

Additional Needs Policy

NQS

QA3	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.

QA5	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.

QA6	6.2.1	Transitions - Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
	6.2.2	Access and participation - Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

National Regulations

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups
	157	Access for parents

EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported
	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities
	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

Aim

To provide each child regardless of their additional needs and abilities with a supportive and inclusive environment that allows them to fully participate in service activities and programs.

Related Policies

Child Protection Policy
Continuity of Education and Care Policy
Enrolment Policy
Orientation for Children Policy
Relationships with Children Policy
Health, Hygiene and Safe Food Policy
HIV AIDS Policy
Immunisation and Disease Prevention Policy
Infectious Diseases Policy
Medical Conditions Policy

Implementation

Our service positively responds to and welcomes children with additional needs. This includes children who:

- are Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders
- are recent arrivals in Australia
- have a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- 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 have different causes and require different responses. Any child may have additional needs, and these may be temporary or for a lifetime.

Learning Environments

Indoor and outdoor environments and equipment will be designed or adapted (to the extent reasonably practical given service financial constraints) to ensure access and participation by every child, including those with additional needs. For example:

- learning materials, resources and equipment (eg books, games, music, role plays, drama) will reflect the positive inclusion of children with additional needs in the local and broader community
- the environment may be adapted to meet the needs of children with sensory sensitivities to pressure, texture, smell, noise or colour

Promoting Each Child's Ability

Educators understand their role is to support each and every child to reach their full potential. Some of the ways educators do this include:

- using the enrolment form to gather information about children with additional needs and encouraging families to update this information throughout the year
- developing a written individual support plan where appropriate in consultation with families
- encouraging each child to feel a sense of belonging at the service through positive interactions which help each child feel safe and secure and provide the foundation for rich and meaningful learning
- modelling respect for diversity in the community and helping children understand how a diverse population (eg physical, racial, religious and cultural) strengthens our communities
- providing accurate and appropriate information about the additional needs of others
- assisting all children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride
- presenting children with a wide range of resources that breakdown stereotypes and, for example, show men and women in non-traditional male/female roles within the home and the workplace, and disabled people engaged in work and community activities
- encouraging children to develop friendships with each other based on mutual trust and respect
- promoting awareness of cross-cultural and non-discriminatory practices in our curriculum
- developing a curriculum which is based on each child's interests, abilities, culture, experiences and ideas
- encouraging all families, including those from migrant and/or non-English speaking backgrounds, to contribute their knowledge and culture to the curriculum
- promoting fairness and equity to all children, and immediately taking action to address any inappropriate/unfair behaviour or exchanges between children
- meeting the verbal and non-verbal communication needs of each child, for example, by using relevant cues, sign language, key words in child's home language and visual displays.
- working with local schools to help each child transition. This may include sharing information about the additional needs of children where families consent
- attending regular professional development on inclusive practices and educating and caring for children with additional needs

Professional Support Services for Children

A child's best interests are met when educators work in partnerships with external support services/professionals. This will, for example, promote continuity of learning for each child. Educators and the Nominated Supervisor will support families in accessing appropriate support services or professionals where relevant, and will work in partnership with those services and/or professionals and families to ensure that learning environments and the curriculum meet each child's needs.

They will hold regular meetings with families and external services/professionals where relevant to evaluate documented plans and strategies prepared in consultation with families or provided by services/professionals.

In cases where families do not include educators in the child's external support arrangements, families are encouraged to pass on relevant information, and to share any service support plans with the child's medical practitioners and/or support services and professionals.

Partnerships with parents

It is also expected that parents will work in partnership with educators to ensure any child with a diagnosed or undiagnosed additional need receives the best possible support to achieve their potential and does not adversely affect the learning environment for other children at the service eg due to behaviour issues. This may involve accessing external professional health and support services.

Where parents do not wish to consult these professionals or work with educators in implementing measures which support their child, the Nominated Supervisor may suspend or terminate the child's enrolment.

Federal Government Inclusion Support Program (ISP)

Educators or the Nominated Supervisor will contact the State/Territory Inclusion Agency where appropriate for help with building our capacity and capability to provide and embed inclusive practice and address barriers to inclusion. Support may include:

- help to develop and/or review a tailored Strategic Inclusion Plan
- practical advice and strategies, including solutions to address particular barriers
- help to access the Specialist Equipment Library
- reviewing and endorsing applications to the Inclusion Development Fund to deal with a barrier the Inclusion Agency can't address

Funding categories include:

1. Subsidy for an Additional Educator

Per hour funding to centre based services to subsidise the employment of an Additional Educator where service may have children with ongoing high support needs (refer 'Guide to Social Security Law, 1.1.R.90 Recognised disability CA (child)') on the Department of Social Services' website. The extra educator works with other educators to meet all children's needs

2. Subsidy for Immediate/Time-Limited Support

Enables centre based services to immediately engage an Additional Educator for a limited time, while an alternative and more stable solution is being determined.

3. IDF – Innovative Solutions

Assists eligible services to fund innovative and flexible solutions to inclusion eg funding for:

- translating and interpreting services and/or bilingual workers to engage with parents and/or settle a child from a CALD background
- funding to purchase services from cultural experts eg Indigenous community elders, bicultural support workers

- funding for specialist advice on how to include a particular child, beyond the expertise of the Inclusion Agency eg advice from trauma or hearing specialist

Further details about the types of funding support, or other aspects of the ISP, can be found in the Inclusion Support Programme Guidelines -2016-2017 to 2018-2019 on the Department of Education and Training website.

Sources

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

National Quality Standard

Early Years Learning Framework

Inclusion Support Programme Guidelines -2016-2017 to 2018-2019 Department of Education and Training

Guide to Social Security Law, 1.1.R.90 Recognised disability CA (child) Department of Social Services

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Last reviewed: April 2021

Date for next review: April 2022