



1.03 DIVERSITY

Purpose Statement

Ensuring children have the right to an education that respects their additional needs, family, culture and other identities and languages is an important consideration in educational program planning within a Family Day Care environment. A supportive and culturally safe environment provides children with an opportunity to experience a positive sense of belonging, being and becoming.

Educators' practice should be reflective and inclusive of the diverse needs of children so that they are not disadvantaged by an educator's bias or views.

Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casuals), educators, contractors, children and families.

Definitions

Diversity: differences in cultural and linguistic background, gender, lifestyle, sexuality, socio-economic status, family composition, personal beliefs and values.

Cultural Protocols: refers to the customs, lore and codes of behaviour of a particular cultural group and a way of conducting business.

Additional Needs: a broad term that can include children and families with intellectual or cognitive delay, speech or language delay, specific medical conditions (i.e cystic fibrosis, anaphylaxis) and emotional needs resulting from trauma or grief.

Policy Statement

TO ENSURE THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE TREATED AND RESPECTED EQUALLY REGARDLESS OF GENDER, AGE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, RACE, LANGUAGE, BELIEFS, ADDITIONAL NEEDS AND FAMILY STRUCTURE OR LIFESTYLE.

Procedures

Program Requirements

1. Educators are required to provide children with programs that suit their individual needs based on their current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests.
2. Educators will discuss the diverse needs of the children enrolled in their education and care setting with parents and/or guardians and identify ways in which these needs can be addressed when program planning.
3. Educators will support and encourage children to be fair and respectful of others.
4. When children with additional needs enrol in a service, educators will discuss these specific needs with parents/guardians and identify ways to address these needs (i.e. singing songs and nursery rhymes for a child with speech delay).



1.03 DIVERSITY

5. Educators are encouraged to be a positive role model in guiding and educating children. Be aware that your actions, language, gestures and behaviours may communicate biased or prejudiced opinions or feelings. Use language that promotes equity and challenge stereotypes when engaging in play based activities with children (ie. role play single parent families when playing dolls houses with children).
6. Educators are encouraged to discuss their own personal experiences, biases and prejudices with co-ordinators during field visits. Being aware of one's own beliefs and viewpoints, and discussing these openly, can be of great personal benefit when wanting to develop professional skills and knowledge.
7. Be aware of cultural protocols and discuss these with children and their families. Cultural protocols are unique to different communities so it is always important to be respectful and ask what these may be. Do not assume. Examples of cultural protocols may include:
 - a. Greetings – ask how children and families prefer to be greeted (ie preferred name or title)
 - b. Engaging elders in all decision making activities (i.e. Aboriginal culture)
 - c. Encouraging Islamic children to eat and drink with their right hand
 - d. Being respectful when meeting an infant for the first time. In some cultures (i.e. Vietnamese) it is regarded as 'bringing bad luck' if you comment on how beautiful the baby looks. A good way of avoiding this, is for instance by commenting on how much the baby resembles the mother or father.
 - e. Asking permission before photographing a child
 - f. Mealtime etiquette (i.e reciting grace, eating with chopsticks etc)
 - g. Celebrating special occasions – Easter, Christmas, New Year, birthdays etc. Are these milestones celebrated and if so, how?

Embedding Culture in Practice – Suggestions for Educators

There are a number of ways in which educators can embed history and culture into everyday practice. The below table provides a number of suggestions for educator's.

Suggested Activity	Strategies
Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the library and look for 'Dreamtime' stories to share with children • Access Dreamtime stories online to share with children • Engage children in NAIDOC week celebrations (held around Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what music children enjoy listening to and play during rest times • Visit toy libraries to borrow musical instruments that represent different cultures.



1.03 DIVERSITY

Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage children in varied art and craft activities that represent the cultures of the children enrolled in care (ie Chinese lanterns, aboriginal clapping sticks etc).
Diversity Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use a diversity calendar as a guide NOTE: the Department of Social Services produce an excellent calendar of cultural and religious dates. You may like to use this as a reference: https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/a-multicultural-australia/government-building-social-cohesion/calendar-of-cultural-and-religious-dates

Relevant Standards/Legislation

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
 - Education and Care Services National Law 2011
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Related Policies & Links

- Understanding Children's Behaviour* procedure
- Interactions with Children* procedure
- Sleep & Rest* procedure
- Department of Social Services, Calendar of Cultural and Religious Dates