

EDUCATION AND CARE GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Inclusion in Education and Care Services

Introduction

Each child is an individual with many abilities and come from various backgrounds in our community. Cumberland Council's Education and Care services provide an inclusive environment that reflects cultural diversity, an anti-bias approach and gender equity for all children.

All services

- Children and families' needs will be assessed prior to enrolment and families will be offered care at an appropriate centre to achieve the best outcome for the child, families and educator. Council's Education and Care services will support the needs of all families where positions are available. Access to care will focus on the needs of the child and the service's ability to meet those needs.
- Should a concern arise affecting the safety of the children or educators, the Nominated Supervisor will discuss with the families their concerns and possible restrictions may be put in place.
- Educators need to be positive role models to all children and their families by showing them how to be accepting, respectful and inclusive of all children.
- Educators will respect all families regardless of their differences and this will be shown through creating inclusive programs and practices.
- Each child is an individual with varying abilities, interests and needs and will be provided with opportunities to express themselves, be stimulated, enriched and develop within an inclusive early childhood and school age care setting
- Educators will extend their knowledge, understanding and skills in regards to children with additional needs, by undertaking relevant training and by gathering as much information that will allow the educators to fully meet the child's needs whilst in care. This includes information from families, school teachers, therapists and other professionals involved with the child.
- Educators will be reflective practitioners in regards to their relationships with the individual child. Educators' and children's wellbeing are a priority at the service.
- The centre will support and implement activities and events within the program to provide awareness to children regarding social justice issues with, but not limited to, appropriate social cultural celebrations.
- All services will aim to become aware and critically reflect on their individual feelings and beliefs about other cultures and endeavour to overcome them by gaining an understanding of other cultures.
- The service will support bilingual and multilingual children to use home languages and encourage educators to be respectful of the entire group when exploring home language within the program and environment. Please note that the service does not tolerate offensive or obscene language within the service.

- Educators will engage in meaningful conversations with families to translate key words, to encourage a smooth transition into the centre.
- The environment at the service will reflect the needs of individual children and be modified where necessary. The learning environment will be inviting, stimulating, accessible and safe to maximise the child's development and full participation.
- All facets of the environment and programs will reflect cultures, both traditionally and in everyday life with the use of books, music, recipes, crafts, clothing, play equipment and posters.
- Each centre will respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the land through a physical Acknowledgment to Country in the foyer area.
- Children will be involved in Acknowledgement to Country where appropriate.
- Meetings will begin with Acknowledgement to Country.
- Educators will be aware of culturally appropriate methods of communication with Aboriginal families and children, encouraging the use of Aboriginal English when used by families and children.
- Educators will use language that is free from bias when communicating with children.
- Educators will encourage parents from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds to contribute knowledge of their own culture and share cultural experiences.
- Educators will use visual images that support children to have a positive self-identity.
- Experiences provided to the children will be monitored by educators to ensure that messages and images that are negative, stereotyped or bias are avoided.
- Educators need to have realistic expectations for children with additional needs in their care. In consultation with families and other professionals, achievable outcomes for the child will be developed, in accordance with the needs of the child.
- Individual written programs are developed for all children with a diagnosis. In 0-5 years they have short term objectives reviewed every 3 months and long term objectives reviewed every 12 months. In Out of School Hours Care (OOSH), a child information sheet is developed and reviewed quarterly.
- Specialised equipment that will assist educators and the child at the service, such as, mobility stools, standing frames, electronic devices or the board maker program for signage/ cards, are resourced by the Nominated Supervisor. Families can bring in specialised equipment as well.
- Open communication will be maintained at all times between educators, families and other professionals to gain a thorough understanding of the individual child.
- Educators are to network with support services, agencies, community groups and other educators to aid understanding and extend their knowledge on cultural diversity and child rearing practices.
- Educators are to respect all cultural and religious practices; however the educators need to ensure that the health and safety of the children are the main priorities.
- Information will be provided in a range of languages that represent the cultural diversity within the community.
- Educators will advocate for the rights of all children and treat children equitably and respectfully.

- An initial meeting will be held with the Nominated Supervisor and the family to discuss the child's background and care required. This meeting is used to gain a picture of the family and child's needs, expectations and to discuss options available to them.

Existing child (for School Holiday Care (SHC))

- During the last week of SHC, the Nominated Supervisor will discuss recommendations for the next SHC. At this time, the families will be given a booking form for the following SHC which will have a due date that families need to return the form by (usually week five of the next school term).
- After the due date, all forms are collated and days are allocated to the children depending on requests and the child's needs. Priority of access is to be remembered at this time. As the children are already existing children, the Nominated Supervisor will know their needs as well as the needs of the centre to ensure that inclusion is successful for all children.
- Once days are allocated, the families are informed and the Education and Care Support team at Council is notified.
- If a family returns the form after the due date, every effort to meet their requests will be made, however they may need to be offered any days that the centre can accommodate.
- If a child is already enrolled in a service without prior knowledge of the child's additional needs or they are newly diagnosed, the Nominated Supervisor will consider what further action is to be taken; e.g. an interview with the family to gather relevant information and discuss how best to support the child and the service.

Initial enrolment (LDC/ FDC/ OOSH)

The Nominated Supervisor may set conditions for enrolment based on the following information/ assessment of the child which may vary once the child is in care:

- days of attendance
- negotiated hours of attendance (e.g. school hours 9.00am to 3.00pm) are to support successful access of the child into the service
- attendance or non-attendance on excursions
- recommended service to attend and availability
- if specialised equipment is needed for the child.

To be able to successfully include the child into a service there needs to be sufficient staff to manage the child's needs in regards to the hours they will be attending. Ratios are deemed on a risk assessment of the environment.

Responsibilities of families

- Educators and families will communicate informally daily about the child's day.
- The Nominated Supervisor/FDC educator and family will communicate on a daily basis and, if needed, through an individual communication book or electronic communication for the child. The purpose being to record brief observations by educators.
- Families to provide opportunity for discussion with educators on the child's welfare at home.

- Families need to inform educators of any changes to the child that may affect their day.
- Families are to listen to the advice of the educators and follow through with suggestions at home, for such things as behaviour management strategies.
- Families are to keep educators involved with meetings with specialist agencies regarding transition to school or other programs the child is involved in.
- Families will be required to supply updated reports to the service as they receive them.
- Equipment that would be used at home or in the school environment should be made available to assist with day to day routines e.g. wheelchair.

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 2018, [Education and Care Services National Regulations: Part 4.5](#)
- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 2018, [National Quality Standards](#): Quality Areas 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 6.1, 6.2.1, 6.2.2

Further reading

- Department of Education - [Belonging, Being & Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#)
- Department of Education - [My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia](#)
- Cumberland Council’s Education and Care Guiding Principles:
 - Confidentiality
 - Medical Conditions

Implementation date: November 2019

Next review date: September 2019