

Children's Services Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

Woden Community Service (WCS) values the diversity and individuality of its families. WCS is committed to supporting high quality, inclusive practices which embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and viewpoints into every day practice. WCS Children's Services respect and recognise the importance of experience, perspective, knowledge and skills that each family brings to the service. Each service will actively support the inclusion of all children particularly those with additional needs.

WCS Children's Services recognises and values the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind. The services are committed to *"respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status"* (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 2).

Aim

To ensure individual needs are recognised and met, so that children feel accepted and valued. To support the learning and wellbeing of all children and families. To recognise where discrimination and prejudice are present and actively work to eliminate them to create an environment where all children and adults are treated with respect and equity.

Strategies and practices

Access

All children are valued, active participants and have equitable access to experiences and routines.

- Educational programs are available and accessible to families from all backgrounds and WCS works to ensure that this information is accessible through a variety of ways and mediums.
- Families are supported through the enrolment process. Interpreting services can be accessed for families from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Enrolment into the service is tailored where possible to support children into our programs. This includes actively seeking information on the needs, background and ability of children. The service works in partnership with individual children and their families to determine the needs of the child and facilitate the inclusion of children and families into the service.
- There is an orientation process which is tailored to support the individual needs of children and families.
- Information about family traditions, culture, ethnicity and language is collected during the enrolment process and throughout a child's attendance and is used to enrich the curriculum and experiences for all children and staff.

- Indoor and outdoor environments are arranged in ways to enable children to move freely and make choices based on their strengths, interests and needs.

Participation

When children are meaningfully included, children, families and educators learn with and from one another.

- Educational program is tailored by taking into account the individual differences and abilities of each child.
- Inclusion and diversity principles and practice are key considerations embedded in pedagogical decision making.
- Educational programs are delivered in accordance with the approved learning framework and are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child and are consistent with religious and cultural beliefs of families.
- Educators model inclusive, non-judgmental language and supportive relationships and promote respectful interactions between children.
- Educators will model appropriate ways to challenge discrimination and prejudice and actively promote inclusive behaviours in children.
- Resources and equipment will reflect the diversity in the ability, family structures, backgrounds and cultures of families and staff in the community to encourage inclusiveness. Resources include material that increases awareness and appreciation of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded into the curriculum through resourcing of materials as well as through building and strengthening of connections with local indigenous groups and elders.
- Children are given equal opportunities to engage in experiences and interactions regardless of ability, gender or cultural and religious background.
- Opportunities and non-competitive activities are provided for all children to succeed.
- Children with additional needs are included as equals and the rights of all children are promoted and respected.

Support

The service works together with families and other professionals.

- The service works in partnership with parents/guardians to develop individual support plans for children with additional needs. Plans are regularly reviewed and revised.
- The service will seek assistance, guidance and where possible, financial funding from recognised inclusion support agencies to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs in order to ensure that the needs of children are met.
- The service will work with specialised services and professionals to provide support and services for families and children experiencing severe disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns.
- The services actively seek guidance and support from Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, organisations and individuals, and refer to the WCS Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group.

- The service will ensure that eligible families are supported to access Government Fee Subsidies, where applicable.
- Appropriate programs and practices are implemented to support vulnerable children and families, including working cooperatively with relevant services and/or professionals.
- Professional development opportunities that promote positive understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity are offered to extend educator knowledge and skills.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- Communicating with the service to ensure awareness of their child's specific needs.
- Raising any issues or concerns regarding their child's participation in the program.
- Being involved in, keeping informed about, and providing written consent for any individualised intervention or support proposed or provided for their child.
- Responding to requests from educators for permission, assessments or reports on their child.

Links to Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	73	Educational Program
	74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
	76	Information about educational program to be given to parents
	90	Medical conditions policy
	105	Furniture, materials and equipment
	155	Interactions with children
	162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record

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, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
	1.1.3	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
	1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
	1.3.2	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
	3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
	5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
	5.1.2	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- UNICEF. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA). *The Code of Ethics*. <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>
- Australian Human Rights Commission – *Federal Discrimination Law*. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/federal-discrimination-law-2011>
- NSW/ACT Inclusion Agency – For Families. <https://www.inclusionagencynswact.org.au/for-families>

Policy Review

Current version

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Version	Date	Author	Approved by	Description of changes
1.0	May 2020	Krysta Cordina	Kate West	New policy