

Additional Needs Policy

Including children with additional needs requires 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 and inclusion.

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 & Inclusion Policy Code of Conduct Policy Educational Program Policy Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy	Orientation of New Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Respect for Children Policy
--	---

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 its education and care at the Service. 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 Service.

In accordance with The National Quality Standard, our Service positively responds to and welcomes children with additional needs including those who:

- 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 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 with diverse origins, which require different responses. Supporting children with additional needs enables them to participate and feel included; this also helps promote their strengths and may reduce their risk of developing mental health difficulties. Strategies for supporting children with additional needs can differ significantly, because every child is unique.

IMPLEMENTATION

Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure

- 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.
- 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 verify the educational program and learning environment is most suited to each child with additional needs, including 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 colour is considered within the environment.
- 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.
- 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.
- Support Educators through providing professional development and opportunities to network with professional agencies to ensure Educators are meeting the needs of each individual child.
- 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 privacy and confidentiality for children and families is maintained.

Educators' will:

- Treat children equally and fairly.
- 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.
- 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 things such as sign language, the use of images, and/or learning key words in the child's home language.
- Where required or requested, 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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 all children to 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.
- Work with all families to meet children's developmental needs in order to build strengths and capabilities.
- Work collaboratively with health professionals and families together to discuss and plan to support children.
- Talk to children about differences and acceptance.
- Provide opportunities for all children to play and learn together, promoting cooperative, caring, and pro social behaviours.

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009).

Children's Services Central. Early Identification of Children with Additional Needs. (No longer available)

Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	April 2019	NEXT REVIEW DATE	April 2020
Additional Needs Policy MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rearranged the order of points for better flow Points added. Sources/references checked, corrected, updated, and alphabetised. Deleted 'procedures' appendix and added relevant info to body of policy. 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor terminology and grammatical adjustments Included the list of related policies 	April 2019	
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the National Quality Standards references to comply with revised standards 	April 2018	
April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor changes and additions made 	April 2018	