

Inclusion Matters

Issue 2, 2023



Inclusion Support QLD

Supporting educators in early childhood education
and care services to include all children

From the State Manager of Inclusion Support QLD

Welcome to the second Edition of Inclusion Matters for 2023.

In this edition we take a closer look at the updated Approved Learning Frameworks, including the Early Years Framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming 2.0 and My Time, Our Place 2.0 and we are excited that ‘Inclusion’ is highlighted and celebrated throughout.

Last year members of our Inclusion Support Queensland team were fortunate to attend the National Early Childhood Australia (ECA) conference and listen to International Keynote Speaker Dr Laura Jana. Dr Laura Jana explored the seven QI skills that are deemed necessary for success in today’s rapidly changing world, we hope that the reflective questions included with this article will support your team to explore these skills further.

Also included in our newsletter are some inspirational inclusion stories which showcase the amazing work of educators in providing inclusive environments for all children. Clearview Early Learning and Kindergarten share how their service has developed the art of teaching through nature and inspiring learning opportunities through ‘Inclusion on Country’. We also hear how Kidspace Caloundra Outside of School Hours Care (OSHC) overcame inclusion barriers and accessed support within the Inclusion Support Program (ISP) to ensure all children felt welcomed and included.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to all the services who completed our annual service feedback survey, your feedback is extremely important in ensuring our service delivery is responsive to your service needs. It was identified that some services would like further information on our Specialist Equipment Library, so we have included the QR codes in this edition which will take you directly to our Specialist Equipment Catalogue and some of the valuable resources we have on our Inclusion Support Queensland (ISQ) website.

We look forward to continuing to support your service on their inclusion journey.

Soraya Apps

State Manager, Inclusion Support QLD

Did you know 1971 Early Education and Care (ECEC) services in Queensland have a current Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP)? Have you updated your Strategic Inclusion Plan and obtained your 2023 sticker to proudly display? If not, please contact your Inclusion Professional.



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Acronyms used in Inclusion Matters

ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
IP	Inclusion Professional
ISQ	Inclusion Support Queensland
MTOP	My Time Our Place
NQS	National Quality Standard
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
SIP	Strategic Inclusion Plan

Inclusion Support Queensland acknowledges the First Peoples of Australia as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the many Lands on which we work, live and play.

We pay respect to Elder's past, present and emerging, as they continue to share their knowledge to preserve their histories, cultures, and stories for future generations.

We respect their deep spiritual connection to their Lands, waters, and communities, and we are committed to assisting educators in their learning and journey towards a reconciled Australia.

Are you up to date with the changes to the approved learning frameworks?

Inclusion is highlighted and celebrated throughout the Early Years Learning Framework (V2.0) and My Time Our Place (V2.0).

Some of the changes include the renaming of the principle ‘high expectations and equity’ to ‘equity, inclusion and high expectations’ which recognises that all children have the right to participate in quality, inclusive early childhood settings. It refers to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the expectation of educators to create inclusive learning environments and adopt flexible and informed practices, including making reasonable adjustments to optimise access, participation and engagement in learning.

The practice ‘cultural competence’ has been renamed ‘cultural responsiveness’ asking educators to move beyond cultural competence and develop a respect for all cultures that are not their own and to allow for ongoing self-reflection, continued learning and a commitment to improving professional practice in this area.

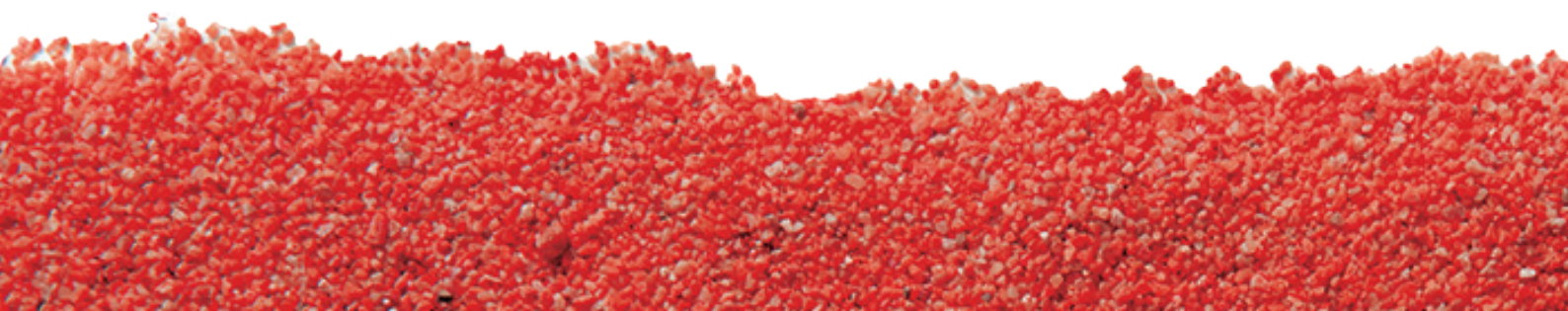
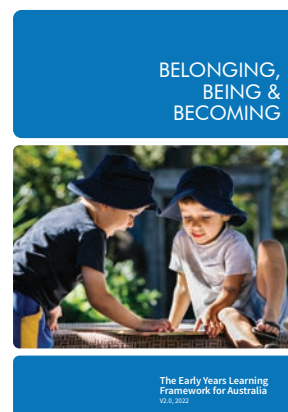
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and doing are also acknowledged and woven throughout this update including the new

principle ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and ways of knowing have also been made more explicit in each of the learning outcomes to reflect family and community connections, kinship systems, connection to Country, spirituality and storytelling.

The glossary can be useful for defining new terms such as reasonable adjustments, cultural responsiveness, cultural safety and inclusion.

What did you find interesting about the approved learning frameworks?

How will the changes influence your practice?



Family Day Care Week

Family Day Care Schemes across the country celebrated National Family Day Care Week on the 1st -7th May 2023.

Inclusion Support Professionals have been working closely with Family Day Schemes across Queensland to support inclusive practices through reflective conversations, the development of Strategic Inclusion Plans and strategies to support inclusion in Family Day Care. Educators are reflecting on inclusive practices to support the needs of every child and are keen to engage with Inclusion Professionals for ongoing coaching and mentoring.

Busy Butterflies Family Day Care accessed a free trial of sensory resources through the Specialist Equipment Library to support their children.

Enhance Family Day Care Capricornia has been holding reflective conversations on their organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). They are reflecting on how they could support the confidence of educators to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into everyday programs and routines.

Educators from Enhance Family Day Care have also been reflecting on supporting all children to develop a sense of belonging and agency, "It's beautiful to watch the children support each other with each of their varying abilities. The older children assist the younger children and celebrate the newfound skills and share a common play-based goal. It is very fulfilling to see a child gain a skill that you have facilitated and supported them to achieve", said Kimberley.

Inclusion Support QLD joined many 'picnics in the park' to celebrate the amazing work done by all the Family Day Care educators to support all children to be included.



You can access more information on how we can support Family Day Care on our website.

Challenging our limits with play



How do you balance your obligation to ensure each child is protected (Standard 2.2) with every child's need to explore risky play?

Dr Peter Gray, the author of 'Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life', defines play as having four key components. Play must be fun, freely chosen, intrinsically motivated and process orientated (Gray, 2017). Often play-based learning in early childhood settings is in fact planned and directed by adults within restrictive routines and environments.

What is one of your favourite memories playing as a child? Where was it? Who was there? How long did it go for? What did you learn? How did you feel?

Ellen Sandseter is a professor at Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education in Norway and is referred to as one of the world's leading experts on the value of playground risk-taking. She describes six categories of risky play (Sandseter, 2007):

1. Great heights: where children face fears and build confidence as they experience the risk of falling.
2. Rapid speeds: helps children understand and use their bodies and experience a risk of injury from collision.
3. Dangerous tools: helps children build confidence and skills and experience the risk of injury.
4. Dangerous elements: children have opportunities to face fears, understand the world and experience the risk of injury.
5. Rough-and-tumble: children can hone their physical and social skills and risk scratches or bruises.
6. Disappear/get lost: children seek opportunities to explore unfamiliar spaces alone or in small groups – disappearing or getting lost offers a temporary scary thrill.

Engaging in risky play provides children with diverse learning opportunities including:

- ▶ Thinking about consequences as part of a risk assessment
- ▶ Using motor planning and sequencing skills to execute complex movements
- ▶ Developing visual spatial skills
- ▶ Building gross motor skills
- ▶ Providing opportunities to experience emotions such as exhilaration, joy, excitement, fear, apprehension and pride
- ▶ Fostering confidence in their own capabilities and a growth mindset
- ▶ Collaboration and cooperation with peers

Learning Outcome 1.2 of The Early Years Learning Framework (V2.0) is that children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and agency which encourages children to:

- ▶ Take considered risk in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected
- ▶ Approach new safe situations with interest and confidence
- ▶ Be open to new challenges and discoveries
- ▶ Persist and persevere in self-chosen tasks, including when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful
- ▶ Initiate exploration and independent learning
- ▶ Recognise their individual achievements and the achievements of others

References

Sandseter, E. (2007). Categorising risky play - how can we identify risk taking in children's play? *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 28(2), 237- 252. doi:10.1080/13502930701321733.

Gray, P. (2017). What Exactly Is Play, and Why Is It Such a Powerful Vehicle for Learning? *Topics in Language Disorders*, 37(3), 217-228. doi:10.1097/TLD.0000000000000130.

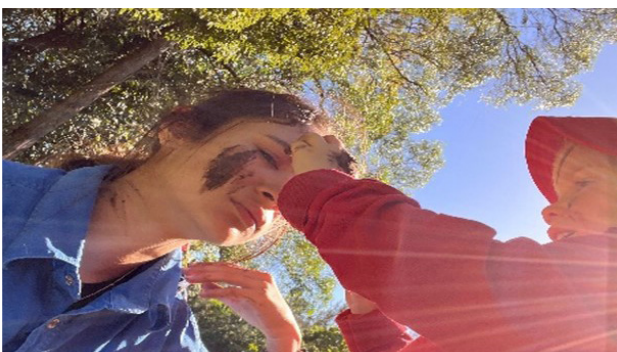


Inclusion on Country

Nominated Supervisor Debbie Priest and Educational Leader Netty Lester share how their service has developed the art of teaching through nature, by creating natural environments where children can learn holistically and care for the land, plants animals and people.

Tell us a little about your service.

Clearview Early Learning and Kindergarten is an established centre nestled in a beautiful semi-rural environment. Our outdoor play space has lots of natural elements that include trees, plants, rocks, dirt, sand, water and fire. We encourage children to physically challenge themselves and participate in risky or challenging play. Our children can climb trees, move big boulders, play in the rain, get covered in dirt and regularly leave our gates to go and play in local bushlands through our Bush Kindy program.



inclusion for all children?

We have created a daily program and natural environments that demonstrate our commitment to the importance of all children learning outdoors. The pedagogical practices of our educators focus on the passion for outdoors and unstructured opportunities to learn in nature, whilst still scaffolding and facilitating our children to develop holistically. Being able to play in the same environments as their friends boosts self-esteem. The children have big blocks of unhurried time to play and discover in their outdoor environment. We have made spaces where children have a choice of busier, more active areas and quieter spaces that allow children the option as they may need it.

Physically we have seen our children become fit, strong, healthy, and more coordinated. Emotionally, we see them develop higher resilience and a greater ability to self-regulate. Socially, we see them working cooperatively and showing respect and being more empathetic to their peers. The outdoors gives us opportunities to have meaningful conversations about things that the children are experiencing, feeling, and seeing. As we watch plants grow, count seed pods and learn about natural life cycles, become water wise, the science and mathematics opportunities present themselves abundantly. The educators feel calmer outside and also notice that the children are calmer and very engaged when learning outdoors.

When you are thinking about your programming and practices, what does your service do to ensure there is a connection to Country and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures?

Learning and connecting to Country is an ongoing journey for our service and we acknowledge that there is still much we do not know around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. As a service we started off by learning about the histories of the cultures, we learnt about the local Yugambah language and began incorporating simple words from nature such as bush, river, food into our daily communications. We downloaded the **Yugambah** language app for our reference and to extend our knowledge. We have made community connections with Uncle Allan Lena, and Uncle Boomerang. We updated and simplified our philosophy which now supports our strong belief of the benefits for children spending valuable time outdoors exploring, learning, and making connections to the land and local community.

We incorporate the practice of **Dadirri** in nature, at our service. Through this process all children are encouraged to find their own space, a bubble just for them. Educators participate and role model the expectations alongside the children, and with an awareness of each individual child's learning or coping style, they are able to make adjustments and allowances that ensures all children are able to participate. Kinaesthetic learners are encouraged to hold something such as a small stick or rock to help them focus. Auditory learners are invited to close their eyes and just listen, and our visual learners are supported to look around and observe, for the designated 3 min time frame. We might do this process several times a day if we find children are unsettled. The opportunity to be silent, still and listening supports all children and educators to return to calm.

Our service is also part of the Mobo Jarjums network group, an educator group, supported by Inclusion Support QLD. The focus of the group has been for all educators to have a forum for shared learning around Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander cultures. It is a comfortable space where educators can meet regularly, share their journey, challenges, ask questions, reflect on practices, and gain ideas and knowledge around cultural practices and protocols, knowing that the information is authentic and has the backing of local Elders and community. Being part of this group has not only seen our service grow in our understanding of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander cultures, but also continues to enrich our thinking and give us confidence to continue our ongoing journey to provide wholistic inclusion for all children on Country.

Is incorporating local Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander knowledge into your program a barrier for your service?

Talk to your Inclusion Professional and access helpful resources on the ISQ website.



Going the extra mile to ensure everyone is included

Kidspace Caloundra is an Outside of School Hours Care (OSHC) service on the Sunshine Coast that offers Before School, After School, Vacation and Saturday Care. They have over 1100 children enrolled in the service and up to 100 children attend each session. The service charts two fifty-seater buses each day to transport the children to eight local schools and then bring them back to the service in the afternoon.

The service was receiving feedback from families that although the schools in the local area had OSHC programs, they were finding it difficult to find care for their children with additional needs. This was having an impact on the ability of families to work. One of these families had three school-aged boys. Two of the brothers had their enrolment accepted at the school's OSHC program but the family was told the program could not meet the needs of their third son, Nolan. The family collected Nolan each day at 3pm which impacted on their work and Nolan was upset that he couldn't be with his brothers.

Kevan and Lynne, owners of Kidspace Caloundra worked closely with their Inclusion Professional to identify the barriers to including Nolan at the service. Together they arranged for Specialist Equipment to be put into place to support Nolan to access and participate in the program. This included a mobile floor hoist and sling, an electric change table and an adaptive swing. They accessed Immediate Time Limited funding for an additional educator which allowed all the educators to spend time with Nolan, learn about his interests, become confident with his care needs, and build a trusting relationship with him. Kevan collaborated with the bus company to obtain a low-set bus from Gladstone and together they made further modifications to the bus to accommodate a wheelchair so Nolan could be collected from

school and brought to the service. This bus is now affectionately referred to as 'Nolan's bus' by the community.

Nolan now spends his afternoons with his brothers at Kidspace. He has also made some new friends and his parents are able to continue to work. Recently, Nolan began attending the service's Vacation Care program and recently he joined his friends on an excursion to Aussie World.

The community has embraced Kidspace Caloundra and the service has a lengthy waiting list and a high number of children with additional needs attending each day. The Inclusion Professional continues to work with the service to support their inclusive practices, recently creating a sensory room where children can take themselves to self-regulate when needed. The service is currently completing an Innovative Solutions application which will support educators better understand the impacts of trauma on a child's developing brain and to build their confidence in supporting a large cohort of children with challenging behaviours.



Supporting Speech and Language development

Children's Key Word Sign

Children's Key Word Sign is a communication tool using signs and gestures alongside speech to support and encourage communication.

- ▶ Signs are borrowed from Auslan (Australian Sign Language)
- ▶ The signs for key words in a sentence are signed at the same time to key word is spoken
- ▶ Signs can be easily embedded into your daily routines
- ▶ All children can benefit from using Key Word Sign
- ▶ It is easy and fun to do with all children
- ▶ Free resources are available including posters, songs, books and videos from Sunshine Sign & Sing – they also offer training packages for educators



Browse the **resource section** of our website to begin implementing Key Word Sign in your environment.



Specialist Equipment

Your Inclusion Professional can assist you to access Specialist Equipment to support speech and language in your environment.

The Frontrow Juno is a sound amplification system. It only takes minutes to set up and can be used to benefit all children in the environment.

BIGmack communicators support the participation of all children and foster peer interactions.

You will find these items and more in our **online catalogue** on our website.



Are QI skills the building blocks for future success?

Dr Laura Jana is a paediatrician and an early educator with more than 20 years' experience collaborating with parents, educators, government and non-profit organisations, corporations and the media to ensure best outcomes for children. She shared her seven QI skills (pronounced 'key') at the 2022 Early Childhood Australia National Conference. These skills were named after the Chinese concept of qi, meaning positive life force or energy. QI skills complement IQ skills and are absolutely necessary for success in today's rapidly changing world. How do you support children to develop QI skills?

Me

Self-management skills that include self-awareness, self-regulation, self-control, attention, focus. Also, executive function skills which allow us to manage, regulate and control our emotions and behaviour.

How does my practice support children to have control of their own thoughts, feelings, and actions?

We

These are the people skills that allow us to understand, share and 'play well' with others including the language, empathy, listening and social-emotional skills necessary for effective communication, collaboration and teamwork.

How does my program provide opportunities for children to collaborate and work together in small groups?

Why

Skills that include questioning, curiosity and inquisitiveness that allows us to always see the world as a question mark and strive for a better understanding of how the world works.

How do I promote and encourage children's understanding of how the world works?



Will

Self-motivation and drive define these critically important skills, including a can do attitude, conscientiousness, determination, gumption, persistence, perseverance and focus put into action.

How do I foster determination and persistence? Do I step in to help too quickly?

Wiggle

Physical and intellectual restlessness make up the WIGGLE skills that play a key role in putting WHY and WILL into action.

How does my environment support every child's need to be moving and taking risks?

Wobble

Skills that allow for, build and foster agility, adaptability, resilience and confer the ability to face, overcome and learn from failure.

How do my interactions with children help them to develop resilience?

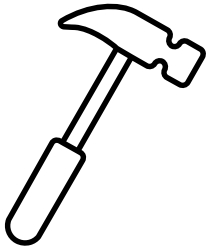
Encompassing curiosity, imagination and creativity, these are the skills that ultimately allow us to understand not just how the world is but envision how it could be.

What if

What conversations with children have I had recently that encouraged them to think about the world and how it could be?

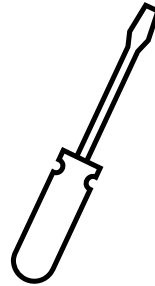


The Strategic Inclusion Plan, let's reflect on what tools you need



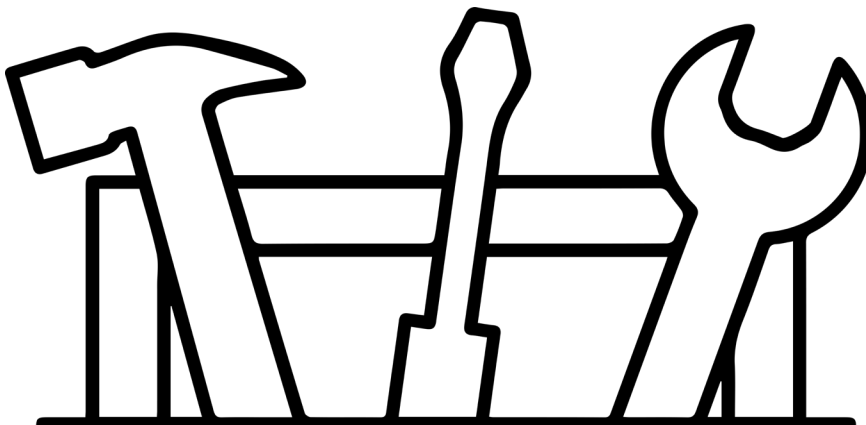
Resources

Identify resources in your service, local community and networks to support you .



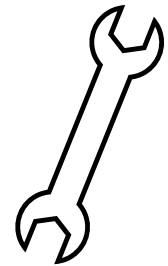
Practical Strategies

Identify consistent approaches to include all children in the environment.



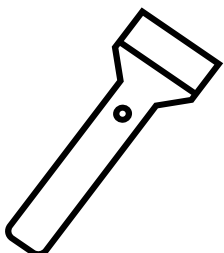
The Strategic Inclusion Plan

An inclusion assessment and planning tool developed by early childhood education and care services with support of an Inclusion Agency. It includes strategies and actions for improving and embedding inclusive practice for all children including children with additional needs.



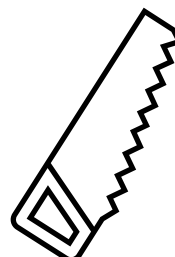
Reflection

Reflect on your current barriers to inclusion with your team and your Inclusion Professional.



Funding

Consider applying for Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) to assist your service in addressing a barrier to inclusion that cannot be addressed through the support of the Inclusion Agency.



Collaborate with others

Work closely with families, allied health professionals, local networks and organisations.

Inclusion

Outcomes through a child's eyes

Contact us for more information:

Talk with your Inclusion Professional

Phone: 1800 811 035

Visit: www.inclusionsupportqld.org.au



Strong Sense of Identity

- ▶ I have a voice and feel heard.
- ▶ I am recognised and respected for who I am
- ▶ I am supported to engage and participate in all activities
- ▶ I am supported to have meaningful, respectful, interactions and relationships



Connected with and Contribute to my World

- ▶ I understand what it means to be treated fairly and to treat others fairly
- ▶ I can contribute to decision-making and action taking in matters that affect me
- ▶ I can engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and diverse cultural community members to explore my own and others' connections to community



Confident and Involved Learner

- ▶ My educators are attuned and respond sensitively and appropriately to my efforts to communicate
- ▶ I am supported to exchange ideas, feelings and understandings using language and representations in play
- ▶ I am provided opportunities for visual communication such as signing
- ▶ I am supported to communicate through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander verbal ways of storytelling and yearning and non-verbal ways of deep listening

Strong Sense of Wellbeing

- ▶ I am shown genuine affection, understanding and respect
- ▶ I have agency and exercise choice about my sleep, rest and relaxation
- ▶ My learning environment is culturally safe and reflects and celebrates my culture and my family

References:

- ▶ Australian Government Department of Education (2022). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)*. Australian Government Department of Education for the Ministerial Council.
- ▶ Australian Government Department of Education (2022). *My Time our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (V2.0)*. Australian Government Department of Education for the Ministerial Council.



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