



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Catholic Early Learning and Care supports the principles of equity through implementing inclusive practices.

The inclusive practices of educators, and the partnerships they form with each child and their families, have a significant effect on each child's access, participation and success in learning. Educators' attitudes, beliefs and values about inclusion are key factors for successful inclusion. Children thrive when families, educators, local schools and the wider community work together in partnership to support their access, inclusion and participation.

Guide to the National Quality Framework (ACECQA) – Element 6.2.2

Inclusive practices underpin each service's philosophy. A culturally inclusive environment requires mutual respect, open communication and self-reflection; it builds relationships with the community and considers the social, physical, emotional and cultural needs of individuals and groups.

There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one member suffers, all members suffer, if one member is honoured, all members share this joy. You then are the body of Christ and each one of you is part of it. [1 Cor 12:25-27]

2. APPLICATION

This procedure applies to all Catholic Early Learning and Care Services in the Diocese of Cairns.

3. PROCEDURE

Through inclusive practices, children can:

- participate fully in the program to the best of their ability
- feel safe from prejudice, abuse and unfair criticism.
- interact with others and develop an understanding of cultural awareness and diversity.

Educators enact and reflect on inclusive practices by:

- initiate thoughtful and informed curriculum decisions.
- partnering authentically with families, staff, community and other professionals
- creating supportive learning environments.

- adapting an inclusive service philosophy

Service Responsibility:

- To create an environment that promotes an inclusivity, diversity and equity and to develop programs that support this.
- To regularly assess the physical environment for inclusivity of access and make changes in an environment where appropriate.
- To adopt a zero-tolerance approach to behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.
- To celebrate all cultures through their program and provide children with a variety of experiences from a range of social, cultural, linguistic and ability backgrounds.
- To provide Interpreter information for non-English speaking families.
- To provide families with opportunities to take an active role in decision making within the service.

Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued

The NQF [National Quality Framework] is underpinned by a commitment to 'Closing the Gap' and acknowledges Australia is a nation of great diversity, and an ancient land that has been cared for by Indigenous Australians for many thousands of years. Education and care services have a shared responsibility to contribute to building a better society and sustainable environment and to support children, families, colleagues and the local community to understand, respect and value diversity. Educators take every opportunity to extend children's understanding of their local context and of their wider world. Educators respectfully engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to explore how to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the philosophy of the setting, their planning and implementation of curriculum.

Through all aspects of their practice, educators challenge stereotyping and bias. They find sensitive and respectful ways to negotiate tensions that may arise, for instance, because of differing values, beliefs and expectations within the local context of the service, and between the local context and the broader contexts of Australian society.

Guide to the National Quality Framework (ACECQA)

The service will:

- Collaborate with communities, families and employees in the development and implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Recognise and celebrate the unique giftedness that Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children and their families bring to the community.
- Involve Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in educational decision making.
- Promote an awareness of and respect for the cultural diversities, spirituality, values and traditions of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Include Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum.
- Ensure staff have access to Cross Cultural Awareness Programs as part of their Professional Development
- Seek assistance and support from Aboriginal staff and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in the Diocese and from the local Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The service will promote and celebrate First Nations cultures, through practices such as:

- Displaying art and images of First Nations people in everyday contemporary situations.
- Incorporating First Nations resources within the educational program.
- Programming experiences that reflect First Nations culture

- Embedding First Nations perspectives in all aspects of practice.
- Inviting local elders to share knowledge and stories and building authentic and ongoing relationships.
- Where practicable, flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to promote cultural safety.
- Investigating traditional names and language and recognising them at each service
- Including Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country before meetings or training sessions.

Equity, Inclusion and Diversity

The NQF [National Quality Framework] recognises all children’s capacity and right to succeed regardless of diverse circumstances, cultural background and abilities. Inclusion is acknowledged as an approach where diversity is celebrated. It requires educators to hold high expectations for the learning, development and wellbeing of all children, recognising that every child treads an individual learning path and will progress in different and equally meaningful ways. In recognising each child’s experience of learning and development, educators implement responsive, equitable, individualised opportunities, additional support and reasonable adjustments if barriers to success are identified.

Guide to the National Quality Framework (ACECQA)

Inclusion Support:

Inclusive practice is a key aspect of quality early learning and care provision. Services need to ensure they understand and are sensitive to the complex issue of many families with children with additional needs who have the protected right to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

Children with Additional Needs:

Parents are requested to provide comprehensive and accurate information, so that our services might effectively support their child.

- Families will be given access to resources and support networks within the community.
- The service will complete a Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan where applicable.
- The Nominated Supervisor along with educators will develop a strategic inclusion plan which recognises and supports the needs of the child.

Early Learning

On receipt of the enrolment form and prior to confirmation of enrolment, the Nominated Supervisor will meet with the Parents/Carers to determine what assistance and inclusion support will benefit their child.

Parents may be asked to bring their child for “stay and play” sessions to assess their needs prior to enrolment.

In some cases, children may be required to start with limited days/hours so their inclusion in the program can be effectively supported.

In the event that the service cannot effectively and safely meet the needs of the child, parents will be invited to a further meeting to discuss options and support.

OSHC

Whilst all effort will be made to ensure a variety of Vacation Care experiences, participation in certain Vacation Care events may be limited in order to ensure the safety of all children. Parents will be advised in advance if this is the case.

Educators' Responsibility:

Educators must ensure that their interactions with children:

- Promote equity regardless of gender, race, culture or difference and reflect this in their program and language.
- Encourage all children to develop to their full potential regardless.
- Ensure that their language and daily practices are inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- Self-evaluate and monitor their biases concerning gender, stereotypes or other differences between children or adults.
- Undertake professional development.
- Uphold the CELC Code of Conduct
- Are inclusive of all lifestyles and models when discussing family structures with children.
- Provide inclusive resources, experiences and materials.
- Recognise the emotional needs of children resulting from trauma, abuse or grief and seek support where necessary
- Support the full engagement of children with additional needs.
- Respect the differences of families in their parenting approach.
- Be aware of all children and educators with specific medical conditions.

CELC Management:

- Support staff in their professional development opportunities to ensure the provision of inclusive programs.
- Assess the centre documents and communications to ensure they are inclusive.
- Ensure all enrolment policies and practices are inclusive.
- Provide opportunity for parents/guardians and educators to contribute to the review of the policy.
- Ensure all equipment and resources purchased are inclusive.
- Include in the staff orientation, information in regard to the service's commitment to inclusive practices.

4. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against a person who is found to have breached the requirements contained within this document. Action taken will depend on the nature and circumstance of each breach and could include: an official warning and note on the individual's personnel file; a formal written and/or verbal apology; counselling; demotion; transfer; or suspension or dismissal for very serious matters.

5. ENQUIRIES

Catholic Early Learning and Care Executive Director - admin@cclc.catholic.org.au

6. SEE ALSO

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

- The National Quality Standards for Education and Care Services 2018
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 2006
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 2007
- Privacy Act 1988
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Amendment 2014
- Code of Conduct
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 Amendment 2013
- Guide to the National Quality Framework January 2025

7. APPROVAL



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Date: 4/03/2025