



# ADDITIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Supporting children with additional needs requires educators to extend upon the strategies they already use in providing quality care for children. It is imperative for educators to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's interests and abilities and implement a program and environment that is receptive to their needs and inclusion.

As Out of School Hours Care Service offer flexible attendance options, and vacation care options, it is critical that our service works in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure specific consideration and adaptations allow children with additional needs access and participation. Our OSHC service is committed to take into account children's social and cultural diversity, including learning styles, abilities and disabilities to achieve positive experiences for children in our setting.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE		
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	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.

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2.1	Inclusive environment	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.
3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.

5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

#### QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	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	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

#### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
157	Access for parents

#### RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy Behaviour Management Policy Code of Conduct Policy Educational Program Policy Enrolment Policy	Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy Medical Conditions Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Respect for Children Policy
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#### PURPOSE

To be responsive to each child, irrespective of their additional needs and abilities. We aim to provide a supportive and inclusive environment that sanctions each child to fully participate in its education and care at the OSHC Service. Educators will remain encouraging, unprejudiced and supportive, ensuring that

all children are treated equally and fairly and have the opportunity to grow and develop to their individual potential.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the Out of School Hours Service. According to the Inclusion Support Program Guideline (Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment) March 2020, there is no national definition of 'additional needs.' This term is used within the policy to describe children who may need or require specific considerations or adaptations to participate fully in our OSHC service.

Additional needs may include children who:

- have a diagnosed disability or developmental delay- physical, sensory, intellectual, or autism spectrum disorder
- are presenting with challenging behaviours and/or behavioural or psychological disorders
- have a serious medical or health condition
- are presenting with trauma-related behaviours
- are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- 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 or neglect
- are experiencing language and communication difficulties
- have learning difficulties
- are gifted or have special talents
- have other extra support needs.

We understand that additional needs may be temporary or permanent with diverse origins, which require different responses. Supporting children with additional needs enables them to have equitable access to resources and participation. This can lead to stronger skills in literacy and numeracy, social and emotional development and understanding of diversity. Strategies for supporting children with additional needs can differ significantly, because every child is unique.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### IN REGARD TO THE ENROLMENT PROCESS MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

All families will be assessed upon enrolment regarding their child's level of care required, and all enrolments/bookings are subject to resourcing, availability and staffing. When a child has been identified with Additional Needs, the Team Leader will undertake a risk assessment (taking into account such things as training of staff required, environmental factors, safety of all children enrolled, etc.), and will determine whether the Service is able to accommodate the family's request subject to the following steps:

1. When completing the enrolment form parents/guardians must fully disclose any additional needs or special circumstances about their child. The parent/guardian must also upload any documentation by a relevant professional that confirms a diagnosed disability (including development delay) or diagnosed medical condition, or a current and ongoing assessment for disability. The Inclusion Support Agency may be contacted to apply for funding assistance where additional support staff is required to meet the needs of the child, along with other children with Additional Needs who may also be attending our Service. Please note that the inclusion support subsidy may be required for the continuation of the child's enrolment.
2. An Additional Support Information sheet will be required to be completed by the parent/guardian outlining background information (including extra care required, behavioural strategies, interests, skills, etc.) to enable an understanding of the child.
3. When the Additional Support Information sheet has been received with the enrolment forms the Team Leader will contact the parent/guardian to discuss their child's needs, and written consent will be sought to contact the child's current educator and/or other support services that may already be involved with the child with a view to providing optimum care for the child. This may also include observation of the child in their current care setting and/or an orientation visit prior to commencing.
4. Prior to the child commencing at the Service, if appropriate, the Team Leader may meet with the parents/carers and the child to discuss the child's needs and how the Service can accommodate these.
5. If a child is diagnosed with Additional Needs subsequent to their initial enrolment, that child's ongoing enrolment will be subject to the Additional Needs Enrolment process.

All information obtained through the enrolment process will be kept in the strictest confidence and used only for the purposes for which it was obtained. Staff need to be kept fully informed of the child's needs and it is in the child's best interests that this information is kept up to date.

Additional Needs

We offer a generalised play-based program at our Service and provision of places for children with additional needs will be made wherever possible, with a regular review period. Access to care will focus on the needs of the child, necessity of additional funding and facilities, and the Service's ability to meet these needs. Ongoing arrangements will be at the discretion of the Approved Provider in consultation with parents and educators.

Whilst OOSH Northern Beaches will endeavour to accommodate the needs of children and their families, there may be times where our Service is not able to meet the needs of a particular child, for example, if there are already several children with Additional Needs enrolled/booked in at our Service, or during a period of disruption (ie: impact of health emergencies such as COVID-19). OOSH Northern Beaches reserves the right to review bookings received through My Family Lounge and to withdraw bookings where we are unable to meet the needs of all children booked in on a particular day within the resources available, so as not to compromise staff safety or the level of care received by any child using our Service

Inclusion Support

The Inclusion Support Program (ISP) assists Child Care services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs in mainstream services; providing them with an opportunity to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers. A child with additional needs who requires additional support may be accepted at our Service and ISP funding will be applied for to increase staff to child ratios above the minimum requirements mandated in the National Regulations. Any additional educator works as a member of the team to provide a quality inclusive program for all children (they are not funded to provide one to one support for an individual child). This is designed to ensure adequate supervision for all children attending a Service whilst reducing barriers to inclusion for those children with additional needs.

Please note ISP funding cannot be used to provide one to one support, respite care or for transportation. Children with complex needs and/or functioning in a way that limits their ability to be included in the program will be considered as requiring one to one support. Under such circumstance's agencies supporting the child will need to provide the one to one support.

Before/After School Care

Subject to our Additional Needs Enrolment process, children with additional needs requiring an additional educator are required to have a permanent/routine booking (subject to availability) with at least 4 weeks' notice from commencement so that the Centre can roster the appropriate staff to child ratio. This ensures the appropriate level of care is provided for your child. Any requests for care with less

than four weeks' notice cannot be guaranteed. This is also dependent on staffing availability, which may be negatively affected by periods of disruption (ie: impact of health emergencies such as COVID-19).

**MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:  
IN REGARD TO THE PROGRAM AND CENTRE:**

- completed enrolment forms are used to gather information about children's additional needs
- equitable access is provided to support children with additional needs
- communication with families is consistent and supportive
- develop effective relationships with school leaders and the OSHC service to support the child
- they have a thorough understanding of the NDIS plan for each child (if applicable) and assist to help achieve goals and build skills and independence
- they contact their local Inclusion Agency to access information and support about the Inclusion Support Program (see: [Inclusion Development Fund Manager](#) for your state/territory organisation)
- they develop a *Strategic Inclusion Plan* in collaboration with the Inclusion Agency which will identify any barriers preventing a child's inclusion and implement strategies for improvement
- they seek assistance, training, and where possible, financial funding from inclusive support agencies to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs
- educators are meeting the needs of each individual child, by providing educators with targeted professional development and opportunities to network with professional agencies
- they access the Inclusion Support Portal (IS Portal) through PRODA
- parents provide written consent for information about their child to be shared on the IS Portal if accessing support under the Inclusion Support Program
- families are encouraged to meet with the educators who will be working with the child to ensure an understanding of the child's needs, appropriate methods for communication, and to ascertain that suitable resources and support is provided to both the family and the child
- the OSHC Service works in partnership with allied health professionals and families to verify the educational program and learning environment is inclusive for each child with additional needs, including children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds
- specific plans and programs provided by external resource providers and professionals for children with additional needs are shared with educators and copies filed in the child's individual record
- children are encouraged to feel safe and secure during their education and care at the OSHC Service by developing trusting relationships with educators, other children, and the community
- inclusive strategies and practices are embedded in the delivery of quality education and care
- the privacy and confidentiality for children and families is maintained

- the indoor and outdoor environment and equipment is designed or adapted to ensure access and participation for all children, supporting the inclusion of children with additional needs. This may include the use of:
  - portable ramps
  - use of standing frames and support swings
  - specialised furniture such as chairs, tables and positioning equipment
  - communication charts and Auslan dictionaries
  - resources and books in languages other than English to support Indigenous children and children from linguistically diverse backgrounds
- the program and curriculum are inclusive and meet the individual needs of children with additional needs, disability or developmental delay
- children’s sensory sensitivities to pressure, texture, smell, noise, or colour is considered within the environment.

#### EDUCATORS WILL:

- treat children equally and fairly and with respect
- create an inclusive program, which is adaptable and supportive of all children
- advocate for children’s rights
- conduct specific observations on the individual child, outlining their interests, strengths, and developmental needs to support programming including open ended learning opportunities
- meet with families of children with additional needs to familiarise themselves with the specific communication needs of each child. Communication could include verbal and non-verbal communication skills and cues and may necessitate the use of systems such as sign language, the use of images, and/or learning key words in the child’s home language
- establish a means for frequent communication with parents of children with additional needs through a communication book, verbal daily information exchanges, and/or formal and informal meetings.
- work with all families to meet children’s developmental needs in order to build strengths and capabilities
- develop an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) in collaboration with Inclusion Agency professionals, health professionals and parents of the child and keep a copy in the child’s individual record
- liaise with school counsellor and other key personal at the school to ensure consistent strategies are implemented for the child at OSHC
- work with other professionals who play a role in supporting the child’s development

- create a flexible environment, which can be adapted to each child's needs within the OSHC Service to support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- implement programming experiences and activities, that are inclusive for all children to access, explore and participate.
- listen carefully to all children's concerns and discuss issues of inclusion and exclusion, and fair and unfair behaviour.
- act as role models by displaying appropriate behaviour and language, being consistently aware of and responsive to children who may require additional support, attention, or assistance.
- discuss a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views constructively with the children within a supportive environment
- not judge or compare one child's development with another
- talk to children about differences and acceptance.
- provide opportunities for all children to play and learn together, promoting cooperative, caring, and social behaviours.

### INCLUSION SUPPORT PROGRAM (ISP):

To assist in the provision of an inclusive environment for children with additional needs, our OSHC Service may apply for additional support through the [Inclusion Support Program \(ISP\)](#) if the eligibility requirements are met.

The Team Leader and educators will refer to the Inclusion Support Guidelines and consult with families to submit an application. Applications would need to be submitted for the different types of care the child accesses through our Service (care during school terms and vacation care). The objectives of the Inclusion Support Program include:

- supporting Out of School Hours Services increase their capacity and capability to provide quality inclusive practices for all children
- to address access and participation barriers
- support the inclusion of children with additional needs



## HIGH POTENTIAL AND GIFTED CHILDREN

Our OSHC Service will collaborate with families to support the needs of high potential and gifted children.

We will:

- respect the uniqueness of each child
- acknowledge the characteristics of high potential and gifted children
- be sensitive to the social-emotional needs of gifted children and assist them to feel a sense of belonging
- develop our capacity to cater for the needs of gifted children through professional development
- support children's transition to school
- assist educators cater for gifted children who also have a disability- 'Twice Exceptional' children

## FAMILIES WILL:

- work collaboratively with our OSHC Service
- share information about their child's specific needs- their interests, things they do well, strategies that are used at home to support their child, identify routines or situations that may cause physical or emotional challenges
- provide accurate information about their child's additional needs including relevant reports, documentation, NDIS plans, details about support services and other allied professionals
- help to identify possible barriers for inclusion and reasonable adjustments that may be required
- consent to our OSHC Service accessing external professional support if required to assist educators manage the diagnosed, or undiagnosed additional needs of their child
- collaborate with external professional support agencies and educators to implement plans to support inclusion
- provide written consent for information about their child to be shared on the IS Portal if accessing support under the Inclusion Support Program
- adhere to our policies that should the safety of other children and staff be compromised enrolment may be suspended or terminated.

## SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2009) *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2011) *My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2014) *Continuity of Learning: A resource to support effective transition to school and school aged care*.

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) *Inclusion Support Program (ISP)*

Catholic Education Office Melbourne (2013) *Gifted and Talented Students A Resource Guide for Teachers in Victorian Catholic Schools*

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Early Childhood Australia (ECA), & Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA). (2012). Position statement on the inclusion of children with disability in early childhood education and care.  
[http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ECA\\_Position\\_statement\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_web.pdf](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/ECA_Position_statement_Disability_Inclusion_web.pdf)

Early Childhood Intervention Australia *National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*. (Amended 2018).  
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020).

New South Wales Department of Education *High Potential and Gifted Education Policy* (2019)

Raising Children *Supporting gifted and talented learning* <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/gifted-talented-children/supporting-learning>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	APRIL 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2022
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference to COVID-19 added 01/01/2022</li> </ul>		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of policy - Moved Families will.... to end of policy</li> <li>sources checked for currency</li> <li>Updated information for Inclusion Support Program- PRODA</li> <li>Reference to resource- <i>Guide to Strategic Inclusion Plan</i> added</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
APRIL 2020	Additional information for Approved provider and educators added Adjustments for inclusion added - Family responsibilities - Inclusion Support Program - High Potential and Gifted children New references added	APRIL 2021	
APRIL 2019	Rearranged the order of points for better flow Points added (Highlighted). Sources/references checked, corrected, updated, and alphabetised. Deleted 'procedures' appendix and added relevant info to body of policy.	APRIL 2020	
APRIL 2018	Minor terminology and grammatical adjustments made to further support understanding and implementation Included the list of related policies	APRIL 2019	

NOVEMBER 2017	Updated the National Quality Standard references to comply with revised standard.	APRIL 2018
APRIL 2017	Minor changes and additions made	APRIL 2018