

Inclusion Matters

Issue 1, 2022



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 first edition of Inclusion Matters for 2022.

The new year has presented ongoing challenges for many Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services throughout Queensland as COVID-19 and recent natural disasters impacted on our local communities. However, the dedication, resilience, and collaboration demonstrated throughout these challenging times has highlighted educators' genuine commitment to our profession.

In this edition, Okinja Early Learning share a heart-breaking yet inspiring insight into an amazing little girl, "Ruby", and the legacy she leaves behind. Cairns Regional Family Day Care discuss their Innovative Solutions Project that supported them in coping with trauma in culturally responsive ways.

A group of early childhood professionals and community members share how they established the 'Our Nangara Group', a true example of this year's NAIDOC theme, Get up! Stand up! Show up!

Also highlighted in this edition is the "Hear Our Voices" poster which captures the voices of Aboriginal Elders, community members, educators, management, and children while also proposing reflective questions to strengthen inclusive practices.

If you would like to engage in further reflection and utilise this resource to build on your inclusive practices, please contact an Inclusion Professional in your region.



Soraya Apps
State Manager, Inclusion Support QLD



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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.

A service's journey of collaboration and support for authentic inclusion



At Okinja Early Learning Centre, both the staff and children are grateful to have had the honour and privilege of having Ruby as part of our family.

Ruby truly lit up the hearts of our Okinja community and demonstrated the importance of being inclusive but also taught the educators the value of diversity and choice. Ruby was diagnosed with Cockayne Syndrome Type 2 which is an incurable, inherited medical condition, primarily consisting of premature aging and failure to thrive.

Ruby showed both the children and staff at Okinja the meaning and importance of inclusivity within our centre and how to authentically approach the differing needs of all children.

Ruby's journey at Okinja Early Learning Centre began in 2018 when she started in the Nursery. During her time in Nursery, Ruby won the hearts of her educators, but little did they know the impact that she would have. As time passed throughout the year, it became apparent that Ruby was not reaching her milestones like her friends were. Observations were

documented and strategies along with learning opportunities provided to ensure that Ruby was striving towards meeting goals that aligned with her learning and development. At times it left the educators feeling overwhelmed and unsure how they would meet Ruby's high, ongoing support needs. Ruby was nonverbal, in a wheelchair and being fed via a PEG feeder.

Educators watched Ruby's friends, who were the same age as her, transition through the age-appropriate rooms without her. This was hard but they were not confident at the time for Ruby to move with her peers to the next room due to her high needs. Ruby's family felt the same - particularly with children running, jumping, and moving around both the indoor and outdoor environments. Ruby remained in the Nursery where educators felt confident they could meet her needs in a safe environment. Her same aged peers were in Junior Kindy.

At this time, our centre Director, Kristy McKinnon, liaised with the staff at Inclusion Support Qld to discuss Ruby and her individual circumstances.

Collaboratively with Ruby's mum Ashleigh, they explained the value of inclusion not only for Ruby but also for her peers and educators. Discussions were had regarding what resources could be accessed to support the educators with such a significant transition for Ruby, including the use of specialist equipment and funding for an additional educator to increase the ratio within the environment.

The Inclusion Professional worked closely with educators and Kristy to develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan. This was an opportunity for educators to identify the barriers to inclusion within the Junior Kindy environment and decide what the most appropriate strategies and resources would be to support the inclusion of all children, including Ruby with her same aged peers. With the support of specialist equipment, Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) funding for an additional educator and educators working collaboratively with their Inclusion Professional and therapists, Ruby transitioned to the Junior Kindy Room where she was able to participate alongside her same aged peers.

Cherished friendships were formed between Ruby and her peers. Children learnt about different needs, different ways to communicate and most of all they learnt about inclusion. The Strategic Inclusion Plan continued to support educators in building their confidence with implementing inclusive strategies, guiding their practice, and sustaining such positive change.

From the moment Inclusion Support QLD were a part of supporting Okinja with Ruby's inclusion, it was made a priority to ensure that she continued learning with her friends, including her cousin Maclean. Ruby transitioned between the different environments at the same time as her friends, all the way up to the kindergarten environment.

Kristy shared, *"Upon reflection, we never had to teach the children how to be inclusive, they just knew. They just knew because we never allowed Ruby's differences to hinder her learning but made it a point to celebrate everyone's differences."*

Sadly, we lost our precious Ruby in February 2022. We will never forget the lessons Ruby taught us. She will forever be remembered at her home, Okinja Early Learning Centre.

To celebrate Ruby's legacy, we have now created 'Ruby's Room,' 'Ruby's Garden' and we acknowledge Rare Disease Day every year as 'Ruby's Day.'





Spotlight on the “Hear Our Voices” resource poster

What is the new resource poster?

- ▶ The “Hear Our Voices” resource poster captures the voices of children, families, Aboriginal Elders, educators, and management to provide a diverse range of perspective so educators can reflect on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices within the service and plan how they can connect, listen, and respond.

How will this resource support our service to reflect on their practices?

- ▶ The resource proposes reflective questions for educators to consider and reflect on with their Inclusion Professional, individually or as a team to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices within their service.

How can I access the resource?

- ▶ Contact your Inclusion Professional and they will support you in using this resources to reflect on your inclusive practices.

Hear Our Voices

How do educators connect, listen and respond?

Relationships and partnerships form the foundation for successful inclusion

Childrens Voice

“I like it when my mum comes to visit us and helps us cook.” – Evie, 4 years

“My best part of kindy is playing with my cousins.” – Jimmy, 5 years

How is my family, culture and voice represented here?

- ▶ Is my home language embraced here?
- ▶ Is my culture truly valued here?
- ▶ When I look around, can I see me, and my mob represented here?
- ▶ If I have mob here, can I connect with them throughout the day?

Families Voice

“When I am at my early childhood service, I like to both feel and see that my family and child are welcomed and represented. I need educators to see me as a parent first, without expectations, and understand that my culture is part of who I am, my identity. I believe that my child’s culture will be valued while with you and that our relationship will be warm, open and respectful.” – Les Saunders, parent

Is my family and child welcome here?

- ▶ Do I feel safe, respected, culturally secure and valued?
- ▶ Do you value my child rearing practices and understand they may differ from yours?
- ▶ Do you have expectations of me that you do not have of non-Indigenous parents?
- ▶ Is there an expectation that I will share my culture with you?
- ▶ If I have Sorry Business, how will you support my family?

Elders Voice

“Sharing my culture with your service is important to me but give me time to adjust to your centre as you may be all strangers to me, and I may not participate to your expectations on my first visit.”

“I have so much to share but do not expect me to know all the Dreamtime stories around Australia or how to do dot painting as I have my own experiences and connections with the land.” – Uncle Barry Watson

What is our relationship?

- ▶ What is your intent behind engaging with me?
- ▶ Do you view me as a welcome guest to your service to share in your day or are you expecting more of a performance?
- ▶ If you have asked me to share my time and knowledge with you, have you offered to reimburse me for my time? Have you checked if I need support with transport? Have you ensured the way in which you invite me into your service is culturally secure for me?
- ▶ Do you listen, truly listen?

Educators Voice

“The display of the flags as soon as I walk into our centre and when I see my Island culture is displayed makes us feel proud. This is through artwork, weaving, special musical instruments on display and included in the program each day, and pictures of old hunting days and family so we can share our stories with the children. We like that we are asked to participate in celebrations, and it is not expected of us.” – Amara Farmer and Doreen Tabo, Educators

Am I ready to do the hard work to move the concept of reconciliation from vision to fruition?

- ▶ If we truly believe that culture is important to children’s wellbeing and development, how do we demonstrate this?
- ▶ How do I support my colleagues to share their knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, perspectives, and histories at our service?
- ▶ Do I recognise my own biases?
- ▶ Am I confident to challenge racism and bias when I see it?

Management Voice

“Be brave. To see where I am now highlights the steps I have taken. Each step was not taken alone, but with friends, educators, sector professionals, children, Aunts and Uncles.” – Pollyann Webb, Centre Director

How can we ensure all educators and staff are committed to, and will drive a whole of service change, towards reconciliation in education?

- ▶ Do we have a Reconciliation Action Plan and is it implemented with intent?
- ▶ Do we have a plan to employ and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and is this plan successful?
- ▶ Do we engage with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure that we provide a culturally secure and welcoming workplace?
- ▶ Do all of our educators understand Australian history and its impacts on the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities in our service?

Children’s Services
Since 1895

The Australian Government funded Inclusion Agency is managed by KU Children’s Services, in partnership with Cairns and District Child Care Development Association Inc.

Where can I access support?
Talk with your Inclusion Professional.
Phone 1800 811 035 Visit www.inclusionsupportqld.org.au

Using sensory aids to support children's inclusion

Inclusion Support QLD's Specialist Equipment Library provides resources that maximise opportunities for children with additional needs to interact and engage with their environments and the people around them.

With support from an Inclusion Professional (IP), services can access sensory aids through the Specialist Equipment Library. These aids may provide a sense of safety and security for some children and through educator support, children can learn to recognise their emotions and use the sensory aids to self-regulate and soothe.

Illoura Childcare Centre in Rockhampton found that using sensory aid equipment provided amazing support to children and educators within their service. During reflective conversations with their IP Mandi during the development of the Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP), educators identified some children were exhibiting behaviours that they found challenging due to unmet sensory needs. Mandi discussed the use of sensory aid equipment as a strategy to overcome this barrier to inclusion.



The service decided they would like to trial numerous pieces of equipment including:

- ▶ Sensory Pod Swing
- ▶ Kinder Board
- ▶ Bilibo
- ▶ Exploratory Bag of Fidget Toys

After using these items within the care environment, educators noticed an increase in children's participation within the program and more positive engagement with their peers. Since experiencing such great success, the service has now purchased their own sensory equipment to be made available for the whole service to utilise.

Scan the QR code to go directly to our online catalogue:



For more information about the Specialist Equipment Library and using equipment inclusively, talk to your Inclusion Professional.





Coping with trauma in culturally responsive ways

Educators are in a unique position to play a critical role in creating a safe environment for children who have experienced trauma. A Family Day Care Scheme has found a way forward by engaging in an Innovative Solutions Project to help children and educators cope with trauma in culturally responsive ways.

Educators from Cairns Regional Family Day Care (FDC) noticed that the children in their care were becoming increasingly withdrawn and unsettled. In conversations with their families, they identified that many were struggling with unresolved grief and trauma as refugees. With the added stress of COVID-19 outbreaks, job losses and family breakdown, families and their children were experiencing significant impacts to their wellbeing. While educators understood that early exposure to trauma disrupts the development of emotional regulation, empathy, and social relationships, they lacked a deeper understanding of trauma and its effect on children's development.

Service Coordinator, Iris Mitchell, met with her Inclusion Professional, to explore all possible support options. An Innovative Solutions project was developed with Complex Care that included individual face-to-face mentoring sessions and whole team professional conversations. As many of the educators have English as a second language, the professional conversations were held with the support of a translator who translated English to Nepali to ensure all educators understood the content and were able to participate, ask questions and engage in reflection.

Complex Care Consultant Therapist and Lead Trainer, Leland Pasion provided educators with an in-depth knowledge on trauma and helped them to identify

their own triggers, trauma responses and self-care needs. He used a competence-oriented framework to support educators to respond to children in ways that made them feel safe, trust others, problem-solve, and co-regulate.

Iris was delighted by the willingness of the educators to communicate openly during the professional conversations. Those educators who experienced a language barrier had typically disengaged in the past however, with the support of the translator, they were asking myriad questions and sharing their experiences and perspectives. The translator not only increased the engagement and participation of the educators but also ensured the content delivered was tailored to their unique cultural needs. One educator stated that they now, "feel really confident to express my feelings and put boundaries in place and not keep the stress in my mind."

Today, educators feel confident in their capacity to recognise trauma, identify their responses to this and to create safe environments for children. The children are settled, demonstrate a sense of belonging and can be seen deeply engaged in all the experiences offered in FDC. Educators continue to support families with a range of tools they developed throughout the project and recently they have been overwhelmed by an influx of new enrolments.

For more information on Innovative Solutions, contact your Inclusion Professional. Click the link below for more information on how Complex Care may be able to support your service needs.

<https://www.complexcare.com.au/>

Does your children's library provide ALL children with a window and a mirror?

What stories were read to you as a child? Who were the main characters in those stories? Could you imagine yourself in the story? Cultural Consultant, Ranu James shared the importance of representation in children's literature with us.

Story telling is one of the easiest tools that we have in our toolbox for teaching children about their world. Both reading and oral storytelling create intentional teaching possibilities by allowing us to gently begin exploring topics of race, equity, diversity and inclusion with children. We can share with children the importance of respecting, valuing, and celebrating our differences.

Dr Rudine Sims Bishop developed the term windows and mirrors (<https://humaneeducation.org/windows-and-mirrors-and-sliding-glass-doors-ensuring-students-see-themselves-and-others-in-literature/>) in relation to children's literature. It describes a way of ensuring that the story books we provide to children act as windows into their lives, including those children with diverse lived experiences. And that they also provide mirrors allowing children to see themselves reflected in the stories that they read.

All children need to know that they can be the heroes in their stories, not just the sidekick or secondary character. Representation matters, being able to see yourself, to see your culture, to see your own life experiences and hear the voice of your community reflected in the stories that are read to you matters. It sends a message of belonging, acceptance, discovery and possibilities.

Having access to story books where all children are represented creates a community that acknowledges our shared humanity, our shared experiences, and allows opportunity for respect for diversity to be nurtured and grow.



Is it time to audit the books that children have access to in your service? Ask yourself:

- ▶ Do you have story books that represent Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse people, culture and stories?
- ▶ Are there heroes in the story books who are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or culturally diverse?
- ▶ Do you have story books that represent every culture in your service or community?
- ▶ Does your library include culturally diverse authors and illustrators?
- ▶ Who has the power in the story book? Who has joy? Who is the villain?
- ▶ Does the book avoid offensive expressions, negative attitudes or stereotypical representation?
- ▶ If the book has historical information in it, is this information accurate?

You can purchase diverse children's story books from:

- ▶ <https://libraryforall.org/shop-now/>
- ▶ <https://www.rileycallieresources.com.au>
- ▶ <https://www.magabala.com/collections/childrens-pictures-books>

Did you know your Inclusion Professional can support you to reflect on how to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in your service?

The Connecting the Dots Through Culture team are holding a Weaving Cultural Stories Lunch Box Challenge to support educators to embed cultural perspectives into their programs through cultural stories. To find out more, visit <https://connectingthedotsthroughculture.mykajabi.com/live-session-vs-2-1>

Celebrating NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC celebrations are held around Australia each July to celebrate the history, cultures, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living culture on earth.

The NAIDOC theme for 2022 is Get up! Stand Up! Show up!

One such community that has done just that is, 'Our Nangara Group,' a group of both First Nations and non-indigenous members. This community group was formed five years ago, with the common goal of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the community. The founding team of early childhood professionals and community members included Sharon Saunders and Kellie Still, Inclusion Support Queensland, Kristy Morgan, Goodstart Shailer Park, Barry Watson, Communities for Children.

Our Nangara group, (meaning our special place) meets monthly to plan and organise local activities and gatherings, including its largest community event, NAIDOC Week. Members from 'Our Nangara Group' were named finalists in the 2021 Queensland Reconciliation Awards, and commended for their NAIDOC event.

'Our Nangara Group' was formed to fill a gap in the local community. *"I am honoured that the group was named as a finalist in the Reconciliation Awards, the work that is going on is awe inspiring and I feel very privileged and inspired to be sitting amongst that calibre of work,"* Kristy said.

"What began as open conversations and networking fuelled by likeminded individuals, has developed into a strong community group and a significant annual NAIDOC event for the local area highlighting and strengthening relationships within the community," she said.

The thriving NAIDOC event is held annually on a local primary school oval, with stalls and entertainment suitable for children aged birth to 12 years.

This year's 'Our Nangara Group' NAIDOC event will be held on 13 July at Shailer Park Primary School. The event will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers and dancers, a smoking ceremony, a Welcome to Country, and will offer traditional food and bush tucker tastings for all attendees.

While the NAIDOC event is the key activity of 'Our Nangara Group', Kristy acknowledged the importance of ongoing professional conversations about reconciliation and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within early childhood services and community wide.

"It is so important to find out what's happening in your community and just be a part of it," Kristy said. *"Spend time in the community, not just during NAIDOC Week, but year-round. Regular community conversations make a real difference."*

How will your service Get up! Stand up! Show up! in 2022? Get involved with your local NAIDOC event: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/local-events/local-naidoc-week-events>





A lens on community engagement

Director Carrie Rose from Rosie's Early Learning in Daisy Hill, spoke to us about the importance of community connections in the service.

We see connecting the role of family, children, teachers, and community members as an integral part of building genuine community partnerships. This in turn enables educators and the children to advocate their importance as contributing citizens in the world, in the here and now. Engaging in the immediate community where the children are well-known and welcomed, such as with the local shopkeepers, was one of the first steps we took. Involving children wherever possible in such connections makes the experience more meaningful in the eyes of the children.

We have appointed a team member as the Community Engagement Officer to develop and oversee our Community Engagement Program. Rich community engagement takes planning and is not something that has easily come to the centre. This was the main purpose of the Community Engagement Officer; it was about having a team member keep their lens on community engagement.

It is easy to say "well we tried" when something does not work, but it is the ability to continue to make those connections and more that is critical.

There will always be barriers and challenges to engaging with community. Some of our challenges were finding the time to follow up with people to keep the momentum going, tracking down who the right person is to talk too for the connection, feeling a sense of rejection when an organisation or community is not interested in collaborating or working with you. It is also challenging supporting families and other educators to understand the importance the work is to a child's emotional, social wellbeing and self-esteem.

Engaging with community is a journey that has many paths and crossroads - just pick one and start there!

Talk to your Inclusion Professional or log into the Inclusion support QLD resource section of our website for more information and tips on establishing community connections.



Artwork from a child who values community connection at Rosie's Early Learning

Hot topic...loose parts



"The natural connections children make to formal learning through the use of open ended and naturalistic resources should be a motivation to all adults to ensure that these are freely available to young children both indoors and outdoors."

- Eric Erickson

The theory of "loose parts," first proposed by architect Simon Nicholson in the 1970s, has begun to have a big influence on child-play experts and the people who design play spaces for children. Nicholson believed that it is the "loose parts" in our environment that will empower our creativity.

During play, loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways.

They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or combined with other materials. Loose parts provide children opportunities to explore their environments in a truly play based unstructured manner as the use of the resource has not been predetermined by adult influence.

An array of loose parts can encourage wonder, and challenge children to explore creativity, develop executive functioning, maths, science, literacies, problem solving and many, many more essential concepts of a challenging early childhood framework.

Family Day Care Loose Parts:

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/npsa-familyday-care-loose-parts.pdf>

Nature Play SA Loose Parts Information:

<https://natureplaysa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Nature-Play-Downloads-Loose-Parts-Info-Sheet.pdf>



That's innovative...

Making positive changes in OSHC (Outside School Hours Care) through Innovative Solutions support



Nobbs St and Park Avenue OSHC services in Rockhampton identified barriers within their services relating to challenging behaviours.

Through conversations with their Inclusion Professional (IP) Amanda, both service Coordinators identified that the physical environment and routines were contributing to the challenges. Children were disengaging and their emotions were regularly escalating into outbursts. Educators were unsure how to include and support the children as they felt the skills and knowledge they had and were using did not meet the children's inclusion needs.

With further support from IP Amanda, the Coordinator Nadine developed an Innovative Solutions project proposal that demonstrated the inclusion barriers and outlined how their provider would build the capacity and confidence of educators to better include and engage the children within the program. The provider they selected was 'The Outsiders'.

The educators were supported through professional conversations to critically reflect on their own values, beliefs, attitudes and feelings as they delved deeper into the realms of play, play theory and the many developmental benefits that surround it. They were also provided with practical information, theory, and knowledge of why and how to implement a loose parts setting.

The Outsider's consultant provided several onsite visits to the centres to consider how the play spaces were

being used and address the barriers that were outlined in the Innovative Solutions project, with tailored strategies. As a result, the children now have more choice in their day, the play settings and routines have been enhanced and are now more meaningful and interesting for all the children.

Upon completion of the Innovative Solution project and the changes in the environment, educators have observed that there have been positive changes in the children's behaviours. Educators state that 'Children are interacting with each other more freely and with less conflict'.

Educators have also observed children's increased enjoyment when they are able to experiment, and problem solve during 'risky' and 'rough and tumble' play. Educators are now more confident and have a greater understanding of the importance of child-led practices.

Contact your Inclusion Professional to discuss how Innovative Solutions may be able to help your service.

Further reading:

Q.A.3 The environment as the third teacher

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-02/QA3_TheEnvironmentAsTheThirdTeacher.pdf

Q.A. 5 Supporting children to regulate their behaviour

https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/QA5_Supporting_children_to_regulate_their_own_behaviour.pdf

Journey of acceptance involves a working partnership with families

When parents learn about any difficulty or problem in their child's development, this information can come as a tremendous blow. Families can experience many emotions ranging from denial, anger, fear, grief, a deep sense of loss and a feeling of being alone.

Deanna from Goodstart Early Learning Coorparoo, Cavendish Road has shared the service's experiences in supporting families on their journey of acceptance.

Deanna highlights that forming solid working partnerships with families is the key to supporting parents on their journey of acceptance. It may take months, or it may take years for families to accept that additional support is required for their child, but the service is there to support the child's needs and to offer guidance and reassurance to the parents and carers on their journey. Deanna recommends building on the relationships from the onset in order to connect positively by relating personal stories e.g., situation with own child or family member, links with the country of origin and cultural perspectives, suburb in which they live, links to the family's work. She also suggests being persistent in a pleasant way in supporting the family to seek help from the medical profession or allied health professionals.

What does a working partnership involve?

- ▶ Support, guidance, and reassurance. Regular positive communication with family, relaying positive messages about the child's participation and engagement and explaining strategies used at the service and adapting ones from home e.g, toileting, behaviours.
- ▶ Research and recommend allied health professionals, contacts for NDIS planning support.
- ▶ Work with supporting allied health professionals, inviting them to work with the children at the service and to share strategies e.g., Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist.
- ▶ Recommend websites, online workshops, parent connections online or within the service community.



- ▶ Work with your Inclusion Professional and service supports, in devising strategies to overcome barriers to inclusion.
- ▶ Support the children in their environment to have all their needs met and enable children to participate in the program to the best of their ability.

What we can achieve?

- ▶ Child's engagement and participation in all aspects of the program is supported.
- ▶ Educators see the child with additional needs in a more positive light and facilitate in the building on his/her strengths and interests.
- ▶ Educators build on their knowledge, skills, and confidence in working with children with additional needs, and how to communicate with families.
- ▶ Families' gradual acceptance of the knowledge that their child needs additional support, acceptance of the support and advocating for their child to achieve the best developmental outcomes.
- ▶ Consistency with strategies between all child's environments e.g., home/service.
- ▶ Support of an additional educator in the environment to support the team and to ensure the inclusion of all the children.

If as an educator, you find yourself in this situation it is good to consider the parents' perspectives of how they are feeling, as it is a huge journey to acceptance. Working together in a partnership with the family will ensure more positive outcomes.

Your Inclusion Professional can support you further to build partnerships with families.

For more information and resources, visit:
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/notalone>

Have you heard the poem, **Welcome to Holland** by Emily Perl Kingsley?

Kingsley authored this poem, which is from her personal perspective, after she was asked to describe the experience of having a son with Down syndrome.

<https://www.macygilson.com/blog/welcome-to-holland>

Welcome to Holland

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David.

The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine, and disease. It's just a different place.

So, you must go out and buy new guidebooks. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around....and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away...
because the loss of that dream is a very, very significant loss.

But...if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things...about Holland.



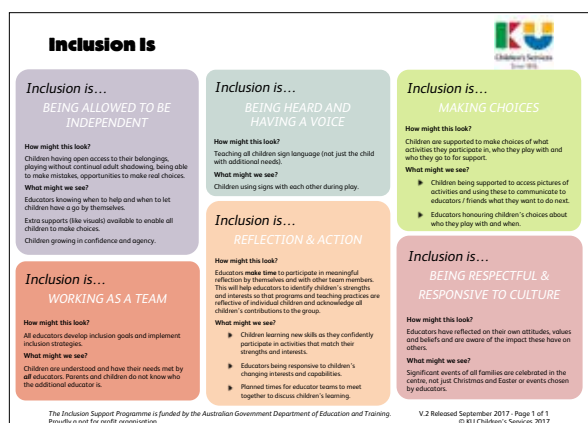
Inclusion resources on the ISQ website

When we are talking about inclusion, are we all talking about the same thing? Inclusion means that...

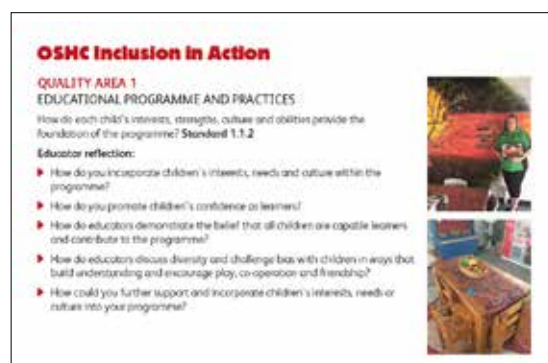
- ▶ Every child has the right to participate in high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- ▶ All children are viewed as being capable learners and contributors in ECEC services
- ▶ The strengths and interests of each child are acknowledged
- ▶ Inclusion is not about 'fixing' the child or improving their skills so that they fit into the ECEC environment, it is about changing what we do as educators so that all children can participate
- ▶ The focus is on the whole environment and not just an individual child
- ▶ Diversity is acknowledged, respected and viewed as a resource for learning, growth and change
- ▶ All educators are responsible for identifying inclusion barriers and learning about ways to overcome them
- ▶ Educators build partnerships with families, other professionals and the wider community

Our new website has some fantastic resources to support educators gain a deeper understanding of inclusion.

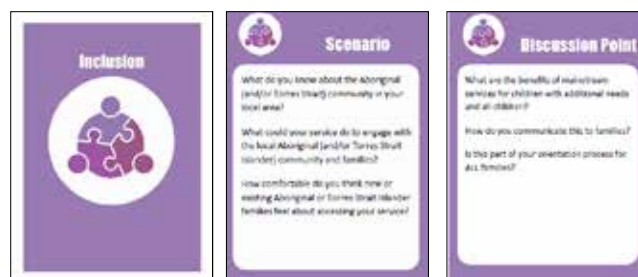
Inclusion Is Poster



OSHC Inclusion in Action Cards



Inclusion Quest for Quality Reflection Cards



Inclusion Matters Poster



You can find these inclusion resources and many more here: <https://inclusionsupportqld.org.au/about/understanding-inclusion>

Coming in the next edition

- ▶ ISQ Inclusion in Action Forums
- ▶ Our new Understanding Visual Supports Poster



Centre for Children's Health and Wellbeing

Healthy Kids

Free Health professional development for the early childhood education and care sector

Healthy Kids 2022

Did you know Inclusion Professionals have been supporting the Healthy Kids program since it started in 2017?

The Healthy Kids Project offers free health professional development for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. The project aims to bring together local educators and other key partners to engage in free health-content professional development (PD) that complements the early years learning framework (EYLF) and National Quality Framework (NQF).

Almost 1000 educators attended the Healthy Kids sessions in 2021. These sessions were focused on trauma. You can still access recordings of these events on their website.

Now Supporting Quality Area 6

Connecting with families and communities is vital! Research shows that children's learning and wellbeing are greatly enhanced when their family and early childhood service work together.

We know that community partnerships that are based on communication and collaboration contribute to inclusion, learning and wellbeing. The 2022 Healthy Kids series aims to provide information, tips and strategies for family and community engagement

80% felt 'very confident' or 'confident' trying something learnt or discussed at the event

92.25% plan on trying out something they learnt or discussed at the event

- ▶ March Session: Knowing and understanding families
- ▶ May Session: Linking with your community
- ▶ August Session: Partnering with families
- ▶ October Session: How to have difficult conversations about children's development

If your service could benefit from free support to connect with your families and communities then sign up for their newsletter and be the first to receive registration details for their sessions:

<https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/our-services/community-health-services/centre-childrens-health-wellbeing/healthy-kids/#newsletter>

We hope to see you there.

Connecting with families and communities





The Australian Government funded Inclusion Agency is managed by KU Children's Services, in partnership with Cairns and District Child Care Development Association Inc.

