



Gender, Equity and Diversity

Policy:

To create an environment that equally supports people of different backgrounds, reflect and promotes equitable and inclusive practices, celebrates culture every day and encourages all children to develop to their fullest potential. Stepping Stones Child Care Centre provides all children with the opportunity to be offered a wide range of experiences which respect each individual and groups of people. All children are given equal learning opportunities regardless of gender.

To ensure that there is a commitment to equity and diversity within the centre and in its management. Equity and diversity emphasises the importance of valuing fairness and difference as good leadership practice. If everyone is valued, the centre can expect retention of the most suitable people for positions, increased effectiveness of teams and a more cohesive workplace with higher morale.

Stepping Stones Child Care Centres place an importance on respecting differences and similarities by ensuring that play and learning experiences is child focussed, relevant and meaningful. Stepping Stones believes that the educational developmental programs must support a child's self-esteem and pride in their family, the community, and their ethnic and linguistic origins.

Procedure:

Stepping Stones Child Care Centre will achieve this through cohesively working with all stakeholders including children, staff, families and the wider community by offering a learning environment that provides the following:

- A non bias or prejudice approach.
- Inclusive practices.
- Opportunities which do not make comparisons between children, families and staff regardless of their backgrounds, abilities or additional needs, but the recognising and valuing of the differences and similarities that exist in children, families and staff of the centre.
- Equal employment opportunities for both males and females.
- Offering children storybooks that depict male and female characters in; non-gender specific roles e.g. Fire-fighters rather than fireman or Police Officers rather than Police women.
- The acknowledgment of children by their name, not their gender. An example of this is: "hello boys" or "good girls". Children need not be referred to as boys or girls, more mention of their actions will be addressed. For example: "You have done really great work with that James".
- The opportunity for both genders to access all activities and experiences.
- Create an environment and opportunities which treat and respect everyone equally regardless of gender, age, socio-economic status, race, language, beliefs, additional needs and family structure.
- Experiences and opportunities to support bilingual children and families.
- Show the diversity of families within the Centre by way of the program, photographs, newsletters, posters and welcoming the community.
- Ensure that equipment and resources bought into the Centre are free of any bias to gender, race, disability or family structure etc.

Stepping Stones Child Care Centre Staff will:

- Interact with children and families equitably and respectfully.
- Use language that promotes equity.
- Use empowerment as a prime teaching technique for all children and themselves.
- Avoid making comparisons between children, families and staff
- Utilise their diverse life experiences to contribute to and enhance the program and the Centre environment.
- Encourage and support children to be fair and respectful of others, learn empathy and the skills to be assertive and challenge unjust behaviours.
- Be role models for children in guiding and educating children and families in relation to diverse and equitable behaviours and practices and be aware of their actions, language, gestures and behaviours towards others.
- Provide experiences which include cultural diversity, the use of non-verbal and written language, sign language, family lifestyles, festivities, celebration and opportunities for the development of critical and analytical thinking.
- Encourage contributions that children, staff, families and the wider community can make to the Centre.

Stepping Stones Child Care Centre's fortnightly developmental programs include areas which incorporate "Multicultural" experiences. Examples of these include "Multicultural Dress up Day", "Naidoc Week". We include multicultural dramatic play areas, gender inclusive books and play equipment, a variety of meals served by the centre from various cultures, expressive arts experiences reflecting various cultures and the community etc and experiences and resources that challenge children's critical thinking about things that are the same and different.

Stepping Stones Child Care Centre aims to meet the requirements of all children and families and this will be discussed with each family upon enrolment and orientation to the centre.

Stepping Stones Child Care Centre supports children with specific medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis, cystic fibrosis etc by communicating the needs of the child with the parents and external support agencies if required. The centre provides opportunities for children with a medical condition to be offered play and learning experiences which are individual and encourage each child to achieve the desired outcome.

Centre staff are regularly provided with professional development and training opportunities on incorporating diversity, individuality and differences into their programs and centre staff can utilise the support services of the Inclusion Support Agencies. An interpreter or translator can be sought for families if required.

Stepping Stones Child Care Centre will not tolerate any prejudice, racist, sexist or bullying behaviours from staff, families and children.

Source:

- National Child Care Accreditation Council www.ncac.gov.au
- ACT Inclusion Support Agency www.actpsc.com.au/inclusion-support/ (Phone: 6287 3330)
- Early Childhood Australia www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- ACT Childcare Services Standards 2009
- Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2009.

This policy links to the following CCQA Principles:

Quality Practices Guide (2005) - Principle 1.5

Developed: September 2006, Last Reviewed: 29th September 2009, to be Reviewed: September 2010.
Reviewed in consultation with staff and parent committee members, current at September 09