

 Woy Woy Peninsula Community Childcare		
<h2 style="margin: 0;">Inclusion and Equity Policy</h2>		
Date adopted: September 2023		
Date last reviewed: September 2023	Reviewed by: Board of Management.	Date of next review: September 2025

<b>Policy context:</b> This policy relates to:	
National Quality Standards.	Standard 6.2 <i>Collaborative partnerships</i> Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing. Element 6.2.2 <i>Access and participation</i> Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
Legislation/Act.	Start Strong - Priority of Access Guidelines NSW Dept. Education

<b>Documents related to this policy</b>	
Related policies	Transition to School Policy
Forms or other organisational documents	Inclusion Support Plan Individual Education Plan Templates Communication books
References	"Who's Going to Teach My Child" Department of Education and Training 2008 "Strengthening Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood Intervention Services: Best Practice Guide" ECIA NSW/ACT 2014. "Statement on the inclusion of every child in early childhood education and care." Early Childhood Australia

<b>Policy Review:</b>	
Policy review frequency: This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Organisations Review Policy.	Responsibility for review: The Board of Management.
Where appropriate staff will be part of the review process.	
Documentation and communication: Policy documentation to be held in Policy and Procedure manuals. Where appropriate copies of new or reviewed policies will be given to staff, volunteers and families.	

## Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines to: ensure all adults and children at WWPCCC (see definitions) are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, level of ability, additional needs, family structure or lifestyle promote inclusive practices and ensure the successful participation of all children at WWPCCC.

## Policy Statement

WWPCCC is committed to:

- acknowledging and respecting the rights of all children to be provided with and participate in a quality early childhood education and care program

- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices
- creating a sense of belonging for all children, families and staff, where diverse identities, backgrounds, experiences, skills and interests are respected, valued and given opportunities to be expressed/developed
- ensuring that programs are reflective of, and responsive to, the values and cultural beliefs of families using the service, and of those within the local community and broader society
- working to ensure children are not discriminated against on the basis of background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, level of ability or additional needs, family structure or lifestyle
- ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease or blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to Definitions)
- upholding the values and principles of Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and Early Childhood Intervention Australia's (ECIA) Position Statement on the Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Early Childhood Education and Care (refer to Sources)
- providing all children with the opportunity to access programs at the service, and recognising that all families are unique and that children learn in different ways and at different rates
- consistently updating and supporting the knowledge, skills, practices and attitudes of staff to encourage and ensure inclusion and equity
- complying with current legislation including the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Equal Opportunity Act 2010, Disability Act 2006 and Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001.

## Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of WWPCCC.

## Procedures

### The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that service programs are available and accessible to families from a variety of backgrounds
- encouraging collaborative, family-centred practice (refer to Definitions) at the service
- providing families with information about the role of inclusive practice in achieving positive outcomes for all children, the key values underpinning inclusive practice and the support options available for children attending WWPCCC
- working with individual families to determine the needs of their child and facilitating the inclusion of both the child and the family into the service
- ensuring that educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (Early Years Learning and Framework for Australia)
- ensuring that the enrolment process is fair and equitable, and facilitates access for all children (refer to Enrolment and Orientation Policy)
- tailoring the orientation process to meet the individual needs of children and families (refer to Enrolment and Orientation Policy)
- considering barriers to participation in service programs and activities, and developing strategies to overcome these
- considering options to provide appropriate physical infrastructure, staffing and resources to facilitate the inclusion of all children at the service ensuring that staff have access to appropriate and accredited professional development activities that promote a positive understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity, and provide skills to assist in implementing this policy

- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to Code of Conduct Policy and Social Justice - Interactions with Children Policy)
- considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at WWPCCC and removing these barriers wherever possible (accessing ACCS for long day care placements)
- ensuring that all eligible families are supported to access Child Care Subsidy (refer to Definitions and Fees Policy), including families with concession cards, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, and refugee and asylum seeker families
- using language services to assist with communication where required, considering the employment of a multilingual worker/s to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families
- working with the Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader and educators to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to Definitions)
- accessing Inclusion Support Services (refer to Definitions) and Preschool Inclusion Support Packages (refer to Definitions) for children with disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns, where required
- where practicable, accessing resources, support and professional development to facilitate inclusion of children with additional needs who are ineligible for specific support packages
- working with specialised services and professionals (e.g. Early Childhood Intervention Services and inclusion support agencies – refer to Definitions and Sources) to provide support and services for families and children experiencing severe disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns
- ensuring that all eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children known to Child Protection are supported to access the Early Start Kindergarten program (refer to Definitions)
- accessing support from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion Hub where required
- implementing appropriate programs and practices to support vulnerable children and families, including working co-operatively with relevant services and/or professionals (e.g. Brighter Futures), where required (refer to Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy and Child Protection Policy)
- ensuring that service programs are inclusive of children with medical conditions, including anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy (refer to Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy)
- ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to Definitions), illness or medical condition
- ensuring that any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice are dealt with in an appropriate manner (refer to Addressing Complaints Policy)
- ensuring that all policies of WWPCCC, including the Confidentiality Policy, are adhered to at all times.

### **The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:**

- being aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to Code of Conduct Policy and Interactions with Children Policy)
- identifying children who may be disadvantaged, have additional needs, or be at risk of discrimination/exclusion, and being aware of the support/resources required to ensure that these children are included in service programs
- consulting with families and liaising with the Approved Provider to access support/resources for individual children, where required
- ensuring that parents/guardians are consulted, kept informed and provide written consent, where individualised programs, action, support or intervention are planned and provided for their child (e.g. the Preschool Field Officer Program and Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages – refer to Definitions)

- developing an educational program that is reflective of the service's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion (EYLF – refer to Sources)
- ensuring that the program provides opportunities for all children to participate and interact with one another
- using language services to assist with communication, where required working with the Approved Provider and educators to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to Definitions)
- using family-centred practice (refer to Definitions) and working collaboratively with staff, parents/guardians, specialist services and other professionals to implement the program at the service and provide individualised support for children, where required
- responding to the needs and concerns of parents/guardians, and providing support and guidance, where appropriate
- providing information to families about the support available to assist children, including:
  - Inclusion Support Services
  - Disability Inclusion Program
  - language services
- providing support and guidance to educators/staff, where required
- ensuring that service programs are inclusive of children with medical conditions, including anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy (refer to Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy)
- ensuring that individualised programs incorporate opportunities for regular review and evaluation, in consultation with all people involved in the child's education and care
- providing opportunities for families to contribute to the program
- notifying the Approved Provider of any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice
- advising the Approved Provider if they become aware of discrimination against anyone at the service on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to Definitions), illness or medical condition
- adhering to the policies of WWPCCC including the Confidentiality Policy, at all times.

### **Certified Supervisors, educators and other staff are responsible for:**

- being aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to Code of Conduct Policy and Social Justice - Interactions with Children Policy)
- using family-centred practice (refer to Definitions) and working collaboratively with other staff, parents/guardians, specialist services and professionals to implement the program at the service and provide individualised support for children, where required
- delivering an educational program that is reflective of the service's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion (EYLF)
- using language services (refer to Sources) to assist with communication, where required
- understanding and respecting different cultural child-rearing and social practices
- working with the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to Definitions)
- meeting any specialised medical and nutritional needs of children on a day-to-day basis (refer to Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy and Nutrition Policy)
- providing information to families about the support available to assist children, including:
  - Inclusion Support Services
  - Disability Inclusion Program
  - language services
- discussing any concerns regarding individual children with the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider, and parents/guardians
- responding to the needs and concerns of parents/guardians, and providing support and guidance, where appropriate
- reviewing and evaluating individualised support programs in consultation with all people involved in the child's education and care

- critically reflecting on practice to ensure that interactions and programs embrace an approach in which children and families feel valued and respected, and that their contributions are welcomed
- notifying the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider of any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice
- advising the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider if they become aware of discrimination against anyone at the service on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to Definitions), illness or medical condition
- adhering to the policies of WWPCCC, including the Confidentiality Policy, at all times.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- adhering to the policies of WWPCCC, including this Inclusion and Equity Policy and the Confidentiality Policy, at all times
- communicating with the service to ensure awareness of their child's specific needs
- raising any issues or concerns regarding their child's participation in the program
- being involved in, keeping fully informed about, and providing written consent for any individualised intervention or support proposed/provided for their child
- responding to requests from educators for written permission to arrange for an assessment or collect reports on their child.

## **DEFINITIONS**

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

**Additional needs:** A broad term that can include families and children experiencing disability, a medical condition, a developmental concern, an emotional need (resulting from trauma, abuse or grief), family displacement (due to war or refugee status), domestic violence, mental illness, family separation or divorce.

**Blood-borne virus (BBV):** A virus that is spread when blood from an infected person enters another person's bloodstream. Examples of blood-borne viruses include human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B, hepatitis C and viral hemorrhagic fevers. Where basic hygiene, safety, infection control and first aid procedures are followed, the risk of contracting a blood-borne virus is negligible.

**Culture:** The values and traditions of groups of people that are passed from one generation to another.

**Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD):** Refers to individuals and groups who are from diverse racial, religious, linguistic and/or ethnic backgrounds.

**Developmental delay:** A delay in the development of a child under the age of 6 years that:

- a) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, or a combination of mental and physical impairments, and
- b) is manifested before the child attains the age of 6 years, and
- c) results in substantial functional limitations in one or more of the following areas of major life activity:
  - i) self-care
  - ii) receptive and expressive language
  - iii) cognitive development
  - iv) motor development, and
- d) reflects the child's need for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic care, treatment or other services that are of extended duration and are individually planned and co-ordinated.

**Disability:** In relation to a person, refers to:

- a) a sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury, or any combination thereof, that:

- i) is, or is likely to be, permanent, and
  - ii) causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication, and
  - iii) requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support, and
  - iv) is not related to ageing, or
- b) an intellectual disability, or
  - c) a developmental delay

**Diversity:** Refers to all characteristics that make individuals different from one another, including race, religion, language, ethnicity, beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, level of ability, additional needs, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, personality, marital and/or parental status, family structure, lifestyle and general life/work experience.

**Equity:** (In the context of human rights) is the behaviour of acting in a fair and just manner towards others.

**Family-centred practice:** Children learn in the context of their families, and families are the primary influence on children's learning and development. Professionals also play a role in advancing children's learning and development and can engage in family-centred practice by respecting the pivotal role of families in children's lives. Early childhood professionals should:

- use families' understanding of their children to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
- create a welcoming and culturally-inclusive environment, where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development
- actively engage families and children in planning children's learning and development provide feedback to families on each child's learning, and
- provide information about how families can further advance children's learning and development at home and in the community

**Inclusion:** The incorporation of children and families into the service to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

**Inclusion support agencies:** Funded by the Commonwealth Government to provide advice on inclusive practices in childcare services. Inclusion Support Facilitators are employed to help services access a range of practical support. Further information and eligibility requirements are available at [www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/programs/childcareforservices/supportfamilyccs/pages/inclusionsupportprogram.aspx#inclusion\\_support](http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/programs/childcareforservices/supportfamilyccs/pages/inclusionsupportprogram.aspx#inclusion_support)

**Inclusive practice:** The provision of a flexible, innovative and responsive program that supports the learning needs and meaningful participation of all children attending the service.

**WWPCCC:** The commonly used name of our children's service. The Approved Provider is Woy Woy Peninsula Community Childcare Co-operative Society Limited.

**Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**