

## ADDITIONAL NEEDS POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

Supporting 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.

Northwest Community Childcare aims to provide flexible attendance options and vacation care options, and it is critical that our service works in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure specific consideration and adaptations allow children with additional needs access and participation. Our Service is committed to take into account children's social and cultural diversity, including learning styles, abilities and disabilities, to achieve positive experiences for children in our setting.

### NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREAS 1, 3, 5, 6		
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.
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.
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 that 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.
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.

<b>EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS</b>	
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 POLICIES

Providing a Child Safe Environment Confidentiality Enrolment Interactions with Children Behaviour Guidance	NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
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## PURPOSE

To 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 its education and care at the OSHC 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, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisors and management of the OSHC Service.

## DEFINITIONS

According to the Inclusion Support Program Guideline (Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment) July 2021, 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 OSHC service.

Additional needs may include children who:

- have a diagnosed disability or developmental delay- physical, sensory, intellectual, or autism spectrum disorder
- are presenting with challenging behaviours and/or behavioural or psychological disorders
- have a serious medical or health condition
- are presenting with trauma-related behaviours
- are Aboriginal 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 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 have equitable access to resources and participation. 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.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- completed enrolment forms are used to gather information about children's additional needs and supports that may be required
- equitable access is provided to support children with additional needs
- communication with families is consistent and supportive
- develop effective relationships with the school and the OSHC service to support the child
- they contact their local Inclusion Agency to access information and support about the Inclusion Support Program (see: [Inclusion Development Fund Manager](#) )
- they develop a *Strategic Inclusion Plan* in collaboration with the Inclusion Agency (IA), which will identify any barriers preventing a child's inclusion and implement strategies for improvement
- they seek assistance, training, and, where possible, financial funding from inclusive support agencies to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs
- educators are meeting the needs of each individual child by providing educators with targeted professional development and opportunities to network with professional agencies
- ⊖ 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 who will be working with the child to ensure an understanding of the child's needs and appropriate methods for communication and to ascertain those suitable resources and support are provided to both the family and the child
- the OSHC Service works in partnership with allied health professionals and families to verify that the educational program and learning environment is inclusive for each child with additional needs, including children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds
- specific plans and programs provided by external resource providers and professionals for children with additional needs are shared with educators, and copies are 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 of children and families are maintained
- the indoor and outdoor environment and equipment are 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 meet the individual needs of children with additional needs, disabilities or developmental delay
- children's sensory sensitivities to pressure, texture, smell, noise, or colour are considered within the environment.

### Educators will:

- treat children equally and fairly and with respect
- create an inclusive program that 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 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, the use of images, and/or learning keywords 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, health professionals and parents of the child and keep a copy in the child's individual record
- liaise with the school counsellor and other key personnel at the school to ensure consistent strategies are implemented for the child at the Service
- work with other professionals who play a role in supporting the child's development
- create a flexible environment that 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
- not judge or compare one child's development with another
- talk to children about differences and acceptance.
- provide opportunities for all children to play and learn together, promoting cooperative, caring, and social behaviours.

### **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 Supervisors and educators will refer to the Inclusion Support Guidelines and consult with families to submit an application. Applications would need to be submitted for the different types of care the child accesses through our Service (care during school terms and vacation care). The objectives of the Inclusion Support Program include:

- supporting the Service to increase its 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

### **Families will:**

- work collaboratively with our NWCC Services
- share information about their child's specific needs- their interests, 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
- 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 to inclusion and reasonable adjustments that may be required
- consent to NWCC accessing external professional support if required to assist educators to 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 our policies that should the safety of other children and staff be compromised, enrolment may be suspended or terminated.

### **Inclusion Support Supervisor**

Where this role exists in our services the Inclusion Support Supervisor will train staff to support children in a school aged care setting and provide them with support for individual/small groups of children with specific developmental needs/and or challenging behaviour.

*They will:*

- Supervise and assist staff to support children in the indoor and outdoor environment at the service to support inclusion and develop social skills.
- Supervise and assist staff to support individual children with a disability or social/emotional development need to achieve their goals.
- Assess and identify children with additional needs, fostering self-help strategies to encourage independence and self-reliance in the service environment.
- Liaising with staff, families and school to develop appropriate strategies for managing behaviour, monitoring behaviour, providing agreed rewards and consequences, responding to incidents of challenging behaviour and recording outcomes.
- Monitor all service documentation and records related to children with disabilities and additional needs.
- Assist staff to implement support plans to ensure the children and their needs are effectively supported at the service.

**SOURCE**

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

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2009) *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2011) *My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

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

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2021) *Inclusion Support Program (ISP) Guidelines. Version 2.3 July 2021*

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.

[http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ECA\\_Position\\_statement\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_web.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ECA_Position_statement_Disability_Inclusion_web.pdf)

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

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Amended 2018).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) (2011).

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

Guide to the National Quality Framework (2017) (amended 2020).

Revised National Quality Standard (2018).

**REVIEW**

<b>POLICY REVIEWED BY</b>	Courtney Tancred	Childcare Operations Coordinator	January 2024
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<b>VERSION NUMBER</b>	V1.2		



<p><b>MODIFICATIONS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updates to Inclusion Support Supervisor</li> </ul>	
<p><b>POLICY REVIEWED</b></p>	<p><b>PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b></p>
		<p>October 24</p>

