

Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs

Values

This centre is committed to:

- Providing all children with the opportunity to access a centre regardless of their ability
- Respecting the rights of all children to participate in a quality children's program
- Providing a family-centred approach which recognises that parents know their children best and want the best for their children
- Recognising that families are different and unique
- Recognising that all children learn in different ways and at different rates
- A child's right to social inclusion.

Purpose

To provide guidelines for the successful inclusion of children with additional needs into the centre.

Objective:

To implement a process for the inclusion of children with additional needs into the service.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- Children with additional needs, as defined below, who are attending or whose parents/guardians are seeking for them to attend the centre.
- Parents/guardians of children with additional needs who are attending or seeking to attend the centre.
- The committee/board, staff, volunteers, students and any other persons involved in the care and education of children with additional needs at the centre.

Background and legislation

Children's Services Act 1996

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Children's Services Regulations 2009

Health Records Act 2001

Intellectually Disabled Persons Act, 1986: A Victorian Act of Parliament that establishes the basis upon which services to people with intellectual disabilities or significant delay in their development are provided.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Victoria)

The Federal Disability Discrimination Act states that “It is unlawful for an Educational authority to discriminate against a person on the grounds of a person’s disability or a disability of any of the person’s associates”.

Early Years @ Phoenix Park is committed to the provision of appropriate programs for children with additional needs. In consultation with parents and additional resource services, all children will be encouraged to maximise their full potential. The centre provides enrolment procedures, which offer access to all children based on clearly defined statements (see Priority of Access / Waiting list policy). Support and training will be provided for staff working with children with additional needs. Staff will work in consultation with the parents/guardians, and other professionals and/or agencies working with the family to determine additional resources required.

Early Years @ Phoenix Park is committed to parents/guardians being involved in, and fully informed about, any intervention or support that is being planned for their child. Parents will decide who will receive information about their child. They also have the right to retain information that they do not wish to divulge, and will be guaranteed confidentiality in all matters regarding their child.

Definitions

Additional needs: Children whose development, in one or more of the following areas, needs specialist support - mobility, expressive and/or receptive communication, social behaviour, behavioural control, fine/gross motor skills, vision, hearing, self care, cognitive skills.

Disability: Something that incapacitates, for example an intellectual, sensory, physical, social or emotional impairment.

Child support group: This group is to be established prior to the application for support, or the child’s enrolment or attendance in a funded kindergarten program. (A requirement of the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service)

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS): ECIS support children with a disability or developmental delay from birth to school entry and their families

Inclusion: The incorporation of children with additional needs into the centre to ensure that they have equal opportunities to achieve their maximum potential

Inclusion support facilitator (previously known as CSRDOs): Inclusion support facilitators are employed by inclusion support agencies funded by the Commonwealth Government, to provide advice on inclusive practice to childcare services. Inclusion support facilitators also help centres to access a range of practical supports

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services: A program offering supplementary assistance to centres to support the inclusion of children with assessed severe disabilities into a funded kindergarten program. For information and an application kit visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO): PSFOs are employed by some Local Government Authorities or other agencies to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in funded kindergarten programs. The PSFO service is part of the kindergarten inclusion support services program.

Procedure

Staff Will:

- constantly monitor and support children's development through a comprehensive planning process.
- keep parents informed at all times regarding their child's development and any concerns that may arise. Staff will work closely with parents to address these concerns. If the staff feels it is appropriate, they will recommend to parents that an Inclusion Support Facilitator (ISF) or Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) be requested to provide resources and support to assist with the child's development.
- Take a flexible approach to education and care
- Have appropriate expectations for each child
- Seek to develop the additional skills and knowledge for working with, and supporting children with additional needs and their families.
- Promote understanding and tolerance in children and families about children with additional needs
- Encourage acceptable behaviour that fosters sensitivity and assists in the development of appropriate social values.
- Access support resources and personnel when planning for children with additional needs.
- Acknowledge the parents as the people who know their child best, and use their knowledge as a resource to successfully include the child into the service.

Inclusion Support Facilitator

Inclusion Support Facilitators (ISF) are available to facilitate the inclusion of children with additional needs into centres within the City of Stonnington.

The ISF's role is to ensure the inclusion of children with additional needs, aged 0-12 years, into Commonwealth funded children's services within the City of Stonnington

The ISF's work with services to develop an Assisted Inclusion Readiness (AIR) plan, that helps the service to build its' capacity to successfully include children with an additional need.

Where the service is working with a child with a diagnosed and /or specific additional need, the ISF will work with the service to develop a Service Support Plan (SSP) that is specific to the particular child and the care environment (the room) the child is in.

Parents will be required to complete a Parental Permission form when the service requires the support of an ISF for a child.

Sources:

Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2007, *Inclusion and Professional Support Guidelines (ver. 11)*, Australian Government, Canberra.

Reviewed: August 2018
