

Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines to:

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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.

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- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

g) 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 (ESK)

Sources

- *Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care* (March 2014). Signed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Department of Human Services, Municipal Association of Victoria and Early Learning Association Australia. 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
- KidsMatter: www.kidsmatter.edu.au
- *The Kindergarten Funding Guide* (DET): www.education.vic.gov.au
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- 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 EPIC ELC
- 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* and *Enrolment and Orientation* for more information)

- providing support and guidance to educators/staff
- organising appropriate resources and accredited professional development for staff to enable all children to be included at the service
- developing links with other services and/or professionals to support children with additional needs and where required 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, 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 e

