Information sheet
MY TIME, OUR PLACE

Equity, inclusion and high expectations

Quality educational programs promote a view of all children as capable and competent learners. Educators who are committed to equity recognise that all children have the right to participate in inclusive early childhood services, regardless of their circumstances, strengths, gender, capabilities or diverse ways of doing and being.

This information sheet is on the renamed *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0, 2022* (MTOP V2.0) Principle, Equity, inclusion and high expectations. It provides you with reflective questions as you consider your practice, service philosophy and program in relation to this principle.

Links to the National Quality Standard (NQS)

The NQS recognises the potential of the educational program and practices to enhance each child's learning and development. The MTOP V2.0 Principle, Equity, inclusion and high expectations is reflected in several quality areas of the NQS, with a particular focus in:

QA1: Educational program and practice

> **Element 1.1.2**: Child-centred – Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.

> **Element 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.

> **Element 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.

QA2: Children's health and safety

> **Element 2.1.1**: Wellbeing and comfort – Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

QA3: Physical environment

> **Element 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.

QA4: Staffing arrangements

> **Standard 4.2**: Professionalism – Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.

QA5: Relationships with children

> **Standard 5.1**: Relationships between educators and children – Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.

QA6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

> **Standard 6.2**: Collaborative partnerships – Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing..

QA7: Governance and Leadership

> **Element 7.1.1**: Service philosophy and purpose – A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

> **Element 7.2.3**: Development of professionals – Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performances are regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

What is the change?

The principle high expectations and equity as been renamed to Equity, inclusion and high expectations.

Rationale for the change

- The expansion of this principle includes a focus on inclusion, recognising that all children and young people have the right to participate in quality and inclusive school age care settings, regardless of their circumstances, strengths, gender, capabilities or diverse ways of doing and being.

- There has been considerable growth in research and understanding relating to inclusive environments and practices for children and young people.

- Inclusion makes visible and celebrates the diversity of children and young people's lives. The revision draws on new knowledge and evidence-based practice to strengthen inclusion in school age care settings, whereby educators enact inclusion for all.

What will this change look like in practice?

- Educators intentionally plan for and create inclusive learning environments and adopt flexible and informed practices, including making reasonable adjustments to optimise access, participation and engagement in learning.

- Educators nurture children and young people's feelings and emotions, such as optimism, happiness and sense of fun and support children's friendships and interactions with each other.

- Educators engage in critical reflection, challenge practices that contribute to inequities or discrimination, and make curriculum, routines, rituals and practice decisions that promote genuine participation and inclusion for all children and young people.

- Educators recognise and actively respond and challenge barriers that some children and young people face. For example, attitudinal and practical barriers that may be related to disability, family diversity, cultural and linguistic diversity, neurodiversity, and children and families living through trauma and adversity.

- Educators view all children and young people as capable and competent learners with a right to participate, be reflected in and contribute to the school age care and to succeed regardless of diverse circumstances, focusing on strengths, cultural background and abilities.

- Service operations, policies and practices do not discriminate against children, young people or others either directly or indirectly.

- Educators actively listen to the child and family and provide the opportunity for them to make choices about decisions that affect them to encourage them to feel valued and provide a foundation for ongoing conversations about their learning, development and wellbeing.

- Educators monitor and evaluate the adjustments made with the child, young people and family to see if they are still supporting the child or if changes are needed.

- Educators actively refer to and engage with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and ECA's Code of Ethics.

- Educators are engaged in active research, incorporating information from the services in the community, to support equity and inclusion.

Practice is evident for school age children when:

- children and young people are provided with multiple means of representation

- reasonable adjustments to the environment, routine and program are offered and implemented

- consideration is given to the different engagement needs of children and young people.

Reflective questions and provocations

- How does your service philosophy guide quality practice that reflects a commitment to equity, inclusion and high expectation for all children?
  - » Be You – Leading an inclusive learning community
- How well does the team understand what motivates or supports a child or young person in the learning community to participate? And what could be done to improve understanding and knowledge?
  - » Emerging Minds – The whole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child (Vimeo)
- Do children and young people have choice and autonomy in how they participate in their learning environment? What adjustments or modifications can be made to experiences that ensure children can participate according to their strengths, abilities or interests?
  - » ACECQA – DDA tip sheet – 6 tips for making reasonable adjustments in OSHC settings
- What visual or auditory delivery methods could be introduced? And how would access to digital tools and platforms help?
  - » NSW Department of Education – Universal Design for Learning planning tool
- Take a walk around your service. Is it welcoming, accessible and responsive to the diverse range of children and families in the community? How has the physical learning space been organised and designed so that children and young people can access what they need without having to ask?
  - » City of Darebin – Creating Gender Equitable Spaces (YouTube)
- How are children and young people provided with more than one way in the learning community to show who they are, what they know and what they need, and given enough flexibility in time and opportunities?
  - » Be You – What is inclusion?
- How does your curriculum decision making demonstrate high expectations for all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and provide opportunities and access to learning to enable them to be successful learners, and confident and strong in their identities?
  - » ACECQA – Information sheet – QA5 Relationships with Children
  - » PWD Australia – PWDA Disability Language Guide (YouTube)

ACECQA references and resources

- Australian Government Department of Education – My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0, 2022
- ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework
- ACECQA – DDA tip sheet – 6 tips for making reasonable adjustments in OSHC settings
- ACECQA – Information sheet – QA5 Relationships with Children
- ACECQA – Information sheet – QA2 Active supervision: Ensuring safety and promoting learning
- ACECQA – Self-regulation and reflective conversations in OSHC

Other references and resources

- Be You – What is inclusion?
- Be You – Mindfulness
- Be You – Leading an inclusive learning community
- Be You – Quick guide to inclusive language

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- City of Darebin – Creating Gender Equitable Spaces (YouTube)
- Emerging Minds – The whole Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child (Vimeo)
- NSW Department of Education – Universal Design for Learning planning tool
- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian – Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Scheme (Bing)
- National Office for Child Safety – Keeping our kids safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- PWD Australia – PWDA Disability Language Guide (YouTube)