5.1 Inclusive Practice

**Applies to:** All Koorana staff working in Preschools and families attending Koorana Preschools and visitors.

**Purpose**

1. To ensure that Preschools provide an inclusive programme that allows all children genuine opportunities to contribute and be part of the group, takes into account the differing abilities and skills of the children when planning and implementing the programme, fosters the development of a feeling of belonging, being and becoming and embraces and demonstrates the valuing of diversity.

2. To educate children about bias, fairness and equity.

3. To support and facilitate the inclusion of children with additional needs and diagnosed disabilities into Preschools.

**Policy context:** This policy relates to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards or other external requirements</th>
<th>National Quality Standards – Quality Area 1, Standard 1.1, Element 1.1.2 &amp; 1.1.5; Quality Area 5, Standard 5.1, Element 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3</th>
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Koorana Child and Family Services Incorporated: Preschool Inclusive Practice Policy

Contractual obligations | N/A
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Resources

- Ten Reasons for Inclusion, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education; Guidelines for Challenging Racism and other forms of Oppression, Patti DeRosa of Cross-Cultural Consultation
- National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program – Curriculum decision making for inclusive practice
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves, Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards, National Association for the Education of Young Children

Documents related to this policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related policies</th>
<th>Educational Program, learning and development Code of Conduct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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Definitions

"Koorana” means Koorana Child and Family Services Incorporated.

“Parents” includes a legal guardian.

“Visitors” includes students, volunteers, visiting professionals, performers and contractors.

“Staff” is a Koorana staff member working in the Preschool, e.g. Educator, Administrator or Key Worker. This may also include other Koorana staff such as Case Managers, Early Linker, Therapists, Head Office Administrators, Home and Community Based Key Workers and Koorana Management when visiting or
“Diagnosed Disability” is defined as:
(a) total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; or
(b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
(c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
(d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
(e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or
(f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
(g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;
and includes a disability that:
(h) presently exists; or
(i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
(j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
(k) is imputed to a person.
To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability. (Disability Discrimination Act 1992)

“Additional Need” refers to children who:
- are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- are recent arrivals in Australia
- have a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- live in isolated geographic locations
- are experiencing difficult family circumstances or stress
- are at risk of abuse and neglect
- have a medical or health condition
- demonstrate challenging behaviours
- are gifted or have special talents
- have other extra support needs. (‘Additional needs’—looking beyond disability, National Quality Standard, Professional Learning Program, No.41, 2012)

POLICY STATEMENT
As an organisation Koorana Child and Family Services implements inclusive practices. Children attending Preschools, and their families, come from a diverse spectrum of backgrounds, cultures, experiences and with a variety of needs. It is recognised that “Inclusive practice occurs when educators make thoughtful and informed curriculum decisions and work in partnership with families and other professionals. This helps to ensure that all children—including those with a disability—have equitable and genuine opportunities to participate in and learn from the everyday routines, interactions and play and learning experiences that occur in early learning settings.” (National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program – Curriculum decision making for inclusive practice)
Children with diagnosed disabilities and/or additional needs
Koorana Preschools embraces the inclusion of children with disabilities and/or additional needs and every effort will be made to include all children in the Preschool. Should Koorana not be able to meet the needs of a child and family, Koorana will endeavour to assist the family to locate an alternative care type. Please refer to Policy 7.1 Admissions, Enrolment and Orientation for further information.

Bias, fairness and equity
Furthermore, Inclusive Practices also refers to strategies for reducing bias and promoting values of fairness and equity. Positive inclusive practices are:

- Gender equity.
- Respect and awareness for diversity of abilities.
- Respect and awareness for diversity of cultures.
- Respect and awareness for diversity of religion.
- Respect and awareness for diversity of experiences and backgrounds.
- Awareness of personal bias, values and beliefs.

Staff Responsibilities
Staff are positive role models for children of all ages and therefore should:

- Reflect on their own values, beliefs, background and experiences and the impact of these on their interactions with children, staff and parents.
- Encourage an atmosphere of acceptance.
- Interact with children and families without bias or prejudice.
- Support children to recognise and reject biased or unfair behaviour towards others.
- Ensure they are aware of attributes of children’s cultures, backgrounds and particular needs.
- Communicate with parents to understand their expectations, values and beliefs.
- Access training and professional development opportunities to increase their understanding and awareness of anti-bias and equity issues and strategies.
- Encouraging children to be aware of their own and others’ physical characteristics and cultural beliefs and to be comfortable with differences.
- Enabling children to feel pride about their identity.
- Helping children with disabilities to develop autonomy, independence, interdependence competency, confidence and pride.
- Helping children to develop the ability to interact knowledgeably, comfortably and fairly with people having various disabilities.
- Staff will respectfully acknowledge that parents are the child’s first teachers. Therefore constant communication between parents and staff is identified as an important aspect in a child’s ability to develop an awareness of fairness and equity.

The Program
Children with a Diagnosed Disability
All programs that are developed for children with diagnosed disabilities will be supervised by university trained teachers whose qualifications are recognised by ACECQA. Each child will have a written Individual
Learning Plan (ILP) that is aimed at supporting the holistic development of the child as well as supporting their inclusion into early childhood education programs, thus preparing the child for school.

**Preschool Program**
The Preschool Program should:
- Provide for planned experiences that promote discussion and awareness of diversity, equality and acceptance.
- Encourage all children to have equal access to all activities in a way that is supportive of their developmental level, skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Reflect positive language.
- Be displayed in a manner that supports a variety of learning styles to enhance parent’s understanding of the programme.
- Encourage involvement from parents and the extended family.

**The Physical Environment**
The physical environment will include:
- Images of people from diverse cultures and religions, and people of different ages and abilities are reflected in:
  - Picture books.
  - Play equipment such as home corner and puzzles.
  - Picture displays such as posters, artwork, photographs and other media.
  - Language used by staff and encouraged for use by the children.
- Images that challenge traditional gendered identities and give positive messages about gender equity are reflected in:
  - Picture books.
  - Play equipment such as home corner and puzzles.
  - Activities that all children are encouraged to participate in.
  - Picture displays such as posters, artwork, photographs and other media.
  - Language used by staff and encouraged for use by the children.
- Activities such as dramatic play and stories are included to encourage children to empathise with others and to challenge stereotypes and bias.
- Discussions are held with children to allow them to explore their own thoughts, stereotypes and bias.

**Parents and Families**
Parents will be provided with information about how the activities, experiences and the programme are supporting the development of anti-bias ethics amongst the children.
Parents are considered an important resource for staff to obtain information about a child’s culture, religion, and other beliefs.
The parent, extended family and staff relationship should:
- Provide enthusiastic exchange of information relating to family values and culture.
• Foster a sense of collaboration.
• Develop a sense of group identity.
• Provide opportunities for parents, families and staff to participate in the growth, development and wellbeing of the children’s lives.