

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

Additional Support Needs



Introduction

To be responsible for each child irrespective of their needs and abilities with a supportive and inclusive environment that sanctions each child to fully participate in their education and care at Kootingal & District Preschool. 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.

Supporting children with additional needs requires educators to extend upon the strategies they already use in providing quality education and care for children. It is imperative for educators to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's interests and abilities and implement an inclusive and equitable learning environment that supports their individual needs.

Inclusion is stipulated in the Early Years Learning Framework as 'taking into account all children's, social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographical location) in curriculum decision making processes.' Belonging, Being and Becoming (V2.0, 2022, p.66).

Goals – What are we going to do?

According to the Inclusion Support Program Guidelines (Australian Department of Education September 2023), 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 Early Childhood Education and Care service.

Additional needs may include children who:

- have a disability or developmental delay - physical, sensory, intellectual, or autism spectrum disorder (including awaiting diagnosis)
- are presenting with challenging behaviours and/or behavioural or psychological disorders
- have a serious medical or health condition
- are presenting with trauma-related behaviours

Meeting the needs and requirements of:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children
- children from refugee or humanitarian backgrounds
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse background
- may also require specific considerations, such as cultural support, to ensure that these children are able to participate fully in ECEC services and experience positive outcomes

Our preschool will work in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure specific consideration and adaptations/adjustments allow children with additional needs access and participation and achieve positive learning outcomes.

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.

Strategies – To achieve our goals

Additional Support Needs Procedure

Children with additional support needs require support by using specialised strategies catering for their specific needs or circumstances. When planning for children with high support 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 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. Acquainting educators with, and sharing 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 also include things such as sign language and or learning key words in the child's home language.
5. Developing an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) 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 to primary school. We are open to sharing information about the additional needs of children to promote continuity of learning.
11. Remaining positive, unbiased and authentic at all times.

Our Service will promote and support enhanced transition to school programs for children with additional needs by:

- starting the planning for transition to school aged care early and in collaboration with all key stakeholders
- involve the child in making choice during the transition process
- liaising with key people representatives at the school and other support services to ensure key dates for applications for support are noted
- sharing information about the child’s strengths and completing Transition to School Statements
- supporting reciprocal visits to strengthen the transition to school for children and families
- provide continuity of learning between our Service and school aged care.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met ➤ Child safety and wellbeing are the paramount consideration in all inclusion planning and decision making ➤ Obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) are met ➤ All staff, educators, students and visitors have knowledge of and adhere to this policy; understand and comply with the (DDA) including making reasonable adjustments to the program, practices and environment in collaboration with families and children ➤ All new employees are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process and ongoing professional practice ➤ Support is provided to educators to make reasonable adjustments to enable children with disability access and participate in the service on the same basis as others ➤ All staff, educators and support workers complete mandatory national child safety training and refresher training every 2 years ➤ Children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity is considered to inform curriculum decision-making processes to provide an inclusive education ➤ 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 ➤ Ensure they have a thorough understanding of the NDIS plan for each child (if applicable) and assist to help achieve goals and build skills and independence ➤ Ensure they contact their local Inclusion Agency to access information and support about the Inclusion Support Program ➤ Ensure that any barriers preventing a child’s inclusion are identified and strategies to make improvements implemented ➤ Ensure 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 understand their obligations under offences relating to inappropriate conduct, including grooming, coercion or behaviour that causes harm ➤ Ensure educators are meeting the needs of each individual child, by providing educators with targeted professional development and opportunities to network with professional agencies

- Ensure parents/guardians provide written consent for information about their child to be shared with the Department if accessing support under the Inclusion Support Program
- Ensure families are encouraged to meet with the educators who will be working with the child to ensure an understanding of the child's needs, appropriate methods for communication, and to ascertain that suitable resources and support is provided to both the family and the child
- Ensure the service works in partnership with Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) professionals, allied health professionals and families to verify the educational program and learning environment is inclusive for each child with additional needs, including children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Ensure specific plans and programs provided by external resource providers and professionals for children with additional needs are shared with educators and copies filed in the child's individual record
- Ensure 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
- Ensure inclusive strategies and practices are embedded in daily routines and play based learning
- Ensure the indoor and outdoor environment and equipment is designed or adapted/adjusted to ensure access and participation for all children, supporting the inclusion of children with additional needs. This may include the use of:
 - portable ramps
 - use of standing frames and support swings
 - specialised inclusion toys such as sensory or switch toys
 - specialised furniture such as chairs, tables and positioning equipment
 - communication charts and Auslan dictionaries
 - resources and books in languages other than English to support Indigenous children and children from linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure the program and curriculum are inclusive and meet the individual needs of children with additional needs, disability or developmental delay.
- Ensure children's sensory sensitivities to pressure, texture, smell, noise, or colour are considered within the environment.
- The service works with external professionals and families to ensure the educational program and learning environment are most suited to each child with additional support needs as well as children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds. We will keep a copy of any specific plans or instructions provided by external healthcare providers and professionals for children with additional support needs.
- Support educators through professional development and networking with professional agencies to ensure educators are meeting the needs of each child's needs.
- 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 confidentiality for children and families is maintained.
- Sensory sensitivities and individual regulation needs are considered.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure the safety of all children is considered and if adjustments to childrens hours are required or cessation of care is required then these requirements are enforced.
Early Childhood Educators/ Responsible Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treat children equally and fairly, 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 support 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, fair and unfair behaviour. ➤ Work with other professionals who play a role in supporting the child’s development. ➤ 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 ➤ Seek specific professional intervention and training in order to meet the individual child’s needs. ➤ Implement programming experiences and activities, that are inclusive for all children to access, explore and participate ➤ Engage with NSW Dept of Education Disability and Inclusion Program (DIP), and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) ➤ Listen carefully to all children’s concerns and discuss issues of inclusion and exclusion, and fair and unfair behaviour ➤ Develop an ILP 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. ➤ Talk to children about differences and acceptance ➤ Provide opportunities for all children to play and learn together, promoting cooperative, caring, and social behaviours. ➤ Not judge or compare one child’s development with another
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Notify the service of any requirements their child may require to participate fully in the preschool environment ➤ Update the service regarding any changes that may occur. ➤ Work collaboratively with our service ➤ 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 for inclusion and reasonable adjustments that may be required ➤ Consent to our service accessing external professional support if required to assist educators 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 ECCMS 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.
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Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 12 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with Regulation 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Links with other policies:

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Interactions with Children

Child Protection

Code of Conduct for Staff

Participation of Volunteers and Students

Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

Enrolment and Orientation

Privacy and Confidentiality

Anti Bias and Inclusion

Positive Behaviour

Related Legislation:

NQS

Quality Area 1		Educational Program and Practice
Element	1.1.1	Approved learning framework
Quality Area 3		Physical Environment
Standard	3.1	<i>Design</i>
Element	3.1.1	Fit for purpose
Element	3.2.1	Inclusive environment
Element	3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning
Quality Area 5		Relationships with children
Standard	5.1	<i>Relationships between educators and children</i>
Element	5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions
Element	5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child
Quality Area 6		Collaborate Partnerships with Families and Communities
Standard	6.1	<i>Supportive relationships with families</i>
Element	6.1.1	Engagement with the service
Element	6.1.2	Parents views are respected
Standard	6.2	<i>Collaborative partnerships</i>
Element	6.2.2	Access and participation

National Regulations

Reg	155	Interactions with children
Reg	156	Relationships in groups
Reg	157	Access for parents
Reg	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg	170	Policies and procedures are to be followed

Sources:

- 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
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2022). Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) resources.
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Guide to the National Quality Framework.
- Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0.
- 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.
- Early Childhood Intervention Australia National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

- Education and Care Services National Regulations

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