

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

AIM

Inclusion is a right and every child has a right to be included and to participate in their community, irrespective of their race, religion and abilities (UNICEF, 2006). Inclusion happens when children are viewed as capable and valued contributors as opposed to having deficits that need to be fixed. Inclusion is about embracing our diversity as a strength and viewing each child at BHCK for their unique qualities.

We believe that every child has the right to participate meaningfully while learning and interacting in our program and routines of the day. We will acknowledge each child's abilities, strengths and interests, so that they are supported to be active members of the preschool environment and to experience positive learning outcomes.

RATIONALE

There is a large body of evidence that indicates that the relationships, interactions and experiences in children's early lives have a profound influence on their early brain development and future life outcomes and further evidence that high quality early childhood settings make a difference. BHCK is striving to provide an optimal learning environment for all children, regardless of their social, cultural, or ethical background or ability. Children with a disability are recognised as contributing members of our kindy and wider community. Research evidence indicates that children in inclusive programs generally do as well as children in specialised programs. There are benefits for children with and without disabilities, particularly with respect to their social development.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Board of Directors will:

- Where possible, maintain one member of staff that holds a post graduate qualification in inclusion.
- Ensure sufficient staffing levels are met in each class group to support the children needs, whilst maintaining and looking after staff wellbeing.

The Director and Inclusion Support Facilitator will:

- Work to build positive attitudes, beliefs and values about inclusion in the professional community.
- Liaise with each child's family and other stakeholders at enrolment and throughout the year to develop a good understanding of the 'whole child', this may include, but is not limited to, gathering of reports, telephone conversations and regular meetings.
- Ensure that each class has a balanced make up of children, including children with additional needs, but establishing class groups that still allow for the needs of all children to be met.

- Liaise with the Sector Capacity Building team at Lifestart to build on our inclusive knowledge and confidence to support children that are enrolled with additional support needs and their families.
- Ensure there is a community of learning where educators are sharing strategies and knowledge of specific children and their individual needs to support consistency, collaboration and shared knowledge to achieve best outcomes for children.
- Complete, or support class teachers to complete applications for High Learning Support Needs (HLSN) funding through the Disability and Inclusion Program (DIP) for each eligible child.
- Ensure that therapists working with children in the preschool environment have a valid WWCC Clearance on file.

Educators will:

- Continuously reflect on our practice and the environment to ensure barriers are overcome or minimised to enable inclusive access.
- Establish strong partnerships with families and community to empower supportive outcomes for all children.
- Request that therapists visiting children in the preschool, deliver therapy in the classroom or playground environments, valuing the social aspect to therapy while in the preschool setting.
- Use an inclusive program in which children's interests and strengths are used to support their growth and development. Every child will be recognised as an active agent in their own learning.
- Ensure every child's sense of identity will be respected and upheld. Our program and practices empower every child to experience a sense of belonging at preschool.
- Use a holistic and positive approach to teaching and learning.
- Build on and foster diversity. We will do this through building on each child's strengths and recognising and responding to any barriers to learning and participation.
- Embed cultural diversity including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in our program. Children will explore the diversity of culture, background and tradition and that diversity presents opportunity for choices and new understandings.
- Ensure that every child, irrespective of their needs will experience positive learning outcomes in the areas identified in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), namely that they have a strong sense of identity; are connected with and contribute to their world; have a strong sense of wellbeing; and are confident and involved learners and effective communicators.
- Pay regular attention to questions and raise topics to challenge and support children's development of dispositions critical to activism that will nurture critical thinking with open ended questions and foster each child's critical thinking about bias.
- Ensure an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be written, implemented, and evaluated for each child with identified needs.
- Participate in regular professional development opportunities to develop their knowledge to support children with a diverse range of skills and needs.



LINKS TO POLICIES

Interactions with Children

Enrolment and Orientation

Priority of Access

Staffing

Recruitment of Staff

LINKS

Early Years Learning Framework- Being, Belonging and Becoming

National Quality Standards- Quality Area 1.3: Assessment and Planning

Quality Area 3.2.1: Inclusive environment

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangement

Quality Area 5.1: Relationships between children and educators

Quality Area 6.2: Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Quality Area 7.1: Governance supports the operation of a quality service

Quality Area 7.2: Effective leadership build and promotes positive organisational culture and professional learning community

SOURCES

Early Childhood Australia- Statement on the inclusion of children in Early Education and Care.

UNICEF- The Convention of the Rights of the Child

The Early Years Learning Framework Australia

The Learning Area- Lifesart: Sector Capacity Building