

Background

Children's relationships and experiences in their first five years affect their learning and development throughout life. Adults working with children require commitment, knowledge and skills to support the children to form positive relationships with adults and other children, and to fully participate in the Service's activities. For all children to be treated equitably and fairly, those with additional needs, as defined by the National Quality Standard 2011 (p. 202), may require specific considerations and some adaptations to the environment.

As stated, these first five years are critical in the formation of attitudes and behaviours. Assumptions developed during this time usually continue into adulthood, and can affect a person's life choices and decisions. Creaser and Dau (1995) argue that adults working with children should understand the importance of supporting children to:

- construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity (i.e. children are confident about who they are);
- develop comfortable, empathetic and just interaction with diversity (i.e. children are accepting of difference);
- develop critical thinking (i.e. children recognise injustice); and,
- learn how to stand up for oneself and others in the face of injustice (i.e. children act upon injustice).

Policy statement

This Policy outlines how the needs of all children who attend the Service are met fairly and inclusively, and how children are supported to fully participate in the program.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's philosophy is based on a commitment to equality and fairness for all children, particularly their right to fully participate in every aspect of the program. The philosophy, together with its Inclusion Policy, is reviewed regularly as part of the Service's self-assessment and quality improvement process. QA 4.2.1, 6.3.3, 7.2.1, 7.2.3, 7.3.5
- Information about the operations of the Service and what it provides is available in an easy-to-read format. When necessary and wherever possible, it will be made available to parents in their first language. QA 6.1.1, 6.1.3
- The Service is committed to working with families to best meet the education and care needs of their children. This commitment is communicated to parents at enrolment, and reinforced throughout the time their children attend the Service. Refer to the Service's *Interactions with Families Policy*. QA 6.1.1, 6.2.1
- The Service's Enrolment Form requires parents to provide information about any additional needs their children may have. Parents are asked to update this information throughout the year and to pass on information from any professional support services accessed outside of the Service. Educators use this information to meet the education and care needs of the child. QA 5.1.2, 6.1.1
- Parents are asked about their child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests at enrolment and throughout the time the child attends the Service. They are also asked about their

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child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language and traditions. Educators use this information to help children feel secure, safe and confident, and to develop the program. Refer to the *Service's Educational Program Policy*. QA 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 5.1.3, 6.1.1, 6.2.1

- Parents are welcome at the Service at any time. In addition, parents are encouraged to be involved in decision-making and consultative roles within the Service. QA 6.1.2, 6.2.1
- The Service's physical environment and facilities are designed and, when necessary, adapted to ensure access and participation for every child in the service. QA 3.1.1, 3.1.3
- The décor of the Service reflects the diversity of the children, parents, staff and educators in the Service. Where applicable, signs are displayed in languages other than English. QA 1.1.1, 6.1.1
- Equipment and resources are selected to support and encourage the participation of all children. They reflect the lives of the children in the Service, their families and the cultural diversity of the broader community. Learning materials (e.g. books, puzzles, games, posters) support positive inclusion by providing children with accurate and appropriate information about their own and other cultures. They also depict people with additional needs as active and contributing members of communities. QA 1.1.5, 3.2.2, 6.3.3
- Information gathered about children with additional needs is used to develop an individual support plan, in consultation with parents. When appropriate, and with parents' knowledge and permission, this plan is shared with the child's medical practitioners and/or professional support services. QA 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 5.1.2, 6.2.1
- Educators plan the program based upon their observations of children's play and the ideas, interests and opinions that the children share with them. When planning the program, educators reflect upon the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and the learning environments they provide. QA 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 7.2.3
- The Service works with families, external professionals and agencies (e.g. paediatricians, child welfare workers, early childhood intervention services, psychologists) to ensure that the learning environments are the optimum for each child with additional needs. The child's input is also obtained in this process. Copies of any goals for the children, specific plans or instructions provided by these external professionals and agencies are kept at the Service and are incorporated into the child's individual program. QA 1.1.5, 4.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 6.3.1, 6.3.3
- The Service provides parents with information about support and resources available in the community. Where appropriate, parents are assisted in making contact with the relevant professionals and agencies. QA 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.3
- When a child with additional needs meets the pertinent criteria, the Service applies for the Australian Government funded Special Needs Subsidy Support (SNSS) available through the Inclusion Support Agency (ISA). If the application is successful, educators receive support from SNSS workers to assist in programming for the specific needs of that child. QA 5.1.3, 6.3.1, 6.3.3
- The Service's rosters ensure continuity of care so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel and do. Further, the educators promote the children's wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful. Refer to the *Service's Relationships with Children Policy*. QA 5.1.1, 7.1.3

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- Professional development is based upon evaluation of the professional knowledge and skills of individual educators and the team. When appropriate, they receive training on how to meet the additional needs of any child in their care. QA 4.1.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 7.2.2
- Educators are encouraged to reflect, individually and as a team, on the way their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural background and attitudes to people may impact negatively upon their relationships with others, and educators' ability to promote inclusion and participation of all children in the program. QA 1.1.5, 5.1.2
- Educators consistently model equitable and fair treatment in their everyday interactions with other adults and children, and intentionally teach children to do the same. QA 5.2.2
- Educators view children as competent and capable, and support the development of their autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride. QA 1.1.5
- Educators share their time equitably with children, and listen to children's interests and concerns. They ensure that they know the specific communication needs of every child so that they can communicate respectfully and meaningfully with them. QA 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 5.1.2, 5.2.1
- Educators facilitate children's relationships with one another and support them to work collaboratively together. They help children negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others. They intentionally teach children that it is not acceptable to speak or act unfairly to others, and to stand up for those who are being treated unfairly. QA 1.1.6, 1.2.2, 3.2.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3
- The Service celebrates cultural traditions from around the world, especially those cultures represented by the children, staff and educators. Parents and community members are encouraged to share particular aspects of their cultures and traditions (e.g. songs, dances, recipes, creative arts) and to bring into the Service, items from their culture. Refer to the Service's *Interactions with Families Policy* QA 6.1.2, 6.3.4
- The Service shares information with the relevant local schools to help transition children with additional needs. QA 6.3.4
- Parent information sessions are held regularly to promote understanding of topics such as inclusion, children with additional needs, and multiculturalism. QA 6.2.2
- English as a Second Language (ESL) support is given to children whose first language is not English. Children are also encouraged to talk to other children using their first language. QA 1.1.1
- The Service follows the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity when recruiting staff.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide complete and accurate details about any additional needs their children may have, to update this information throughout the year, and to communicate information from any professional support services accessed outside the Service.

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- To provide educators with up-to-date information about their child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests, together with any child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language and traditions that will help educators meet their child's education and care needs.

Links to other policies

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	77	Educational program
	74	Documenting of a child assessments or evaluation for delivery of educational program
	75	Information about the educational program to be kept available
	90	Medical conditions policy
	105	Furniture, materials and equipment
	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups
	157	Access for parents
	162	Health information to be kept on enrolment record
	168	Education and care service must have policy and procedures
	177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider

QA	1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators
	1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program
	1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families
	1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program
	1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events and their world
	1.2.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation
	1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning
	1.2.3	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program
	3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose
	3.1.3	Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.

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3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses
4.1.1	Educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times
4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills, to improve practice and relationships
4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills
5.1.1	Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships
5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning
5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included
5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities
5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts
5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times
6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing
6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing – parent meetings?
6.3.1	Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained
6.3.2	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities
6.3.3	Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated
6.3.4	The service builds relationships and engages with their local community
7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is comprehensive
7.1.3	Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service ///
7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the service's operations
7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement
7.2.3	An effective self-assessment and quality improvement process is in place
7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- My Time, Our Place 2009

Further reading and useful websites

- Australian Multicultural Council – <http://www.amc.gov.au/multicultural-policy.htm> accessed 5 February 2016
- Boschetti, C. with Stonehouse, A. (2006). *A piece of cake: Inclusive practices in early childhood settings*. Yooralla, Victoria.

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- Derman-Sparks, L. and Edwards, J. (2010). *Anti-bias education: For young children and ourselves* (2nd Edition). National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC.
- National Disability Insurance Scheme – www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au accessed 5 February 2016
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services – <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/> accessed 5 February 2016
- Global Kids Oz – <http://www.globalkidsoz.com.au/>
- Global Kids Oz. (2013). *Multicultural Dates - World Culture Celebrations 2012/2013* http://www.globalkidsoz.com.au/multicultural_articles.php accessed 5 February 2016
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2008). *Diversity in early care and education: Honouring differences* (5th Ed.). McGraw-Hill Education, USA.
- Yorganop, Indigenous Support Unit Western Australia – <http://www.ipсуwa.org.au/> accessed 5 February 2016

Policy review

Bella Grace encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. Bella Grace consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Date reviewed: March 2017

Next review Date: March 2018