

# 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 and inclusivity.

## National Quality Standards (NQS)

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**

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
Interactions with children	
Relationships in groups	
Access for parents	

**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 authentic, ensuring that all children are treated equally and fairly and can 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:

- 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 are 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, 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 visual expectation of the environment 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.
- 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 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 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 discuss 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 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 Standard
- 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
Dec 2021

# Additional Needs Procedure

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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. Informing 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 always.