Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs

Implementation Details and Explanatory Notes

1. Actions Required

The Policy Development Checklist (page 4) contained in this KPV Model Policy Kit sets out a summary of actions needed to adopt and implement each policy.

2. Implementation Details

The actions required to implement this policy are:

- All parents/guardians of children enrolled at the service to have access to a copy of the policy and a copy provided to individual parents, if requested.

3. Explanatory Notes

The following information on the implementation and operation of this policy has been provided to assist Committees when adapting this policy for use by their service and when addressing issues under this policy.

This policy is currently under review and a new policy is being developed in consultation with the Department of Human Services.
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1. Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Eastmont PreSchool Committee of Management, at the Committee meeting on 11th July 2006.

2. Review Date

This policy shall be reviewed yearly.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the Committee, staff, volunteers and students who work with children with additional needs.

4. Background and Relevant Legislation

The Federal Disability Discrimination Act states that “It is unlawful for an Educational authority to discriminate against a person on the grounds of a person’s disability or a disability of any of the person’s associates.”

5. Definitions

Additional needs: Children whose development, in one or more of the following areas, needs specialist support - mobility, expressive and/or receptive communication, social behaviour, safe behaviours, fine motor skills, vision, hearing, self care, cognitive skills.

Inclusion: The incorporation of children with additional needs into the preschool program to ensure that they have equal opportunities to achieve their maximum potential.

6. Policy Statement

Values

• This centre is committed to providing all eligible children with the opportunity to experience a preschool program regardless of their additional needs.

• This centre recognises that all children will learn in different ways and at different rates.

Purpose

The provision of appropriate programs for children with additional needs. In consultation with parents and additional resource services, all children will be encouraged to maximise their full potential.

7. Procedures

• This centre will provide appropriate programs and experiences for children with additional needs.

• The Committee will provide enrolment procedures, which offer access to all children based on clearly defined statements.

• The enrolment of a child with additional needs will be done in consultation with staff, the child’s parents/guardian and appropriate support services.

• The centre will provide appropriate physical and staffing resources.

• The centre will provide support and training for staff, working with children with additional needs.
Enrolment requirements

- It is important that any specific information required to assist the staff and committee in planning for children with additional needs should be part of the enrolment information, which is sent to parents when they first enrol at the service.

- Children who will be repeating the preschool year will also need to be assessed as having additional needs by the regional DHS Children’s Services Team, before they can be accepted as confirmed enrolments.

Fees

- Parents of children who need an integration aid to assist them at the preschool may apply for independent funding directly.

- Where the funded hours fall short of actual preschool hours, parents may make the shortfall up themselves or they may apply to the preschool for assistance either as a part contribution or the whole amount.

- Upon application, the Committee will judge each application on merit before deciding what contributions will be made. Factors such as financial viability of the preschool from year to year will be taken into account before a decision is made.

Program requirements

The developmental program will be provided by the teacher in consultation with parent/guardian and specialist support services.

Additional physical and staff resources

- Consultation with the staff, the parents/guardians of the child, and other professionals and/or agencies working with the family will take place to determine additional resources.

- Assistance may be sought through the Special Education Program administered by the Department of Human Services for funding for additional assistants and preschool support programs.

- Supplementary funding be sought for each child who will require assistance on an individual basis.

Inclusion support group

An inclusion support group may be needed to assist with the inclusion of each child with additional needs. Such a group should consist of:

- the child's parent/guardian/s
- the teacher
- the additional assistant
- a Committee staffing representative
- professionals and/or agencies working with the family
- any other person which this group deems necessary eg. DHS Early Intervention Staff

This group would also be responsible for:

- applying for additional assistance
- seeking any other resources which may be required eg. Attendant Care, for any medical assistance the child may require.
8. **Key Responsibilities and Authorities**

The Committee will:

- Ensure that the planning and resourcing for additional needs children is occurring.
- Clearly define who is responsible for co-ordinating the support required if any dispute arises.
- Employ any additional assistants for inclusion support to additional needs children, and the teacher should be involved in this application process.
- Seek assistance through the Special Education Program for supplementary funding for additional assistants and preschool support programs. This support must be applied for each child who will require assistance on an individual basis.
- Approve changes to the enrolment policy, the building and staffing provisions for additional needs children.

The Staff will:

- Plan the program for the child and to ensure that any support or resources available is obtained eg. the Preschool Field Officer, Early Intervention Centres or the DHS Specialist Children's Services team.
- Ensure that the parent/guardian is fully informed about the program and has given consent for any action, support or intervention planned for the child.

The parents/guardian will:

- Be involved in, and fully informed about, any intervention or support which is being planned for their child [as stated in Principles and Practices in Early Intervention Booklet, Health and Community Services.]
- Give consent to any assessments or reports on their child and have a right to copies of such documents.
- Decide who will receive information about their child. They also have the right to retain information that they do not wish to divulge.
- Be guaranteed confidentiality in all matters to do with their child.

9. **Resources and Support**

All qualified staff working with children with additional needs will have some understanding of appropriate inclusion and program planning. Some additional professional development in specific areas may be necessary for staff.