

## Diversity and Inclusion

### - *Inclusion Plan*

#### **Policy Statement**

Ensuring the practices relating to children’s rights as set out in the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child, Code of Ethics and Federal and State/Territory Equal Opportunity legislation guides the service in determining diversity and inclusion.

#### **Policy Purpose**

Our early childhood programs believe all children have the right to have their culture acknowledged and respected while valuing the importance of diverse experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge and skills that our community cohort encompasses and will actively support the inclusion of all children including those with additional needs.

Meerilinga will ensure the care environment is free from bias and prejudice in which children and families learn principles of fairness and respect for the uniqueness of each person. The service involves community to assist educators/staff and children to understand and accept a range of cultures and abilities. Differences in backgrounds, culture and abilities are valued and families are actively encouraged to share their experiences with educators/staff and other families and community. The service will ensure appropriate inclusion support services are accessed to support children’s wellbeing and inclusion into the program.

#### **Scope**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Persons, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, user groups and community.

#### **Exclusions**

#### **Policy Review**

Biennial or from time to time when the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operations and customer service.

<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>5 November 2023</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Advisor Policy &amp; Compliance</b>
<b>Approved By</b>	<b>CEO</b>		
<b>Previous Review</b>	<b>18 February 2022</b>		

#### **Implementation**

Co-ordinator, Educators and staff will actively seek information from children, families and the community, about their cultural traditions, customs and beliefs, and use this information to provide children with a variety of experiences that will enrich the environment within the Service.

We will work in partnership with families to provide care that meets the child's needs and is consistent with the family's culture, beliefs and values. Specific requests will be honoured where practical to demonstrate respect and ensure continuity of care for the child.

The Meerilinga community will obtain and use resources that reflect the diversity of children, families and the community. To increase awareness and appreciation of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of our land.

Co-ordinator, Educators and staff will be sensitive and attentive to all children, respect their backgrounds, unique qualities and abilities, ensure that the environment reflects the lives of the children and families using the service and the cultural diversity of the broader community, and ensure children's individual needs are accommodated at the Service.

Children with additional needs will be provided with support so they can be included as within the service. This may require the assistance of social, ethnic or special needs services which the service will access in collaboration with the child's family, and/or adapting the environment, routines and/or educator/staffing arrangements in order to facilitate inclusion.

All children will be treated equitably and encouraged to treat each other with respect and fairness.

Educators and staff will role model appropriate ways to challenge discrimination and prejudice, and actively promote inclusive behaviours in children.

Children will never be singled out, or made to feel inferior to or better than others. Educators and children will discuss incidents of bias or prejudice in children's play or relationships with each other, to help children to understand and use intentional teaching strategies to counteract these behaviours.

Families will be consulted in the development of holistic programs that are responsive to children's lives, interests and learning styles, and reflect children's family, culture and community.

Educators will create opportunities as an integral part of their daily programs for children to learn about, develop respect for, and celebrate the diversity that exists in the Service and in the broader community by:

- Encouraging all families, children and other educators/staff to share their experiences, skills, cultures and beliefs;
- Inviting community members to the service to share their stories, songs, experiences, skills, cultures and beliefs;
- Accessing and using a range of resources (including multi-cultural and multi-lingual resources) that reflect the diversity of children and families in the Centre and in the broader community.

During the induction process, all Employees are oriented to the organisations code of conduct/code of ethics.

Employees will attend professional development that builds awareness of their own cultural beliefs and values, increases their cultural competence and helps them to challenge discrimination and prejudice.

### **Inclusion Support Agencies**

The Service will access the pool of bicultural support workers to assist communication with families from diverse cultural backgrounds and/or telephone translation services when required. Provide brochures/information on aspects of the service in languages that are spoken in the local community.

The Service will access additional support, assistance and resources for children with additional needs including children from diverse cultural backgrounds, children with high ongoing support needs (including disabilities) and Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders.

Educators will discuss any concerns relevant to a child with their parents/guardians. Families will be offered links to other support services within the community such as Inclusion Support Agencies; Community Health Services etc.

Educators work with families, inclusion support agencies and other specialists to develop individual support plans for children with additional needs.

### ***Co-ordinator / Nominated Supervisor:***

- Providing all children with the opportunity to access programs at the service, and recognising that all families are unique and that children learn in different ways and at different rates consistently updating and supporting the knowledge, skills, practices and attitudes of staff to encourage and ensure inclusion and equity.
- Will ensure opportunities are created for families and children and community members to learn about, develop respect for and celebrate the diversity that exists at the Service and the broader community by:
  - Encouraging all families, children and other educators/staff to share their experiences, skills, cultures and beliefs
  - Inviting community members to the Service to share stories, songs, experiences, skills, cultured and beliefs.
  - Accessing and using a range of resources to reflect the diversity of children and families in the Service and in the broader community.
- The Service will access Inclusion support, assistance and resources for children with additional needs including children from diverse backgrounds, children with high ongoing support needs, including disabilities and ATSI children.
- Will discuss any concerns with the parents and offer family links to other support services within the community such as Community Health or Inclusion Agencies.

**Educators:**

- Will actively seek information for children, families and the community, about their cultural traditions, customs and beliefs and use this information to provide children with a variety of experiences that will enrich the environment within the Service.
- To work in partnership with families to provide care that meets the requirements and needs that is consistent with family's culture, beliefs and care practices
- Will obtain and use resources that reflect the diversity of children, families and the community to increase awareness and appreciation of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural heritage.
- Acknowledge and respecting the rights of all children to be provided with and participate in a quality early childhood education and care program
- Create an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices
- Create a sense of belonging for all children, families and staff, where diverse identities, backgrounds, experiences, skills and interests are respected, valued and given opportunities to be expressed/developed
- Ensure that programs are reflective of, and responsive to, the values and cultural beliefs of families using the service, and of those within the local community and broader society working to ensure children are not discriminated against on the basis of background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, level of ability or additional needs, family structure or lifestyle
- Children with Additional needs will be provided with support so they can be included within the services programs. This may require the assistance of social, ethic or inclusion support in collaboration with the family/adapting the environment, routines and staffing arrangements in order to facilitate an inclusive environment.
- Will treat all children equitably and encourage them to treat each other with respect and fairness.
- Will role model appropriate ways to challenge discrimination and prejudice and actively promote inclusive behaviours with children.
- Parents/guardians are consulted with in program planning to ensure this documentation is responsive to their child's life, interests, and abilities and learning style as well as reflecting the family's culture and community.
- Will work with families, inclusion support agencies and other specialists working with the child to develop and evaluate inclusion plans