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INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND ANTI-BIAS POLICY

QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

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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.
1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
1.2.3	Child directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
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, building, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play based learning.

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.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

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.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family 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
6.2.3	Community engagement	The service builds relationships and engages with its community

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law Act	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
157	Access for parents

All children have the right to be treated equally. Diversity in all its forms within Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) to help develop positive and accepting attitudes in children, and to help them gain a better understanding of the education and care environment, community, country and the world.

This policy includes:

- Additional Needs
- Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Bias
- Gender Equity
- Multi-cultural

Introduction

WECC aims to provide an inclusive environment for all children, families and staff, acknowledging the uniqueness of everyone, regardless of their additional need and abilities, race, gender, sexuality, religion, culture, physical and mental abilities and socio-economic background. This policy ensures all children; families and staff are welcome, treated equitably and with respect.

WECC promotes positive attitudes towards diversity including with respect to:

- children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander heritage
- children and families who may be socially isolated or vulnerable
- children of all abilities, including children with additional needs

WECC is committed to processes that provide all children with the same opportunities and experiences to develop meaningful social relationships and lifelong skills. WECC will always endeavour to provide easy access to buildings and facilities and to provide appropriate education and care for children requesting enrolment. However, enrolment may not always be possible due to WECC's licence capacity and vacancies, Australian Government priority of access guidelines, or because of other factors such as the availability of additional support educators when a child has high support needs that can't be met within existing educators.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

Goals – What are we aiming to do?

WECC will:

- ensure all children and families are treated with fairness and equity
- ensure all children and families have the same opportunities for participation
- ensure all children and families are accepted as valued members of the community
- ensure children and families are treated with respect and equality irrespective of gender
- provide an inclusive environment for all children

Strategies – How will it be done?

General

When working with children, educators will:

- respect the rights and dignity of each child
- view all children as competent individuals with many strengths and abilities and as initiators and active

- contributors in their own learning
- build children's positive sense of self through identifying and responding to each child's strengths
- respect and acknowledge all children within WECC – this make them visible to other children and adults
- develop respectful and trusting relationships with children, so they can begin to feel empowered and more open and respectful of others
- provide a safe physical and emotional environment within WECC
- provide access to specialised equipment and resources and access to appropriate support services, as required

When working with families, educators will:

- show sensitivity to and respect for the range of family structures, social values and child rearing practices evident within WECC families
- acknowledge that parents best know their child and use this information in the care of their child
- empower families as decision-makers about their children's learning and wellbeing
- work through a family-centred practice approach in partnership with families
- provide a program that responds to the individual strengths and needs of all children and respects the priorities and concerns of the child's family

When working with others:

- WECC Management supports educators to extend their knowledge of inclusive and anti-bias practices through training opportunities, publications and discussions at staff and other meetings
- educators establish and maintain links with organisations that promote inclusion and/or provide specialised support or resources
- educators take responsibility for the care and learning of all children
- educators work together as a whole team, including any support educators, in meeting the interests and needs of all children
- educators develop an Individualised Family Service Plan in collaboration with families and other professionals/agencies, for children with specific additional needs

Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Bias

In relation to cultural or national origin and racial identity:

- children and educators will have access to information and training about other cultures/racial identity, especially those relevant in the Service
- educators will work with one another, families and children to continue to extend both their individual and communities' cultural competence
- educators will expose children to a wide variety of concrete materials from daily life of families/cultures
- where possible, the Service will employ Educators that reflect various cultural, national origin and racial identities
- educators will affirm and foster children's knowledge and pride in cultural identity
- educators will foster children's curiosity, enjoyment and empathetic awareness of cultural differences and similarities
- educators will teach children to overcome any inappropriate responses triggered by cultural differences
- educators will encourage children to ask about their own and other's physical characteristics
- educators will enable children to feel pride, but not superiority, about their racial identity. Educators will help children to become aware of our shared physical characteristics – what makes us all human
- educators will encourage parent input into the program, sharing culture, racial identity i.e. first language and to participate on a level that they feel comfortable
- educators will collect information from each family on enrolment and incorporate it in the program to meet individual family needs re: ethnicity and home language

- educators where possible will use both the Educators and children's first language verbally and visually within the Service environment.
- educators will respect all cultures by presenting photographs, pictures, play equipment, books, posters, music, dramatic play and dolls that will encourage open discussion and exploration
- Where possible creative materials will include 2D and 3D materials of different skin tones
- educators will present books that reflect different languages and children's first language
- educators will know and understand the needs, strengths and attitudes of each culture who attend the Service
- educators will challenge inappropriate or stereotypical conversation with the children

In relation to Gender Equity educators will:

- ensure that all children are given equal opportunities to engage in all experiences and interactions regardless of their gender
- monitor and reflect on their own interactions for bias and reflect regularly on the language used with children
- aim to use gender inclusive language
- offer opportunities for both male and female family members to be equally involved within the program
- assist children to identify stereotypes and unfair treatment so that they can discuss ways in which to include the perspectives of others
- be positive role models
- provide resource materials that are not stereotypical
- provide diversity of gender play e.g. mechanic workshop, males and females in work and play clothes
- provide a balance of men and woman involved in a variety of jobs in and out of the home e.g. show men and women repair-people, doctors, beautician, police officer, salesperson, teacher, etc.

In relation to Diversity in Family Composition:

- educators will create an environment that is welcoming to all families
- educators will respect each family, and work in partnership to support the child's emergency identity as an individual, member of their family, WECC and the community
- educators will provide resources, books, puzzles, that reflect diversity in family structure including same sex, single parent, extended, nuclear, step and adopted families
- educators will engage in simple discussion about families that focus on fact rather than values e.g. "some children live with their Mum or Dad, some children live with their Mum and Dad, some with grandparents, and some with two mums or two dads"
- educators will be encouraged to seek awareness and reflect on his/her own feelings, beliefs and background and evaluating the effect these may have on their attitudes and interactions with families
- educators will incorporate various family lifestyle choices during discussions ensuring that they reflect diversity in income. They will treat all families regardless of socioeconomic background with respect
- the educators and children will discuss how members of the community can support one another through the provision of resources, donations of goods or time, etc.

In relation to Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander People:

- educators will deepen their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander culture through attending professional development, reading current information and regularly reflecting together as a team to embed Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and culture into the program in a positive way, consistent with how local Indigenous community wish to be presented
- WECC will develop an Acknowledgement of Country, which will be displayed and will be conveyed during special events and incorporated into the program on a regular basis
- educators will develop awareness/understanding about the Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people as part of the cultural heritage of all Australians

- educators will show respect for the Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander culture, aiming to instil sensitivity/appreciation of the culture and a knowing and valuing of individuals
- educators will encourage access of the Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander community into mainstream of children services
- educators will show sensitivity and respect the numerous Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander languages by incorporating where possible verbal and visual language in the WECC environment
- educators will access and encourage involvement of the Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander families, educators and community members who have a vast knowledge of their culture

In relation to ability Educators will:

- educators will provide an inclusive educational environment in which all children can succeed
- educators will promote acceptance, respect and appreciation for individuals varying abilities
- educators will consult with all families and other professionals to enable full participation in the program for children with varying abilities. Educators will evaluate and alter the environment to enable all children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride
- educators will provide children and parents with developmentally appropriate information about varying abilities to foster understandings that we are all similar and different
- educators will empower all children in their own learning to ensure that they gain a feeling of self-respect
- educators will treat all children equally and develop an understanding that everyone has something important to contribute
- educators will display images of people of a range of ages, including elderly people and young children doing different activities
- educators will create an environment where all children can participate in activities and experiences

Promoting inclusion and diversity into the curriculum

- educators will promote positive influences, modelling appropriate communication, non-bias or gender specific language and attitudes
- educators will take a flexible approach with children and families
- educators will develop appropriate expectations for each child
- the Nominated Supervisor or Director will assist educators with the development of required skills and knowledge for working with children and families
- the Nominated Supervisor or Director will work with Inclusion support facilitators to aid the inclusion of children with additional needs
- educators will explore the values and uniqueness of the diversity within WECC. These opportunities will form part of the curriculum
- educators will provide children with a range of resources, equipment and opportunities to enhance their awareness of diversity
- educators will incorporate children's home language
- educators will reflect on the curriculum ensuring inclusive practice and goals set for children are being met
- educators will involve families in the planning of learning opportunities reflective of their culture
- displaying positive behaviours and making WECC's environment welcoming to all children and families – to ensure a sense of belonging
- building on existing program strengths and accessing specialised advice and appropriate training and additional resources when required
- planning for successful transition between areas of WECC to support the child's wellbeing and continuity in learning and development
- ensuring inclusive behaviours and practices occur in social contexts throughout each moment of the day
- supporting children to work together to communicate, generate ideas and solve problems
- discussing difference as a positive aspect of who we are, rather than one type of difference being superior to another

In relation to Educators demonstrating respect for and valuing of diversity by:

- being positive role models to support children construct their knowledge of diversity
- providing, wherever possible, information in other relevant community languages, both those relevant to WECC and/or within the wider community
- seeking and utilising interpreters, as needed
- being sensitive to but also encouraging families to share their values, beliefs and attitudes in contributing to policies and WECC practices
- supporting the use of a child's home language within WECC
- ensuring resources and equipment respectfully reflect the indigenous heritage and multi-cultural society, as part of daily practice
- discussing with families how special occasions can be celebrated in meaningful and respectful ways

In relation to Educators promoting a child's sense of self, valuing of differences and act to prevent or address bias and prejudice by:

- encouraging the different perspectives of children and families and demonstrating that these perspectives are encouraged and valued
- talking regularly about their own values, attitudes and beliefs and how these may be similar or different to each other and the families using WECC
- genuinely incorporating these perspectives in WECC's philosophy, broad goals and policies
- modelling attentive listening and showing empathy towards others
- ensuring resources reflect positive perspectives relating to gender and diversity of culture and language and that any stereotypes are challenged
- actively intervening to assist children in challenging bias, prejudice or stereotypes
- responding to child's play to help them recognise unfair behaviour
- role-modelling behaviour and language that describes emotions and feelings, equity and fairness

Additional Needs

We understand that additional needs may be temporary or permanent and ascend from diverse origins, which require different responses. Supporting children with additional needs enables them to participate and feel included; this also helps promote their strengths and may reduce their risk of developing mental health difficulties. Strategies for supporting children with additional needs can diverge significantly, because every child is unique.

In accordance with the National Quality Standard, WECC positively responds to and welcomes children with additional needs who:

- are Aboriginal and 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 of stress
- are at risk of abuse or neglect
- are experiencing language and communication difficulties
- have a diagnosed disability – physical, sensory, intellectual or autism spectrum disorder
- have a medical or health condition
- demonstrate challenging behaviours and behavioural or psychological disorders
- have developmental delays
- have learning difficulties
- are gifted or have special talents
- have other extra support needs

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will ensure:

- 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
- the program and curriculum is inclusive and meets the individual needs of children with additional needs
- WECC works with external professionals and families to certify the educational program and learning environment is most suited to each child with additional needs, including children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds. We will keep a copy for any specific plans or instructions provided by external resource providers and professionals for children with additional needs
- children's sensory sensitivities are pressure, texture, smell, noise or visual expectation of the environment or colour is considered within the environment
- children are encouraged to feel safe and secure during their education and care at WECC by developing trusting relationships with educators, other children and the community
- encourage families to meet with the educators who will be working with the child to converse and comprehend the child's needs and to certify the suitable resources and support provided to both the family and the child
- support educators through professional development and networking with professional agencies to certify educators are meeting the needs of each individual child
- seek assistance, training and where possible, financial funding from inclusive support agencies to promote the development of skills in children with identified additional needs
- ensure privacy and confidentiality for children and families is maintained

Educators will:

- treat children equally and fairly regardless of perceived dissimilarities
- create an inclusive program, which is adaptable and supportive of all children
- advocate for children's rights
- create a flexible environment, which can be adapted for each child's needs within WECC to support the inclusion of children with additional needs
- implement programming experiences and activities, encouraging children to explore and participate
- listen carefully to children's concerns and discuss diverse perspectives on issues of inclusions and exclusion and fair and unfair behaviour
- work with other professionals who play a role in supporting the child's development
- seek specific professionals who play a role in supporting the child's development
- seek specific professional intervention and training in order to meet the individual child's needs
- develop and Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) for each child that will be kept on file at WECC and shared with families, the child's medical practitioners and/or professional support services
- 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
- work with families to meet children's developmental needs, building strengths and capabilities
- work collaboratively with health professionals and families together to discuss and plans to support children
- talk to children about differences and acceptance
- providing opportunities for all children to play and learn together, promoting cooperative, caring and pro social behaviours

Gender Equity

Dau suggests the following principles as a basis to challenge sexism and promote anti-bias behaviour:

- be prepared to challenge sexist attitudes and behaviours
- ensure that you protect the child or adult who has been treated unfairly
- explain what you think is unfair about their attitudes and behaviours and if appropriate, model anti-sexist attitudes and behaviours
- correct any incorrect and sexist assumptions a child has about gender
- plan a strategy for how to deal with a similar situation in the future

the Director, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person/Educator will:

- be mindful and respectful of how activities and experiences provided may impact on the expectations, interests and behaviours of all genders
- provide a stimulating learning environment in which all children will be encouraged to explore a full range of experiences and emotions
- act as advocates of children in dealing with other adults who act in a bias manner against a child due to their gender
- discourage the identification of particular skills, behaviours and feelings as 'boys' and 'girls'
- encourage children to look upon both sexes as equal
- support the gender equity policy review by focusing on how children constructed gender, the effects of gender in curriculum, teaching and learning
- be responsive and ensure their actions are relevant to the specific and changing gender dynamics that emerge from the different ways in which different children interpret gender
- monitor language, attitudes and assumptions with regard to gender and anti-bias of themselves, other educators and children
- give positive messages about gender equity through their actions and words and avoid giving messages that promote traditional gender roles and gender bias
- critically reflect on their practices and environment and model a positive attitude towards gender equality
- encourage and support all children to participate in the full range of experiences and activities
- encourage all children to express their emotions and to display affection and empathy
- regularly review resources, equipment, materials and images used with children to make sure they include gender diversity, non-stereotypical images and non-traditional family lifestyles such as single or same sex parents
- encourage children to explore their own gender identities and the impact of gender relations in their play

Multi-Cultural

Director, Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person will ensure:

- that child-rearing practices reflect cultural context
- that all children and families are treated equally and fairly and with respect at all times
- WECC creates and maintains links with local culturally diverse communities
- a sense of inclusion for all families will be embraced within WECC
- there is specific programming and cultural awareness activities and experiences, identifying similarities and differences and learning about cultural celebrations
- WECC builds and maintains cultural resources
- encourage children, families and staff to respect and value others, including those who are different from themselves
- children, staff and family's cultural backgrounds are reflected in developing routines and program consistent with best practice and positive outcomes for all stakeholders
- communication for families can be translated into their home language wherever possible
- educators attend professional learning opportunities to develop a better understanding of cultural diversity
- to acknowledge the unique cultural and social perspectives of each family
- that all children and families have equal access to WECC, and are welcomed and respected regardless of race, culture, colour of skin, socioeconomic status, ability family composition, belief systems or lifestyles

- positive attitudes towards differences in appearance, culture and lifestyle
- adherence to the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics

Educators will:

- encourage children to respect and value others, including those who are different from themselves
- ensure children do not exclude others on the basis of differences such as race, sex or ability
- ensure that the self-identity of each child is valued and respected
- encourage children to explore and accept diversity
- challenge bias and stereotypes
- provide an inclusive environment
- address bias or comments about difference
- model inclusive practices
- ensure privacy and confidentiality is maintained
- use unbiased language – avoid racist, sexist, discrimination, stereotyped remarks
- ensure own interactions are responsive to all children and families
- ensure all displays, posters, children's books and other materials are monitored to ensure they are inclusive of all people
- be sensitive to specific cultural behaviour or dress, which may be different to their own beliefs
- ensure each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are consistently incorporated and actively drive all aspects of the program
- develop strong foundations in the culture and language of WECC families and in that of the broader community, without compromising cultural identities

Evaluation

This policy aims to assist children to form positive social relationships and to learn to accept the diversity of members of the WECC community.

Related policies /documents

- *Dau, E (Ed) (2001). The Anti-Bias Approach in Early Childhood (2nd Edition). NSW Longman*
- *Department of Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – Child Care Service Handbook 2005-2006*
- *Policies by Sutherland Street Childcare and Kindergarten, Kilmore*

Statutory legislation and considerations

- The Education and Care Services National Law
- The Education and Care Services National Regulations

Sources and references

- ACECQA
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ECA Code of Ethics
- Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being and Becoming
- Exploring Multiculturalism – www.cscentral.org.au/Resources/Exploring_Multiculturalism.pdf
- Early Intervention Australia (NSW Branch) www.ecia-nsw.org.au

- Department of Community Services (2002) NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's services: The Practice of Relationships. Sydney. NSW DoCS Office of Childcare
- Diversity in Child Care Queensland Inc.
- Kids Matter – <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood/about-mental-health/about-mental-health-and-wellbeing-children-additional-needs>
- Putting Children First, Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Issue 23 September 2007
- Children's Services Central – Early Identification of Children with Additional Needs
- The Business of Childcare, Karen Kearns
- Relationships with Children – http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/wp-consent/uploads/2012/06/NQS_PLP_E-Newsletter_No36.pdf
- Lady Gowrie NSW

Authorisation

Meng Wang
President
2018-19 WECC Management Committee