



Inclusion, Equity and Anti-Bias Procedure

Policy

The Inclusion, Equity and Anti-Bias Procedure falls under the Governance and Management of Service Policy. Hawthorn Early Years (the Service) will ensure systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined and understood and effective leadership used to build and promote a positive organisational culture and a professional learning community.

Application of Procedure

This procedure applies to all board members, employees, students, volunteers, families, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Service.

Key Definitions:

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.

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:

- is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, or a combination of mental and physical impairments
- is manifested before the child attains the age of 6 years
- results in substantial functional limitations in one or more of the following areas of major life activity:
 - self-care
 - receptive and expressive language
 - cognitive development
 - motor development, and
 - 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 sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury, or any combination thereof, that:
- is, or is likely to be, permanent, and
- causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication, and
- requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support, and
- is not related to ageing, or
- an intellectual disability, or
- 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.

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS): These services support families and children experiencing a disability or developmental delay from birth to school age. ECIS are funded through the Department of Education and Training (DET) and provided by Specialist Children's Services teams and Early Childhood Intervention agencies.

Inclusion Support Program (ISP): A program that assists education and care services to provide and embed quality inclusive practices into their delivery of early learning programs for all children, to address access and participation barriers and to support the inclusion of children with additional needs, with their typically developing peers.

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.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (KISS): A program offering supplementary assistance to early childhood services to support the inclusion of children who have been diagnosed with developmental concerns, a disability or complex medical needs, into a funded kindergarten program.

Preschool Field Officer Program: A targeted and time limited capacity building program. It is available at no cost to all funded kindergarten services and complements other universal and specialist services that are available to support children's learning, development and wellbeing in the kindergarten program. Its aim is to support early childhood educators to build their skills, knowledge and confidence to plan for and include all children.



Hawthorn Early Years is committed to:

Providing an inclusive environment for all children, families and educators, acknowledging the uniqueness of every person regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, religion, culture, physical and mental abilities and socio-economic background. This procedure seeks to ensure all children, families, and staff are welcomed and treated equitably and with respect.

Our Service believes that children have the right to be treated equally and our goal is to develop children's identity and self-esteem in a trusting and supportive environment. We acknowledge that children with disabilities, and those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are more highly represented in child safety concerns, and as such, are particularly focused on inclusion and equity to support these children. We embrace diversity in all its forms to help develop positive and accepting attitudes in children, and to help them gain a better understanding of their environment, community, country, and the world.

The Board of Governance will:

Delegate operational responsibility and day-to-day management of the Service to the Nominated Supervisors. The Centre Director and Centre Manager will act as Nominated Supervisors for the Service.

Monitor the performance of the Association, including responsibilities contained in this procedure, through regular reporting and by ensuring appropriate resources are available to carry out the organisation's functions.

The Nominated Supervisor/s will:

Family centred practice

Ensure that service programs are available and accessible to families from a variety of backgrounds and in line with the child safe standards.

Encourage collaborative, family-centred practice at the Service, building on the strengths of individuals.

Ensure that the Service and its programs are culturally safe, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.



Provide 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 the Service.

Ensure 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.

Equity of access

Ensure that the enrolment process is fair and equitable, and facilitates access for all children and families, following the government priority of access guidelines.

Tailor the orientation process to meet the individual and cultural needs of children and families.

Consider barriers to participation in service programs and activities, and develop strategies to overcome these.

Consider options to provide appropriate physical infrastructure, staffing and resources to facilitate the inclusion of all children at the Service.

Provide service information in various community languages where needed.

Consider the employment of multilingual workers to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families.

Access additional support and training

Ensure that teaching teams have access to appropriate and accredited professional development activities that promote a positive understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity.

Ensure that teaching teams have access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety training.

Work with specialised services and professionals to provide support and services for families and children experiencing severe disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental delays or concerns.

Where practicable, access resources, support and professional development to facilitate inclusion of children with additional needs who are ineligible for specific support packages.



Work to promote equality

Promote the Service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families.

Develop an educational program that is reflective of the Service's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion.

Ensure that all Service programs provide opportunities for all children to participate and interact with one another.

Promote the Service's commitment to valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices.

All employees, volunteers and students will:

Work with families

Undertake and encourage collaborative, family-centred practices, building on the strengths of individuals.

Work with individual families to determine the needs of their child/ren and facilitate the inclusion of both the child and the family into the Service.

Identify children who may be disadvantaged, have additional needs, or be at risk of discrimination/exclusion and support their engagement in the program through accessing support and resources including early childhood intervention services.

Ensure 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.

Respond to the needs and concerns of parents/guardians, and provide support and guidance, where appropriate in a culturally sensitive way.

Provide opportunities for families to contribute to the program.

Foster inclusivity

Provide support and guidance to other educators/employees, where required.

Encourage children to share and learn about the individuality of each child and their family and their role in the Service.



Assist children to form positive social relationships, develop their identity and self-awareness and to learn to accept the diversity of members within and outside of the community.

Challenge children's thinking and views that demonstrate bias, discrimination or exclusion in an age-appropriate way.

Teach and foster children's understanding that there are multiple perspectives and ways of being and doing.

Engage in critical reflection about racism, stereotypes and biases.

Ensure the educational program design and delivery builds on community and cultural strengths.

Develop strong partnerships with families and children to promote their individual and communities' cultural competence.

Ensure children have opportunities to participate with a wide variety of resources from the daily life of a variety of families and cultures.

Affirm and foster children's knowledge and pride in cultural identity and home languages.

Foster children's curiosity, enjoyment and empathetic awareness of cultural differences and similarities.

Notify a nominated supervisor of any behaviour from another adult that may constitute discrimination or prejudice.

Work to promote equality

Promote the Service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families.

Deliver an educational program that is reflective of the Service's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion.

Understand and respect different cultural child-rearing and social practices.

Work with nominated supervisors to ensure inclusive resources for all children, including those with disabilities, additional needs or developmental delays.

Critically reflect on practices to ensure that interactions and programs embrace an approach in which children and families feel valued and respected, and that their contributions are welcomed.



Seek additional support

Access Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services and/or the Inclusion Support Program (as required) to support the inclusion of children with disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns.

Review and evaluate individualised support plans in consultation with all people involved in the child's education and care.

Implement appropriate programs and practices to support vulnerable children and families, including working co-operatively with relevant services and/or professionals (e.g. Orange Door), where required.

Use language services to assist with communication, where required.

Parents/guardians will:

Provide the Services with information about their child's specific needs.

Raise any issues or concerns regarding their child's participation in the program with educators.

Work with the Service in relation to any individualised intervention or support proposed/provided for their child.

Respond to requests from educators for written permission to arrange for an assessment or collect reports on their child.

Conduct themselves whilst at the Service in a manner that reflects this procedure, behaving with respect, inclusivity and free from discrimination.

See also:

1. Governance and Management of Service Policy
2. Child Safe Policies and Procedures
3. Information Sharing Scheme Procedure
4. Privacy and Confidentiality of Records Procedure
5. Code of Conduct Procedure
6. Equal Opportunity and Anti-bullying Procedure