

# Inclusion Policy



<b>Document Title</b>	NQS5.38 Inclusion Policy	<b>Version</b>	2a
<b>Date Approved</b>	January 2024	<b>Date for Review</b>	September 2024
<b>Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.</b>			
DCC Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children			

## 1. Policy Statement

River Region Early Education advocates for every child's right to be valued as an individual and as a contributing member of their family, centre, community and society. Our centre is a child safe organisation where there is a focus on creating a culture to prevent harm to children, this also guides our practice.

In addition, our centre will ensure that every child has access to, and participates meaningfully in, high quality early childhood education that is aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## 2. Rationale

We believe that all children have the right to experience high quality education and care. Additionally that children with a disability have the same rights as all children and additional rights because of their disability. They share with all children the right to be valued as individuals and as contributing members of families, communities and society.

Our educators will:

- Understand the needs, interests and abilities of all children that attend our organisation.
- Ensure children and provided opportunities to participate to their full potential. Equity will be upheld, and diverse needs taken into account.
- Promote a sense of value and belonging for every child and family at the service.
- Continue to review and develop strategies to support the inclusion of children with complex needs.
- Overcome barriers to inclusion for individual children to enable them to participate meaningfully in, and experience positive outcomes from, the program.
- Create a learning environment that is safe and secure and enables children to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
- Work in partnership with families to create learning opportunities that recognise children's needs, unique abilities and emerging capabilities.
- Engage in ongoing professional learning to develop inclusive practices.
- Access professional expertise to support children and families to participate in all programs.
- Access relevant funding and support services to assist in the delivery of inclusive programs.

## 3. Definitions

**Inclusion** — it is acknowledged that 'inclusion' in the broader context includes children of culturally and linguistic diversity and children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

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backgrounds as well as children with a disability. For this position statement however the term 'inclusion' focuses more narrowly on children with a disability.

**Support professional** — refers to people with a wide range of qualifications and experience including inclusion support facilitators, early childhood special educators, therapists, psychologists, social workers, welfare workers and family systems therapists.

## 4. Guidelines

River Region Early Education will demonstrate:

- Program philosophies that reflect shared assumptions about inclusion, the valuing of diversity, collaboration and partnership and what constitutes high quality inclusive practices.
- The commitment to review, identify and respond to inclusion barriers.
- Leadership capacity to support collaborative approaches in building strong and reciprocal relationships with families and professionals to plan for the individual child and family.
- Support for services to provide the opportunity for all children to be active members of the centre community.
- A commitment to the principles of equity and access where every child can experience high quality early childhood education and feel safe, nurtured, valued and heard.
- Responsive and adaptable service environments that will be inclusive for all children.
- Concepts of belonging, being and becoming, where children and families are welcomed, accepted, valued and respected as members of a learning community.
- An expectation that decision making, with regard to the care and education of every child, is a shared responsibility between families, River Region Early Education and other professionals. The service understands that parents, carers and other important people in a child's life have the primary responsibility for raising their children.
- A commitment to building and maintaining collaborative relationships with community agencies and other early childhood professionals to support the inclusion of all children.
- Engagement in critical reflection and professional learning about cultural competence, inclusive beliefs and practices.
- A commitment to building and maintaining professional networks to facilitate capacity building across the organisation.
- Responsive programming strategies that:
  - Honour an inclusive culture and value diversity,
  - Involve partnership with children, families and support agencies,
  - Acknowledge community and cultural strengths,
  - Represent the complex nature of inclusive practices,
  - Are intentional, purposeful and represent the individuality of each child,
  - Provide access to resources that will support inclusion, and
  - Promote diverse ways of connecting and engaging with each child.

### a) Children with additional needs

Children with additional needs and their families are valued and including as members of the community at River Region Early Education.

Children with additional needs include those who:

- Have a disability.

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- Have challenging behaviours.
- Have specific medical needs.
- Are gifted or talented.

For any child with an identified need, the service will endeavour to meet the child/s needs, or which the service becomes aware, unless in the service opinion is not reasonably practicable. Within funding limitations, the service must ensure it is able to cater for all the children in its care.

In order to provide appropriate education and care for all children, the service must have access to relevant information about the child with additional needs. This may include reports from paediatricians, speech pathologists, occupational therapists or early intervention providers. This will be provided as part of the enrolment process. Families will be asked to complete the *NQS 5.38 A1 Additional Needs Information form*.

Furthermore, if the child develops additional needs during the service attendance, the care giver must:

- Notify the nominated supervisor,
- Describe the needs,
- Seek and provide any written assessments,
- Cooperate in all ways to assist the service in seeking additional funding to support the child.

River Region Early Education will undertake the following actions if there is a child with an additional need:

1. Have a one-on-one meeting with the family at enrolment or when an additional need is identified.
2. Be proactive and communicate with the care giver regarding behaviour or additional needs.
3. Refer the child to an Early Intervention provider (currently Intereach) following permission from the care giver. The referral form can be found here: <http://www.intereach.com.au/service/early-childhood-early-intervention-ecei-loddon/>.
4. Advocate for quarterly team meetings with all relevant practitioner/s who may work with the child and care givers. This enhances collaboration.
5. Ensure that all children with additional needs have an *Individual Learning Plan* which has been developed in conjunction with the care giver and relevant practitioner/s. This may involve other practitioners visiting the service whilst the child is in service. A copy of the *NQS 5.38A3 Individual Learning Plan* is located in Story Park.

During the child's attendance, a need may be identified for the service to access additional Commonwealth or State inclusion funding to be able to provide the child extra support.

Current funding includes:

- Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) for childcare subsidy services
- Disability and Inclusion Program (DIP) for preschool funded services

The additional funding the service receives generally goes towards funding an additional educator or hours in the child's room. The educator will not necessarily work on a one-on-one basis with the child, however, will increase the number of educators in the staff team to support the inclusion of all children.

### b) Request for families to engage therapists

River Region Early Education values collaboration. When there are early intervention educators or external professionals (e.g., private practitioners or those employed through the National Disability Insurance Scheme) working with children or commence working with children during a time when they are attending River Region Early Education, and the caregiver requests the professional to attend the service to provide therapy or support the child, it will remain the right of the River Region Early Education service to determine suitability for this to occur. If this situation should arise, the care giver must:

- Complete a request outlining details of the request for a therapist or additional carer to attend the service.
- Complete a *NQS 5.38 A2 Permission to share child information*.
- This cannot be put in place without the approval of the Nominated Supervisor
- The therapist will complete *NQS5.38 A4 'Memorandum of Understanding'* that sets out the parameters of the arrangement- in that they will adhere to all relevant policies and procedures. The therapist will also need to have a Working with Children check sighted by the service.
- This would be required when the therapist is providing therapy on an ongoing basis.

### c) EVALUATION

We will continue to advocate for a strong culture of inclusion throughout the organisation. We will regularly review its capacity to demonstrate inclusive values, collaborative and respectful relationships with children, families and support agencies and a commitment to relevant and innovative professional learning.

### d) Resources and references

- A guide to the Child Safe Standards, Office of the Children's Guardian
- ECA position statement on the inclusion of children with a disability in early childhood education and care.
- Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments (2009), *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework*.
- Early Childhood Australia (2016), *Code of Ethics*. Retrieved from: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/publications/eca-code-ethics](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/publications/eca-code-ethics)
- Early Childhood Australia and Early Childhood Intervention Australia (2012), *Position statement on the inclusion of children with disability in early childhood education and care*. [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)
- Human Rights Commission and Early Childhood Australia (2015), *Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015–2018)*.
- United Nations (2006), *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved 2016, from: [www.hreoc.gov.au/disabilityrights/convention.htm](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disabilityrights/convention.htm)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (1990), *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)* *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008)* Retrieved 2016, from: [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)

## 5. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

<b>Legislation</b>	
<b>Education and Care Services National Regulation</b>	
74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator – h) any special considerations for the child, for example any cultural, religious or dietary requirements or additional needs
<b>National Quality Standards</b>	
1.3.1	Each child’s learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.
5.1.2	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2.1	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
<b>Child Safe Standards</b>	
4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes</b>	
1	Children have a strong sense of identity
2	Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4	Children are confident and involved learners
5	Children are effective communicators
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Principles</b>	
	Secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships
	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion, and high expectations
<b>Early Years Learning Framework Practices</b>	
	Responsiveness to children

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	Cultural responsiveness
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## 6. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments
NQS5.38 A1	Inclusion and Support Form
NQS5.38 A2	Permission to share child information
NQS5.38 A3	Individual Learning Plan
NQS5.38 A4	Memorandum of Understanding

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents
NQS7.45	Code of Conduct Policy

## 7. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS5.38	Inclusion Policy	1	September 2018	September 2020
NQS5.38	Inclusion Policy	2	September 2021	September 2024
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