



Inclusion and Equity Policy

Authorisation	DSCC Management Committee
Review Date	March 2021
Approved Date	30 March 2021
Next Review Date (Frequency)	March 2024 (3 years) or sooner as required.
Relevant Documents	Attachment 1: VALUES, GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO: Gender equity, Inclusion, Multiculturalism, Preventing heterosexism and homophobia

AUTHORISATION

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Dawson Street Child Care Co-operative (DSCC), at a committee meeting on the Approved Date defined above.

POLICY STATEMENT

Values

DSCC 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, health status, level of ability or additional needs, family structure or lifestyle.
- considering the mental health and wellbeing needs of all children, families and staff.

Purpose

This policy provides guidelines to:

- ensure all adults and children at Dawson Street Child Care Co-operative (DSCC) 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 DSCC
- create a positive mental health and wellbeing environment for children, educators, staff and families at DSCC.

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of DSCC.

Background and legislation

Background

The National Quality Framework (NQF) recognises all children's capacity and right to succeed regardless of diverse circumstances, cultural background and abilities. Education and care services must hold high expectations for the learning and development of all children, and at the same time recognise that every child follows an individual learning path and will progress in different and equally meaningful ways. Inclusion involves taking into account children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. Early childhood education and care services must implement responsive, equitable, individualised opportunities and additional support whenever barriers are identified.

The NQF is underpinned by a commitment to 'Closing the Gap' and acknowledges Australia is a nation of great diversity, and an ancient land that has been cared for by Indigenous Australians for many thousands of years. Education and care services have a shared responsibility to support children, families, colleagues and the local community to understand, respect and value diversity.

State and Commonwealth laws prohibit discrimination based on personal characteristics, including race, age, gender, religious belief, disability or illness and parental status.

Under the Child Safe Standards, services are expected to provide environments and activities that encourage all children to participate in and celebrate their identity. The standards are underpinned by three overarching principles which require services to take into consideration the increased vulnerability of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities.

The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity for all children to enable their full participation in kindergarten. A service's philosophy should reflect the values of inclusion and equity which are supported by developing and implementing an inclusion and equity policy. Developing professional knowledge and skills, and using family-centred practice (refer to *Definitions*) to work in partnership with children, families, communities, and other services and agencies, will assist services to identify, include and support children with additional needs and their families.

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 relating to challenges experienced across a number of areas including physical health, mental health, disability, developmental concern, or emotional need (resulting from trauma, abuse or grief), family displacement (due to war or refugee status), domestic violence, mental illness, family separation or divorce, which affects a person's ability to participate or learn.

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:

- a) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment, or a combination of mental and physical impairments, and
- b) is manifested before the child attains the age of 6 years, and
- c) results in substantial functional limitations in one or more of the following areas of major life activity:
 - i) self-care
 - ii) receptive and expressive language
 - iii) cognitive development
 - iv) motor development, and

d) 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 sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury, or any combination thereof, that:
 - i) is, or is likely to be, permanent, and
 - ii) causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication, and
 - iii) requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support, and
 - iv) is not related to ageing, or
- an intellectual disability, or
- 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.

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

Family-centred practice: Practice which:

- uses families' understanding of their children to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
- creates a welcoming and culturally-inclusive environment, where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development
- actively engages families and children in planning children's learning and development
- provides 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.

Inclusion: The engagement and involvement of children and families to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to participate and achieve their maximum potential.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS): A state government subsidy paid directly to the funded service to enable eligible families to attend a funded kindergarten program or funded three-year-old place at no cost (or minimal cost) to promote participation. Details are available in *The Kindergarten Guide* (refer to *Sources*).

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages: A package of support for children with a disability and high support needs and/or with complex medical needs.

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*).

Sources and related policies

Sources

- *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care* (January 2019). Endorsed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Department of Human Services, Municipal Association of Victoria, Early Learning Association Australia, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Community Child Care Association, Vic Tas Primary Health Network Alliance, Victorian Healthcare Association and Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated.
www.education.vic.gov.au
- 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: Search 'statement on inclusion of children with disability' at: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-work/inclusion-resources/
- fka Children's Services www.fka.com.au
- *Guide to the National Quality Framework*: www.acecqa.gov.au
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Be You: <https://beyou.edu.au/>
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (DET): www.education.vic.gov.au
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Principle Practice Guide 1: Family-centred and Practice Guide Four: Equity and Diversity*: www.education.vic.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*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Fees Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*

Procedures

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are 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 which facilitates the inclusion and active participation of both the child and the family at the service
- providing families with information about the support options available for children attending DSCC
- 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, and facilitates access for all children (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*)
- tailoring the orientation process to meet the individual needs of children and families (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*)
- identifying the barriers to participation in service programs and activities, and developing strategies to overcome these barriers
- 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
- ensuring that staff have access to appropriate and accredited professional development activities that promote a positive understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity, and mental health and wellbeing, 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 DSCC, and removing these barriers wherever possible (refer to *Fees Policy*)
- ensuring that all eligible families are supported to access the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (refer to *Definitions* and *Fees Policy*), including families with concession cards, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, and refugee and asylum seeker families

- providing service information in various community languages wherever possible
- using language services (refer to *Sources*) to assist with communication where required and considering the employment of a multilingual worker/s to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families
- working with the Nominated Supervisor and educators to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions*)
- where practicable, accessing resources, support and professional development to facilitate inclusion of children with additional needs who are ineligible for specific support packages
- ensuring collaborative relationships with specialised services and professionals to provide support and services for families and children with a disability, complex medical needs and/or developmental delay
- 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*)
- implementing appropriate programs and practices to support vulnerable children and families, including working co-operatively with relevant services and/or professionals, where required (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- ensuring that service programs are inclusive of all children with medical conditions
- ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against
- 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 there are clear referral options and pathways for children, staff, educators and families to access support services for mental health and wellbeing
- ensuring that educators and staff are supported to learn about and care for their own mental health and wellbeing
- ensuring that mental health and wellbeing information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction
- ensuring that leadership practices and on-the-ground support enable a work environment that minimises stress and promotes mental health and wellbeing for educators and staff
- ensuring that all policies of DSCC, including the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, are adhered to at all times.

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day to Day Charge are responsible for:

- ensuring that the service provides a safe, inclusive and empowering environment which celebrates diversity through positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Interactions with Children Policy*)
- ensuring the diversity and interests of the children, families, educators and staff are reflected in the physical environment
- ensuring there are quiet and reflective spaces for children, educators and families
- ensuring that cultural values and expectations about health and wellbeing are respected

- providing 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*)
- identifying children with additional needs
- being aware of support and resources available to ensure that children are included in service programs
- ensuring that service programs are inclusive of all children with medical conditions
- 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
- providing information to families about the support available to assist children
- providing opportunities for families to contribute to the program as key partners
- 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
- responding to the needs and concerns of parents/guardians, and providing support and guidance, where appropriate
- working with educators to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs (refer to *Definitions*)
- providing support and guidance to educators/staff
- organising appropriate resources and accredited professional development for educators to enable all children to be included at the service, and to understand when and how to refer children to additional support
- developing links with other services and/or professionals to support mental health and wellbeing, children with additional needs and have referral pathways in place
- 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
- 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 information to families about local parenting and family services, mental health and wellbeing and other resources that are available to support the health and wellbeing of children and families
- developing partnerships with other education and care settings and schools to enable children to move successfully from one setting to another
- notifying the Approved Provider of any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination, bullying, harassment or prejudice
- ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against
- 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 DSCC, including the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, are adhered to at all times.

Educators and all other staff are responsible for:

- supporting the participation and inclusion of all children in the program at the service
- 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*)
- embedding social and emotional learning in the service program and practice, and teaching children to care for their own mental health
- providing a range of opportunities in the outdoor and indoor spaces and the natural environment, for all children to engage in physical, explorative and creative experiences
- encouraging and supporting other educators, staff and families as role models to demonstrate positive and respectful relationships, and positive mental health and wellbeing
- undertaking appropriate, accredited professional development to support the inclusion of all children at the service
- using language services 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
- 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
- adhering to the policies of DSCC, including the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, at all times.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- adhering to the policies of DSCC, including the *Inclusion and Equity Policy*, *Code of Conduct* 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
- responding to requests from educators for written permission to arrange for an assessment or collect reports on their child from service providers
- being involved in, keeping fully informed about, and providing written consent for any individualised intervention or support proposed/provided for their child.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**Evaluation**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Director and Management Committee 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 unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.
- Assess whether the strategies and procedures outlined in this policy were upheld
- Take into account feedback from staff regarding the policy
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the operation of the policy.

Attachments

Attachment 1 refers to DSCC's values, guidelines and strategies referred to in this policy in relation to;

6.1 Gender equity

6.2 Inclusion

6.3 Multiculturalism

6.4 Preventing heterosexism and homophobia

Review date:**Inclusion and Equity Policy (previously Inclusion Policy)**

Date Reviewed	Details of Changes (if any)	Date of Next Review
March 2021	New ELAA Policy Adopted Engaging with ELAA on more gender content	March 2024
April 2018	Implementation review conducted	April 2019 (to update with NDIS information)
March 2014	Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs Policy incorporated into policy, Renamed Inclusion and Equity Policy	April 2018
August 2012	Inclusion of definitions at section 5. Addition of prevention of heterosexism and homophobia at sections 5 and 6.	August 2014
February 2010	None	February 2012
November 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy name changed from DSCC Access & Equity Policy v1.0 to Inclusion & Reducing Bias Policy v2.0; • Delete reference under (3) Multi-culturism – “ It will narrow the gap between home and DSCC”. 	November 2009
October 2006	DSCC Management Committee initiated & drafted Policy – 1 st version based on DSCC Policy Manual 2004 content reviewed & incorporated where possible.	October 2007

Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs Policy

Date Reviewed	Details of Changes (if any)	Date of Next Review
March 2014	Incorporated into Inclusion and Equity Policy	Nil
February 2012	Including details of new legislative framework and updates to external references	January 2014
January 2010	Updating some changed contact numbers for support services	2 years October 2011
October 2007	Initial DSCC policy based on 2006 KPV Inclusion of children with additional needs.	2 years October 2009

ATTACHMENT 1

VALUES, GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO:

6.1 Gender equity

6.2 Inclusion

6.3 Multiculturalism

6.4 Preventing heterosexism and homophobia

6.1 Gender Equity

Values

DSCC is committed to developing the full potential of all children irrespective of gender. It affirms that all genders are treated equally in regard to ability, personality and behaviour. It further affirms the right of all children to:

- Develop without the limitations of stereotypes based on gender;
- Develop a sense of pride in oneself and one's accomplishments, so enhancing feelings of positive self-esteem and self-worth; and
- Develop respect for each other's rights and responsibilities.

Guidelines and Strategies

The following strategies assume shared understandings about issues of sexism. In order to assist this, in-service activities of staff and parents should be encouraged.

To further the aims set out in the policy, DSCC will endeavour to:

- Ensure that all children are equally encouraged to participate in all activities with due consideration for individual needs and interests. For example, encourage all children to use home corner, outdoor playing equipment and toys such as cars and dolls.
- Encourage non-sexist behaviour by children and staff by purchasing counter sexism resource materials for staff use and by supplying staff development programs focused "around issues of sexism and education";
 - For example, if a child behaves in a sexist manner, a staff member should make them aware of other modes of behaviour (e.g. roles associated with cleaning up and housework) or encouraging all children to express emotions and display affection (e.g. it is alright for boys to cry or need a hug).
- Ensure that all language used within DSCC, both verbal and written, is gender inclusive.
- Encourage use of materials which portray all children in roles, situations and jobs which are not stereotyped.

For example, borrowing and purchasing children's literature, posters and toys which reflect this (e.g. Sugar and Snails).

- Select resources where both all children are seen both as initiators and nurturers. For example, borrowing and purchasing children's literature, posters and toys.
- Ensure that all children equally share staff time, indoor/outdoor playing space and equipment with due regard to individual needs and interests. For example, staff development program regarding research and strategies developed elsewhere around such concerns (e.g. Equal Opportunity Resource Centres).
- Encourage the employment of all staff and ensure that jobs carried out by staff are not related to gender.
- Encourage educational or information projects that further the aims of this policy. For example, hold parent information nights on general topics of child development, including issues of socialisation.

6.2 Inclusion

Values

DSCC welcomes all children and aims to provide an inclusive environment which caters to the needs of all children. It is desirable for all children to be included into generic childcare services, and all parents to have access to the local service of their choosing.

DSCC affirms that the individuality of children should be valued, their needs considered and their rights respected.

It further affirms that programs and practices should as far as possible:

- take a flexible approach to education and care;
- make appropriate expectations for each child;
- assist staff to develop the relevant skills and knowledge for working with all children and their families, and
- support staff to make contact with specialist services as needed.

Guidelines and Strategies

To further the aims set in the policy, DSCC will endeavour to:

- Work with the Inclusion Support Facilitator (employed externally) to aid in the inclusion of children with additional needs.
- Include all children on a physical, functional, social, personal and organisational level.
- Promote understanding in children relating to children with additional needs.

- Encourage acceptable behaviour that fosters sensitivity and assists in the development of appropriate societal values.
- Offer training on two levels, being:
 - General awareness training: general information about working with children with additional needs.
 - Specific training for when a new child is to attend DSCC: training on issues of a child's additional needs should be made available to the relevant staff.
 - In these circumstances, time should be made available, with the provision of relief staff, for staff to attend training or to visit/observe the child in other situations so as to best assess the requirements of the child.
 - Furthermore, training offered by peers, who have a knowledge of working with children with additional needs and an understanding of the needs of the centre, should be maximised as a means of informing/training staff in this area.
- Support staff to make contact with specialist services as needed, and to see parents and other key informed people (e.g. inclusion support facilitator) as resources.
- Provide information and support to families so as to achieve participation in the planning and evaluating of program decisions that affect their child's settlement into DSCC. The process will as far as possible be collaborative and take into account parent expectations and the needs of the child.
- Organise parent information or discussion nights where awareness of inclusion issues can be promoted.

Inclusion Procedures for Children with Additional Needs

The Management Committee/Director are responsible for:

- Providing clearly defined enrolment procedures in their enrolment policy, which facilitates access for all children.
- Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs.
- Regularly reviewing with staff, the planning and resourcing provided for children with additional needs participating in the program.
- Being available to participate in identified child support groups.
- Providing assistance as required to child support group(s) in identifying and applying for additional resources available through the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services for supplementary funding (funded kindergarten programs only) and through the Early Childhood Intervention Services (birth to school entry).
- Working with staff and families to identify and apply for additional resources/support for children with additional needs (where a separate child support group is not required).
- Providing appropriate physical and staffing resources within the budget constraints of the centre. In providing these resources:
 - Consultation will be sought with the staff, the parents/guardians of the child, and other professionals and/or agencies working with the family to determine

additional resources required to meet the functional and developmental needs of the child (usually the child's support group as outlined on following pages).

- Supporting staff to gain appropriate knowledge and skills to implement this policy.

Qualified staff are responsible for:

- Identifying, if additional support is required, the type of support required and consulting with families and liaising with the Director/Management Committee in order to access this.
- Establishing a support group for children with high support needs, which may include:
 - Parents or guardians
 - Carer of the child (if applicable)
 - Kindergarten teacher
 - Specialist staff from an early childhood intervention service (if the child is receiving a service)
 - Additional staff
 - Preschool Field Officer (if no other early intervention specialist is involved with the family), or
 - Parent/guardian advocate (if applicable)
 - Management Committee member
 - Others as appropriate.
- (Note: It is a requirement of the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services Program to establish a support group before an application is submitted for support, enrolment or attendance at the centre).
- Organising for the child's support group to meet. Generally this would involve a number of meetings prior to the child's commencement at the centre and at least one meeting per term.
- Ensuring that any support or resources available for a child are accessed in consultation with the parents/guardians, for example through the Preschool Field Officer Program and the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service.
- Ensuring that the parents/guardians are fully informed about the program planned and provided for their child and have given written consent for any action, support or intervention for their child.
- To plan and implement a program which incorporates the individual goals for the child with additional needs.
- Ensuring the program provides opportunities for participation and interaction with other children.
- Responding to parents/guardians needs and providing support and guidance, where appropriate.
- Providing support and guidance to other staff.
- Encouraging a collaborative family-centred approach in implementing the program at the centre.
- Ensuring that, in consultation with persons involved in the care and education of the child, any specialised medical and nutritional needs of the child are catered for in the day-to-day program.

- Ensuring that the program incorporates opportunities for regular review and evaluation, in consultation with all persons involved in the child's care and education.

6.3 Multiculturalism

Values

Australia is a society in which all people have the right to maintain their cultural and ethnic diversity. As providers of a service for young children and their families it is important to facilitate equal opportunity, acceptance and justice by helping overcome many of the barriers that prevent the enjoyment of full equality.

When planning programs, measures must be undertaken to ensure that the programs developed reflect a multicultural perspective. The children's program will promote cultural awareness and help children value cultural diversity.

It therefore will be built on the following principles:

- fostering the development of every child's self-esteem in family, ethnic and linguistic heritage;
- maintaining and encouraging a child's ability to utilise his/her first language while providing an environment whereby the dominant language can be acquired; • enhancing cultural tolerance and the status of all cultures; and
- extending the cultural experiences of children.

Guidelines and Strategies

To further the aims set in the policy, DSCC will endeavour to:

- Actively value and encourage multi-lingual skills in children where appropriate with, for example:
 - use of books and songs in languages other than English;
 - using staff who speak a language other than English to teach songs in that language;
 - using visual aids in languages other than English; and
 - displaying welcoming signs around DSCC in different languages.
- Expose children to cultural traditions which differ from those of the dominant culture, in particular, those traditions represented by the children and staff at DSCC by:
 - purchasing and using relevant props (e.g. dolls, dress-ups, musical instruments);
 - encouraging families to bring in props on loan; o encouraging folk dancing and songs;
 - providing in-service for staff about various cultural traditions they would like to learn more about;
 - purchasing resource books for staff use;
 - inviting community members and parents to share particular aspects of their traditions with the children; and
 - linking foods of different traditions and countries to the menu.
 - Provide English as a second language support for children whose first language is not English. For example, assist the development of inclusive communicative games and/or activities that assist non-English speakers to enhance their English language skills.

- Provide information to parents in languages other than English where necessary and possible.
- Encourage educational and information projects that further the aims of this policy. For example, organise parent information nights that promote an awareness of multicultural issues.
- Select a team of staff at DSCC that ideally reflects the nature of the wider community; within the framework of Equal Employment Opportunity, fluency in languages other than English should be considered positively when recruiting staff.

6.4 Preventing heterosexism and homophobia

Values

Heterosexism and homophobia are linked to poor health and education outcomes and create unhealthy environments for young children and their families.

Children of lesbian and gay parents should be supported by diverse representations of family in their care setting, and by programs which embrace difference, facilitate equal opportunity, participation and justice for all children and their families.

Guidelines and strategies

To further the aims set in the policy, DSCC will endeavor to:

- Refrain from making heterosexist assumptions about the sexual orientation of parents and caregivers (e.g. through administrative forms which ask for mother / father).
- Promote positive role images of 'rainbow families' through posters, books, stories and programmes.
- Encourage non-heterosexist behavior by children and staff:
 - Through purchase of counter heterosexist resource materials for staff use, or by supplying staff development programs focused around anti-heterosexist care environments for young children
- Encourage diversity in employment of staff.
- Encourage educational or information projects that further the aims of this policy, for example, hold parent information nights on general topics of child development and the benefits of diversity