

Yarram Early Learning Inclusion and Equity Policy

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines to:

- Ensure all adults and children at Yarram Early Learning are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, level of ability, additional needs, family structure or lifestyle
- Promote inclusive practices and ensure the successful participation of all children at Yarram Early Learning.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Yarram Early Learning is committed to:

- Acknowledging and respecting the rights of all children to be provided with and participate in a quality early childhood education and care program
- Creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices
- Creating 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
- Ensuring 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
- Ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease or blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to *definitions*)
- Upholding the values and principles of early childhood Australia (ECA) and early childhood intervention Australia's (ECA) *position statement on the inclusion of children with a disability in early childhood education and care* (refer to *sources*)
- 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
- Complying with current legislation including the *charter of human rights and responsibilities act 2006*, *equal opportunity act 2010*, *disability act 2006* and *racial and religious tolerance act 2001*.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Yarram Early Learning.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

It is intended that all Victorian children have access to a year of kindergarten before school. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity for all children. Yarram Early Learning follows the criteria for access and inclusion are outlined in the *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria* (refer to Sources) and complies with existing legislation.

Yarram Early Learning is guided by State and Commonwealth laws that prohibit discrimination based on personal characteristics, including race, age, gender, religious belief, disability and parental status. Underpinning the development of this policy are the requirements of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, *Disability Act 2006*, *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

“Inclusion involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes” (*Guide to the National Quality Standard*, Element 1.1.5 – refer to Sources).

In addition to developing and implementing an inclusion and equity policy, values of inclusion and equity are also incorporated into Yarram Early Learning philosophy statement (see *Curriculum Development Policy*).

Developing professional knowledge and skills, using family-centred practice (refer to Definitions) to work in partnership with children, families, communities, and other services and agencies, assists Yarram Early Learning to identify, include and support children with additional needs and their families.

Yarram Early Learning understands that under the Commonwealth's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, it is illegal to discriminate against a person on the basis of the presence of organisms in their body that are capable of causing disease or illness. Yarram Early Learning is also obligated by law, service agreements and licensing requirements to comply with the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *National Regulations*, and privacy and health records legislation in relation to collecting and storing personal and health information about individuals (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

Yarram Early Learning Educators actively challenge prejudice and stereotyping through the design and implementation of an inclusive curriculum that supports the principles of equity including an anti-bias approach to teaching and learning.

Yarram Early Learning will:

- Maximise children's self-esteem concerning their own identity (including cultural identity).
- Encourage children's awareness and acceptance of difference.
- Foster children's interest and delight in diversity.
- Develop children's awareness of their own country's history and cultures (including Australian indigenous culture).
- Increase children's knowledge and appreciation of cultures other than their own.
- Encourage children's positive attitudes towards beliefs and lifestyles of diverse cultures.
- Develop children's ability to deal with unfairness and bias shown towards themselves and others.
- Encourage children's respect for others and their appreciation of the value of others, including those with disabilities.
- Ensure that programs truly reflect equality of opportunity for both boys and girls.
- Ensure that children are assisted to value others and not exclude others on the basis of differences.
- Ensure that staff feel valued, accepted and supported in their efforts to provide an inclusive curriculum and individualised program for children.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Yarram Early Learning is committed to the establishment of collaborative partnerships that link parents, children and staff together as a caring and resourceful community. Research indicates that family involvement is a crucial element in the provision of high quality, early childhood programs (see Attachment 1). Parents are welcome to visit the service at any time to share their skills and interests or just to enjoy being part of the program. Individual arrangements for program participation can be made directly with Educators.

Yarram Early Learning is committed to the ongoing attainment of excellence within all areas of its service delivery. Parents, as the primary influences in their children's lives, are encouraged to share their beliefs and values regarding the education and care of their children. Regular input is sought via a feedback box in the foyer. Parent feedback is analysed to support quality improvement across a range of areas.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- [Age Discrimination Act 2004](#)
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Charter for Children in Out-of-home Care \(Vic\)](#)
- [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Child Safe Standards \(Vic\)](#)

- Dardee Boorai: the Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People (Vic)
- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- National Quality Standards Quality Areas 1-7
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Additional needs: A broad term that can include families and children experiencing disability, a medical condition, a developmental concern, an emotional need (resulting from trauma, abuse or grief), family displacement (due to war or refugee status), domestic violence, mental illness, family separation or divorce.

Blood-borne virus (BBV): A virus that is spread when blood from an infected person enters another person's bloodstream. Examples of blood-borne viruses include human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B, hepatitis C and viral hemorrhagic fevers. Where basic hygiene, safety, infection control and first aid procedures are followed, the risk of contracting a blood-borne virus is negligible.

Culture: The values and traditions of groups of people that are passed from one generation to another.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD): Refers to individuals and groups who are from diverse racial, religious, linguistic and/or ethnic backgrounds.

Developmental delay: A delay in the development of a child under the age of 6 years that:

1. Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, or a combination of mental and physical impairments, and
2. Is manifested before the child attains the age of 6 years, and
3. Results in substantial functional limitations in one or more of the following areas of major life activity:
 - self-care
 - receptive and expressive language
 - cognitive development
 - motor development, and
4. Reflects the child's need for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic care, treatment or other services that are of

extended duration and are individually planned and co-ordinated (*Disability Act 2006 (Vic)*).

Disability: In relation to a person, refers to:

- a) A sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury, or any combination thereof, that:
 - Is, or is likely to be, permanent, and
 - Causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication, and
 - Requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support, and
 - Is not related to ageing, or
- b) An intellectual disability, or
- c) A developmental delay (*Disability Act 2006 (Vic)*).

Diversity: Refers to all characteristics that make individuals different from one another, including race, religion, language, ethnicity, beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, level of ability, additional needs, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, personality, marital and/or parental status, family structure, lifestyle and general life/work experience.

Early Start Kindergarten: A funding program that enables three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to attend a free kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/earlychildhoodupdate/Pages/ec_update_earlystartkinder19.aspx

Equity: (In the context of human rights) is the behaviour of acting in a fair and just manner towards others.

Family-centred practice: Children learn in the context of their families, and families are the primary influence on children's learning and development. Professionals also play a role in advancing children's learning and development and can engage in family-centred practice by respecting the pivotal role of families in children's lives. Early childhood professionals should:

- use families' understanding of their children to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
- create a welcoming and culturally-inclusive environment, where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development
- actively engage families and children in planning children's learning and development
- provide feedback to families on each child's learning, and provide information about how families can further advance children's learning and development at home and in the community (*Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*, p10).

Inclusion: The incorporation of children and families into the service to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

Inclusion support agencies: Funded by the Commonwealth Government to provide advice on inclusive practices in childcare services. Inclusion Support Facilitators are employed to help services access a range of practical support. Further information and eligibility requirements are available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/needs/Pages/kinderinclusion-support.aspx>

Inclusive practice: The provision of a flexible, innovative and responsive program that supports the learning needs and meaningful participation of all children attending the service.

Indigenous Education Program (IEP): The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) provides assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to attend a kindergarten program. The IEP provides financial assistance to support kindergarten programs through Supplementary Recurrent Assistance (SRA). Contact DEEWR on 1800 800 821 for more information.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (KISS): A program offering supplementary assistance to early childhood services to support the inclusion of children who have been diagnosed with developmental concerns, a disability or complex medical needs, into a funded kindergarten program. Services include the Preschool Field Officer Program (refer to *Definitions*) and Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages (refer to *Definitions*). For more information, visit <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx>

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages: Supplementary assistance to support children with severe disabilities or complex medical needs to access and participate in an inclusive kindergarten program.

Koorie Early Childhood Education Program: Supports Aboriginal children and their families to access and participate in kindergarten programs. The program consists of three components:

- A state-wide co-ordinator who provides support, information and assistance to regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers – Early Childhood Development
- Koorie Engagement Support Officers – Early Childhood Development (refer to *Definitions*)
- The Koorie Preschool Assistants program (refer to *Definitions*).

Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs): Employed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET) to assist families in accessing the broad range of services and support needed to ensure the best start in life for Aboriginal children from birth through to completion of school. KESOs provide advice and practical support to services that offer funded kindergarten places to ensure the delivery of programs that are respectful of the cultural beliefs and practices of Aboriginal children.

Koorie Preschool Assistants (KPSA) program: Implemented by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET) in partnership with local Aboriginal communities that employ KPSAs and administer the program. KPSAs work in kindergartens to assist teachers to develop and deliver culturally-inclusive and responsive programs for Aboriginal children.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS):

The NDIS can provide all people with disability with information and connections to services in their communities such as doctors, sporting clubs, support groups, libraries and schools, as well as information about support provided by each state and territory government.

- **National:** The NDIS is being introduced progressively across all states and territories.
- **Disability:** The NDIS provides support to eligible people with intellectual, physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial disability. Early intervention supports can also be provided for eligible people with disability or children with developmental delay.
- **Insurance:** The NDIS gives all Australians peace of mind if they, their child or loved one is born with or acquires a permanent and significant disability, they will get the support they need.
- **Scheme:** The NDIS is not a welfare system. The NDIS is designed to help people get the support they need so their skills and independence improve over time.

Mental health: in early childhood can be understood as a young child's ability to experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development (from Be You – refer to Sources).

Out-of-Home Care: Is the term used in Victoria when a child or young person is placed in care away from their parents. It includes placement in kinship care, home-based care such as foster care and residential care. For these children, the State of Victoria is their legal their parent, and with this comes the responsibilities of a parent to care for and protect them, and to ensure that they have access to all the services they need for their immediate and longer-term benefit (Early Childhood Agreement on Out-of-Home Care – refer to Sources).

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Preschool Field Officers (PSFOs): Employed by local government authorities or other agencies to assist children with additional needs to access and participate in funded kindergarten programs. The PSFO service is part of the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (refer to *Definitions*) program.

Preschool Field Officer Program: An early intervention, outreach service that is universally available within state-funded preschools for any child with developmental concerns. The primary role of the Preschool Field Officer Program is to assist children with additional needs to access and participate in funded kindergarten programs.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Association for Children with a Disability – a Victorian organisation that provides information, support and advocacy for children with a disability and their families: www.acd.org.au
- *Building better partnerships – Working with Aboriginal communities and organisations: a communication guide for the Department of Human Services:*

https://mungabareena.org.au/cdn/CTHG_Directory/Engagement_and_Partnerships/Documents/Building_Better_Partnerships.pdf

- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au
- *Dardee Boorai: the Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People*:
<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/VAC.0001.002.0116.pdf>
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and Early Childhood Intervention Australia's (ECIA) *Position Statement on the Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Early Childhood Education and Care* – available at www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au and www.ecia.org.au
- Early Childhood Intervention Australia Victorian Chapter (ECIA VC) – the peak body for early childhood intervention services in Victoria: www.eciavic.org.au
- FKA Children's Services – provides services including bicultural support, language services and training to children's services workers in Victoria. fka also provides culturally-diverse resources and materials in both English and various community languages. Visit www.fka.com.au
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services – for children who have been diagnosed with developmental concerns, a disability or complex medical needs:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/pages/kinderinclusion.aspx>
- Koorie Kindergarten Inclusion Kit:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/needs/pages/kooriekindrkit.aspx>
- Language services – organisations offering funded programs are eligible to obtain language services. Two types of language services are available for kindergarten providers: telephone interpreting and on-site interpreting (both spoken and sign languages). The provider for language services is All Graduates: visit www.allgraduates.com.au or phone 9605 3000. There is also a free multilingual phone line for individuals requiring information about kindergarten: 1300 200 680.
- *Using Interpreting Services: Victorian Government Policy and Procedures (2010)*: www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/images/stories/pdf/2383%20vmc%20interpreter%20manual%20web.pdf
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Guides – provide practical advice for early childhood professionals about each of the Practice Principles in the Victorian Early Years
- Learning and Development Framework. Each guide includes examples of best practice from a range of early childhood professionals across diverse settings. Practice Guide Four: Equity and Diversity is available at <https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/Teacher.aspx> (enter learning resource ID: GRH4TT).
- Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria:
- National Disability Insurance Scheme: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/>

SERVICE POLICIES

- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Asthma Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy

- Curriculum Development Policy
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy
- Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
- Diabetes Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Epilepsy Policy
- Fees Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Nutrition and Active Play Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Staffing Policy

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Ensuring that service programs are available and accessible to families from a variety of backgrounds (refer to Curriculum Development Policy)
- Encouraging collaborative, family-centred practice (refer to Definitions) at the service
- Providing families with information about the role of inclusive practice in achieving positive outcomes for all children, the key values underpinning inclusive practice and the support options available for children attending Yarram Early Learning
- Working with individual families to determine the needs of their child and facilitating the inclusion of both the child and the family into the service
- Ensuring that educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice *Guide Four: Equity and Diversity* – refer to Sources)
- Ensuring that the enrolment process is fair and equitable, (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*)
- Ensuring that facilities are designed or adapted to support access by every child, family, educator and staff member, including adaptive equipment to support the inclusion of all children
- Tailoring the orientation process to meet the individual needs of children and families (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*)
- Considering barriers to participation in service programs and activities, and developing strategies to overcome these
- Ensuring that staff have access to appropriate and accredited professional development activities that promote a positive understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity, and provide skills to assist in implementing this policy (refer to *Staffing Policy*)
- Ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Interactions with Children Policy*)
- Considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Yarram Early Learning, and removing these barriers wherever possible (refer to *Fees Policy*)
- Providing service information in various community languages wherever possible

- Using language services (refer to *Sources*) to assist with communication where required, considering the employment of a multilingual worker/s to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families (e.g. FKA Children's Services Casual Bilingual Program – refer to *Sources*)
- Working with the Nominated Supervisor and staff to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions*)
- Accessing Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services (refer to *Definitions*) and Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages (refer to *Definitions*) for children with disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns, where required
- Where practicable, accessing resources, support and professional development to facilitate inclusion of children with additional needs who are ineligible for specific support packages
- Working with specialised services and professionals (NDIS) to provide support and services for families and children experiencing severe disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns
- ensuring that all eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children known to Child Protection are supported to access the Early Start Kindergarten program (refer to *Definitions*)
- Accessing support from DET Koorie Engagement Support Officers (refer to *Definitions*), the Koorie Preschool Assistants program (refer to *Definitions*) and the Indigenous Education Program (refer to *Definitions*), where required
- Implementing appropriate programs and practices to support vulnerable children and families, including working co-operatively with relevant services and/or professionals (e.g. Child FIRST), where required (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- Ensuring that service programs are inclusive of children with medical conditions, including anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy (refer to *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*, *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Diabetes Policy* and *Epilepsy Policy*)
- Ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to *Definitions*), illness or medical condition
- Ensuring that any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice are dealt with in an appropriate manner (refer to *Complaints and Grievances Policy*)
- Ensuring that all policies of Yarram Early Learning, including the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, are adhered to at all times.
- Ensuring that all eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background and children known to Child Protection are supported to access the Early Start Kindergarten program (*refer to Definitions*)
- Encouraging and supporting other educators, staff and families as role models to demonstrate positive and respectful relationships, and positive mental health and wellbeing

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Being aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Interactions with Children Policy*)
- Identifying children who may be disadvantaged, have additional needs, or be at risk of discrimination/exclusion, and being aware of the

support/resources required to ensure that these children are included in service programs

- Consulting with families and liaising with the Approved Provider to access support/resources for individual children, where required
- Ensuring that parents/guardians are consulted, kept informed and provide written consent, where individualised programs, action, support or intervention are planned and provided for their child (e.g. the Preschool Field Officer Program and Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages – refer to Definitions)
- Developing an educational program that is reflective of the service's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion (Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Guide Four: Equity and Diversity – refer to Sources)
- Ensuring that the program provides opportunities for all children to participate and interact with one another
- Using language services (refer to Sources) to assist with communication, where required
- Working with the Approved Provider and staff to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to Definitions)
- Using family-centred practice (refer to Definitions) and working collaboratively with staff, parents/guardians, specialist services and other professionals to implement the program at the service and provide individualised support for children, where required
- Responding to the needs and concerns of parents/guardians, and providing support and guidance, where appropriate
- Providing information to families about the support available to assist children, including:
 - Early Start Kindergarten
 - Koorie Early Childhood Education Program
 - Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services
 - language services
- Providing support and guidance to staff, where required
- Ensuring that service programs are inclusive of children with medical conditions, including anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy (refer to Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Asthma Policy, Diabetes Policy and Epilepsy Policy)
- Ensuring that individualised programs incorporate opportunities for regular review and evaluation, in consultation with all people involved in the child's education and care
- Providing opportunities for families to contribute to the program
- Notifying the Approved Provider of any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice
- Advising the Approved Provider if they become aware of discrimination against anyone at the service on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to Definitions), illness or medical condition
- Adhering to the policies of Yarram Early Learning, including the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, at all times.

Responsible Person, educators and other staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to Code of Conduct Policy and Interactions with Children Policy)
- Using family-centred practice (refer to Definitions) and working collaboratively with other staff, parents/guardians, specialist services and professionals to implement the program at the service and provide individualised support for children, where required
- Delivering an educational program that is reflective of the service's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion (Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Guide Four: Equity and Diversity – refer to Sources)
- Using language services (refer to Sources) to assist with communication, where required
- Understanding and respecting different cultural child-rearing and social practices
- Working with the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to Definitions)
- Meeting any specialised medical and nutritional needs of children on a day-to-day basis (refer to Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy and Nutrition and Active Play Policy)
- Providing information to families about the support available to assist children, including:
 - Early Start Kindergarten
 - Koorie Early Childhood Education Program
 - Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services
 - language services
- Discussing any concerns regarding individual children with the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider, and parents/guardians
- Responding to the needs and concerns of parents/guardians, and providing support and guidance, where appropriate
- Reviewing and evaluating individualised support programs in consultation with all people involved in the child's education and care
- Critically reflecting on practice to ensure that interactions and programs embrace an approach in which children and families feel valued and respected, and that their contributions are welcomed
- Notifying the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider of any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice
- Advising the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider if they become aware of discrimination against anyone at the service on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to *Definitions*), illness or medical condition
- Adhering to the policies of Yarram Early Learning, including the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, at all times.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Adhering to the policies of Yarram Early Learning, including this *Inclusion and Equity Policy* and the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, at all times

- 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 fully informed about, and providing written consent for any individualised intervention or support proposed/provided for their child
- Responding to requests from educators for written permission to arrange for an assessment or collect reports on their child.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by Yarram Early Learning Incorporated in October 2020

Review: July 2024