

Cleveland Early Learning Centre

19. Cultural Diversity, Equity & Anti-Bias Policy

Aim

- To give the Children in our care images of Australian Society as a whole
- To develop an understanding, respect, appreciation and acceptance of other cultures, values, intellectual and physical abilities and gender by integrating an anti-bias, cross cultural approach.
- To reflect the multi-national, religious and linguistic needs of the children by incorporating a multicultural perspective to all aspects of our Centre.

Guiding Principles

Culture is 'the fundamental building block of identity' and is essential for children's sense of being and belonging. (Educators Guide EYLF 2010, 21)

Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences (EYLF p.13)

Our Centre philosophy is based on the notion that children bring specific knowledge and skills as a direct result of their membership of a particular cultural group.

Multicultural Education is for all children regardless of their origins. Australia is a culturally and linguistically diverse country and children need preparation in readiness to live in a country that incorporates and respects such diversity.

The Centre therefore:

- Provides opportunities for children to discover and discuss the ways in which all people are alike as well as different.
- Reflects on **traditional** cultural practices and **present** cultural practices to avoid stereotyping cultural groups.
- Ensures that the Early Years Learning Framework is based on children's interests letting them know that they have an important contribution to make.
- Encourages and supports families of identified cultural groups to be involved in their children's centre through sharing of knowledge and active participation.
- Endeavours to ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, language, culture and national origin.

Evaluation

An on-going commitment to this policy will be to regularly attend/provide in-service training in the form of seminars/workshops, Educators meetings to reflect on personal values and assumptions and the reading of current literature on Multiculturalism.

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Multicultural and Equity statement

We believe all children growing up in Australia today need to be given valid images of Australian society as a whole. Children are exposed to a wide range of cultural backgrounds in their peers and carers. We further expose children to cultural diversity by celebrating international celebrations and supplying a variety of resources depicting multicultural families.

In order to develop understanding, respect and an appreciation for cultural diversity, we incorporate a variety of activities into our Early Years Learning Framework, giving them a multicultural perspective. These include:

- Celebrating festivals, celebrations and holidays of other countries
- Practicing social customs of different cultures
- Cooking foods from other cultures
- Locating the geographical position of other countries
- Reading books about other cultures
- Learning traditional stories / songs and poems
- Learning a variety of foreign languages
- Developing bilingualism and multilingualism
- Involving cultural and cross-cultural families to share their unique skills and knowledge

It is important to realise that Australia is a multi-cultural nation and that all children are living in a society in which diversity is an ever increasing reality.

There are many aims and goals that educators of children should be working towards when instilling an anti-bias, multicultural curriculum.

Goal 1

- To foster each child's construction of a knowledgeable, confident, self-identity - both personal and group identity.

Goal 2

- To foster each child's comfortable, empathetic interaction with diversity among people.
- To understand and appreciate similarities and differences and comfortably adapt to the differences.

Goal 3

- To foster each child's critical thinking about bias.
- To develop skills to identify unfair bias directed at one's own or another's identity and the emotional empathy to know that bias hurts.

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Goal 4

- To foster each child's ability to stand up for themselves and for others in the face of bias.

It is not only essential to counteract bias and foster a multicultural curriculum fulfilling the goals set out above. It is more important to put it into practice and begin a successful integration program.

Step One: Making a Personal Commitment

Learning to integrate anti-bias curriculum into your class takes time, energy and most of all takes priority. A carer must have access to appropriate resources and have a true desire to want to be a facilitator of this bias-reducing integration.

We must constantly examine our approach to introducing an anti-bias curriculum. This requires accepting beliefs and values of others and being professionally committed.

We should encourage respect differences such as cultural, socio-economic, gender, age and handicap.

Step Two: Educators Education

Nobody could successfully create and anti-bias curriculum without the support and help of their team mates. The carer should develop strategies for sharing their learning with other carers, parents, administrators the professional colleagues and the community as a whole.

Educators as a whole need to support one another and meet constantly to discuss challenges and to work together to overcome obstacles. Every carer should also realise that we are the role models for the children under our care and our empathetic, patient and sensitive approach to multicultural learning will influence the children.

Step Three: Working with Parents

Any Early Years Learning Framework is to be incorporated into the curriculum needs to have parental support. A carefully thought out and varied parent program is essential.

We must realise that parents and families of any culture must feel comfortable. We must also acknowledge the cultural importance of the family and the values, customs, beliefs and expectations held by our diverse families.

To successfully integrate the child, is a significant step towards successfully integrating the family. The parents are a valuable resource that we may have not realised. Parents often need encouragement, support and a welcoming attitude by the Educators to feel at ease in the centre, - an acceptance of differences without bias and the integration of this into the wider community.

Step Four: Accessing Community Resources

Use the community as a basis for learning. Encourage visitors into the centre and encourage use of resources of and other languages at our centre

It is essential to establish and support the parental input and to put the anti-bias, multicultural integration program into action.

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We believe and practice that "Early childhood educators committed to developmentally appropriate practice contribute to a solid foundation for meeting the challenges of diversity in a child. Integrating an anti-bias approach into developmentally appropriate practice takes time, persistence and courage. We maintain the conviction that children are worth the struggle."

References

- Early Childhood Australia Inc. Code of Ethics
- A Multicultural Future for all of us, discussion paper October, 2009. Qld Government
- www.multicultural.qld.gov.au/be-involved/documents/maq-policy.pdf 28th Oct, 2009
- EYLF Educators Guide 2010
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- Practical Policies & Procedures for Childcare Services. Reprint 2002 Anti-Bias & Cultural diversity
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Considered and Accepted by

KAL Management



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Centre Representative

Parent Representative