parents are required to sign an Incident Report
- Should the behaviour continue, the child's behaviour is observed and carefully documented. Additional information is collated related to the context and behaviour guidance strategies implemented.

INCLUSION SUPPORT PROGRAM (ISP)

- To assist in the provision of an inclusive environment for children with additional needs, our Service may apply for additional support through the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) if the eligibility requirements are met.
- The nominated supervisor 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 (See: Guide to Strategic Inclusion Plan)

HIGH POTENTIAL AND GIFTED CHILDREN Our Service will collaborate with families to support the needs gifted and talented children. We will:

- respect the uniqueness of each child
- acknowledge the characteristics of high potential and gifted and talented 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

ENHANCED TRANSITION TO SCHOOL PLANNING

- Our Service 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 and in collaboration with all key stakeholders
 - where possible, involve the child in making choice during the transition process





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- liaising with key representatives 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

FAMILIES WILL:

- work collaboratively with our Service
- share information about their child's specific needs prior to enrolment, such as their interests, identified additional needs, behaviour concerns, language barriers, 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 and solutions currently implementing in the home environment.
- 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
- consent to our Service 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 all Orchard Early Learning Centre policies should the safety of other children and staff be compromised.
- Parents/guardians unwilling to cooperation with the Service regarding their child adverse behaviour support strategies may jeopardise their child's enrolment.
- Understand that Orchard Early Learning Service has a duty to care to protect the children enrolled and/staff in their employment from any foreseeable risk of harm. Therefore if we determine that the potential enrolment poses any risk for the service we reserve the right to reduce hours of attendance, limit days of attendance, pause enrolments, reject or cancel the enrolment of a child.
- *Please refer to Child Behaviour Guidance Policy & Termination of Care Policy
- Ensure that communication with our team members remain respectful. Please refer to Ethical Conduct for Families Policy.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The Additional Needs Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, educators, staff and management.





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RELATED LEGISLATION, GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS

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.





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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
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed

RELATED LEGISLATION

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Inclusion Policy Behaviour Guidance Policy Parent Code of Conduct Policy Educational Program Policy * <i>Guide to Strategic Inclusion Plan</i>	Enrolment Policy Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy Medical Conditions Policy Orientation of Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
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SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2022). [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(DDA\) resources](#).
 Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).





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Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0.](#)

Australian Government Department of Education (2014) *Continuity of Learning: A resource to support effective transition to school and school aged care.*

Australian Government Department of Education. (2022) *Inclusion Support Program (ISP) Guidelines. Version 2.5 July 2023.*

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.](#)

Early Childhood Intervention Australia *National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention*

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023).

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>

Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations

POLICY REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	APRIL 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V10.4.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • updated Inclusion Support Program guidelines (2023) • sources checked and updated as required 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
APRIL 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • inclusion of Disability Discrimination Act (1992) referencing/recommendations for compliance • Continuous Improvement/Reflection section added 	APRIL 2024	

