

<b>Policy title</b>	1.2 Inclusion and Equity
<b>Policy type</b>	Management
<b>Group</b>	Family and Child

## Rationale

The principles of equity, inclusion and diversity are inherent in the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (section 3(3)), and apply when making decisions about operating education and care services. As recognised in the Early Years Learning Framework (2009) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (2009), children’s personal, family and cultural histories shape their learning and development. Children learn best when early childhood professionals respect their diversity and provide them with the best support, opportunities and experiences.

This Policy acknowledges that all children have the right to access and participate in early childhood programs and services. The purpose of this Policy is to:

- ensure that all persons are treated equitably and with a level of mutual respect
- reduce bias and prejudice
- promote inclusive practices
- encourage all persons to communicate respectfully and fairly

## Policy statement

Moonee Valley City Council is committed to:

- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices, and respects individuals and groups of people
- working in partnerships with families and other agencies in providing a responsive program to meet the individual strengths and needs of all children
- regular professional development for staff to build awareness of cultural diversity, access and inclusion

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- monitoring all play equipment, books and posters to ensure that negative, discriminating images of culture, genders and minority groups are avoided

Council acknowledges that personal experiences, biases and prejudices can influence professional and ethical behaviour, and can affect:

- staff/educators'/contractors' skills and strategies
- the value of interactions between children, families and staff/educators/contractors
- the ability of stakeholders to work cohesively as a team

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<b>Procedure</b>	1.2 Inclusion and Equity Procedure
<b>Policy type</b>	Management
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<b>Action</b>	<b>Approved provider</b>	<b>Responsible Person or Primary Nominee</b>	<b>Educator/contractor</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</b>	<b>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</b>	<b>Children's Services Regulations 2009 &amp; Children's Services Act 1996</b>
Ensure the service's philosophy is used to set direction and build collaborative practice.	✓	✓	✓				
Ensure staff/educators/contractors are aware of the service's philosophy and support staff/educators/contractors to enact this as a key measure for practices and procedures.		✓	✓				
Provide an environment in which we resist stereotypes, reflect diversity, confront discrimination and bias, and advocate for acceptance.	✓	✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r76	s.168	s.26B
Each child has an equal right to life opportunities that promote wellbeing and support their development in all areas.	✓	✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r76		s.26B
Provide professional learning to develop knowledge, inclusion and equity practices.	✓	✓	✓				
Create environments where differences within children and families are celebrated every day.	✓	✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r.76		s.26B

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The interests, abilities and culture of every child and their family are understood, valued and respected.		✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r.76 r.177		r.31 r.28 r.81 s.26B
Non-sexist, non-racist language, gestures, actions and behaviours are modelled by staff/educators at all times.		✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r76	s.167	s.26
Provide an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment for children, families and staff/educators/contractors.	✓	✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r.75 r76		r.81 r.31 s.26B
<p>Staff/educators/contractors are to provide effectively planned play and learning experiences that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• detail how diversity and equity are reflected in each child's individual and group experiences</li> <li>• encourage children to broaden their understanding of different groups of people in their local community and society</li> <li>• reflect the diversity of families and lifestyles, and encourage children to explore, experiment and question the culture they live in</li> </ul>		✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r.76 r.177	s.168 s.169	r.28 r.31 s.26B

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss common values, concerns and triumphs that are shared among people</li> <li>• identify how differences and similarities can be embraced and respected.</li> </ul>		✓	✓				
<p>Staff/educators are to ensure in their interactions with children that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give positive messages about gender equity through their actions and words and avoid giving messages that promote traditional gender roles and bias</li> <li>• offer encouragement and support for children to participate in a full range of experiences and resources, to express their emotions and to display affection and empathy</li> <li>• recognise that the identification of particular skills, behaviours and feelings as 'masculine' or 'feminine' restricts life opportunities.</li> </ul>		✓	✓		r.326 r.375 r.376 r.377	s.169	r.50 r.52 & 52A r.53 r.55 r.60 s.29A

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<p>Areas of focus for experiences can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural diversity</li> <li>• language and bilingualism, including non-verbal and written language eg. sign language</li> <li>• gender role differences and similarities</li> <li>• equal rights, equal opportunity and equal access for people with disabilities</li> <li>• family lifestyles/composition</li> <li>• festivities and celebrations</li> <li>• identification and discussion of prejudice and bias experiences</li> <li>• the development of critical and analytical thinking.</li> </ul>		✓	✓		r.73 r.74 r.76	s.168	r.31 r.28 s.26B
<p>Monitor all play equipment, books and posters to ensure that negative, discriminating images of culture, genders and minority groups are avoided.</p>	✓	✓	✓		r.73		s.26B

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Include a range of texts and images in the program that represent a range of possibilities for males and females, and explore issues of race, class, disability and sexuality.	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓		r.73	s.168	s.26B
Comprehensive knowledge about both societal and structural inequity based on gender and disabilities should be understood and responded to in a manner that does not further promote discrimination.	✓	✓	✓		r.73	s.168	
Gain an understanding of what is age and developmentally appropriate, and what is part of normal inquisitive behaviour.		✓	✓		r.73	s.168	
A child's questions are answered simply and factually with respect for family values, and with enough information to assist their child to understand.		✓	✓				
Parent/guardian are informed about child's questions, and made welcome to discuss issues and concerns.		✓	✓	✓	r.76		
Contribute suggestions and program ideas, which reflect individual family's cultures and backgrounds, to assist staff/educators in their work with their child.				✓	r.74	s.168	s.26B

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<p>Staff/educators are to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>festivals and celebrations are treated equally and researched thoroughly</li> <li>festivals and celebrations are relevant to child and age, stage of development and are culturally relevant</li> <li>celebrations are of significance as well as simple, spontaneous and short</li> <li>all children, families and educators/contractors are supported by providing an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment</li> <li>cultural/religious celebrations are not limited to particular groups but reflect the diversity within the service and the community</li> </ul>		✓	✓		r.73 r.326 r.375 r.376 r.377	s.168	r.31 r.28 r.50 r.52 & 52A r.53 r.55 r.60 r.81 s.26B s.29A

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• before any celebration takes place ask: 'Why are we celebrating?'; 'What is the purpose of the celebration, especially if it is a one-off celebration day?' and 'For whom are we celebrating?'</li> <li>• children are educated about diversity, tolerance and acceptance</li> <li>• areas for focused support or intervention are identified to improve each child's learning and development</li> <li>• bi- and multi-lingual children are recognised as an asset, and support is given to multi-lingual children to maintain their first language and learn English as a second language</li> <li>• cultural awareness is promoted in all children, including greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</li> </ul>		✓	✓				

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culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children are supported to develop a sense of place, identity and a connection to the land</li> <li>• children are actively encouraged to participate in activities that may not generally be available to them because of gender stereotyping</li> <li>• families are asked about any cultural, background or religious issues they may have.</li> </ul>		✓	✓				
Have clear knowledge of the referral process and agencies involved in cases of suspected discrimination.	✓	✓	✓			s.167	
In terms of gender, staff/educators should be mindful of the images of women and men that are prevalent within society, and be aware of and monitor their own language, attitudes and assumptions with regard to gender and disabilities.		✓	✓		r.73	s.167	

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### **Role models**

There is often an assumption that culture is identifiable by difference in race or language. This restricts the definition of ‘culture’, which is widely regarded as encompassing religion, family lifestyle and structure. It is important for staff/educators/contractors to develop an understanding that extends beyond preconceived or traditional stereotypes.

Staff/educators/contractors are important role models in guiding and educating all stakeholders in relation to diverse and equitable behaviours and practices. Children learn from modelling and staff/educators/contractors need to be aware that their actions, language, gestures and behaviours may communicate biased or prejudiced opinions or feelings.

### **Play and learning experiences**

It is important that we acknowledge and respect differences and similarities by ensuring that play and learning experiences are child-focused, relevant and meaningful. The first course of action would be to seek information from the child’s family.

Placing token values on differences and assuming that one interpretation of a culture, race or lifestyle represents everyone from that background, is not reflective of diversity and equity principles. It makes an assumption about the lives of individuals or groups of people, which may not be a true reflection of who they are. This type of assumption emphasises difference and diverts attention away from the similarities between people.

For example, people in other countries may assume that all Australians have held a koala. This places a token value on what people perceive as being the normal Australian lifestyle or experience. Likewise, by assuming that a child from an Asian ethnicity knows how to use chopsticks we can inadvertently place a token value on a child’s lifestyle and history.

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## Resources and useful websites

This Policy and Procedures are aligned to National Quality Standard.

<http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard>

Bicultural Support Pool – [ecsc.org.au/our-programs/bicultural-support](http://ecsc.org.au/our-programs/bicultural-support)

Children’s Services Central – [www.cscentral.org.au](http://www.cscentral.org.au)

*Childcare and Child’s Health; The Anti-bias Approach in Early Childhood* (2009). Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Childcare Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

Community Childcare Cooperative [www.cela.org.au](http://www.cela.org.au)

Derman-Sparks, L. and the Anti-Bias Task Force (1989). *The Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Child.

Ethnic Child Care – [www.ecsc.org.au](http://www.ecsc.org.au)

FKA Children’s Services Inc, incorporating Multicultural Resource Service – [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/resources](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/resources)

Giugni. Miriam, *Exploring Multiculturalism, Anti-bias and Social Justice in Children’s Services* available at [www.cscentral.org.au/publications/nqf-publications.html](http://www.cscentral.org.au/publications/nqf-publications.html)

Inclusion Support Facilitators resources (from your local Inclusion Support Agencies) [www.education.gov.au/inclusion-and-professional-support-program](http://www.education.gov.au/inclusion-and-professional-support-program)

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*Supporting Children with Additional Needs (SCAN)*

[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/needs/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/needs/Pages/default.aspx)

*The Code of Ethics*, (2016). Early Childhood Australia (ECA).

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>

*Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Families* (2009). Service for Community Health;

United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Children*.

<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights>

Vajda, M. (2001). Cultural diversity. In E. Dau. (Ed.) *The Anti-Bias Approach in Early Childhood* (2nd Edition) pp 29-44. Sydney: Addison Wesley Longman.

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