

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

POLICY RATIONALE

TeamKids are conscious that children can be diagnosed with additional needs on an ongoing, temporary or reoccurring basis. This may be due to having a disability, living in complex or vulnerable circumstances or where particular considerations due to cultural, linguistic or family backgrounds, are taken into account.

The TeamKids program includes inclusive practices where educators make thoughtful decisions in partnerships with families and relevant professionals to ensure that all children, regardless of abilities, have the genuine ability to participate in the education and care program at all times. Planned programs are designed to include all children of all abilities, rather than planning alternative or separate experiences for any child where possible.

TeamKids aims to work collaboratively with families and professionals to develop inclusion plans based on the child's individual needs and interests. Individual adaptive equipment may be required along with specific behaviour guidance plans, individual routines, support and program strategies and potentially additional training for educators working directly with the child.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- All children have equal access to equipment, resources and play spaces within the service.
- The service will ensure that we provide a wide section of all toys and materials.
- The service will incorporate awareness of diversity in its programs.
- The service will have access to inclusion support professionals to support educators in services, to provide an inclusive program for all children.
- Our service environment will reflect the value of diversity.
- The service includes children with high support needs, including children with physical disabilities, language, learning difficulties or health concerns.

PROCEDURE

All children whose parents/guardian identify them as having an additional need will be asked to complete a Child Profile. This includes the child's individual needs, interests, strengths, areas of opportunity, strategies already in place for management of the child's additional need and any other information that may support the child's inclusion at the service. This process occurs regardless if the child is eligible for inclusion support funding.

Inclusion Support Funding

The Quality and Compliance Manager will supervise the application process for Inclusion Support Funding for each service that has a child in attendance, diagnosed with an additional need. This funding is then used to provide an additional educator for the service when the child is in attendance. The funding application process requires consent documents from the child's parent/guardian and other documents to support the child's diagnosis.

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- The additional educator is appointed to support the whole service on that day and not to necessarily only work with the child with additional needs.
- At times, the child will require the direct support of an educator and the service Coordinator/Director will determine which educator is best suited to this role each day.
- Where possible, a consistent educator will be available to work directly with the child and the family for greetings, sharing of information and implementing strategies for inclusion.

Observations will be taken for all children, including those with additional needs, to ensure the program meets their individual needs and interests, as well as to support inclusion. These will also support the application process for inclusion support funding on an ongoing basis.

TeamKids engages the involvement of **Inclusion Agency and Inclusion Professional (IP)** and other relevant professionals, to support children's inclusion at the service, as well as the development of educator skills. These professionals may;

- Observing Team Members and children in the care environment and providing practical advice and strategies on effective inclusive practices;
- Assistance with developing and reviewing Strategic Inclusion Plans (SIPs);
- Assistance with applications for funding via the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP);
- Identify and provide assistance for Services to access resources that reduce or remove inclusion barriers;
- Referrals to relevant local and national organisations.

These practices support the reduction of bias, the inclusion of all children and awareness of diversity for all children.

The Service Team has the responsibility to ensure that:

- They actively promote inclusion in their interactions with children, adults and other staff members.
- Educators within the service, are responsible for maintaining observations on each child and following appropriate strategies provided by health professionals and parents/guardians.
- Educators are responsible for the administration of medication if required, and training will be provided as required for any specific requirements.
- They encourage fairness in children's play and recreation.
- Children are encouraged to participate in all experiences provided in the program.
- They acknowledge and value diversity.
- They encourage children to recognise discrimination and prejudice and demonstrate ways to challenge it.
- They will role model appropriate ways to challenge bias, prejudice and discrimination.

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REFERENCES

ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)

Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.

Quality Area 2 – Children’s health and safety.

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children.

Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 73, 74.

Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S168.

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