

Inclusion in early childhood services: Reflection questions

Supporting resource for Webinar 1: Inclusion in early childhood services



“Educators who are committed to equity recognise that all children have the right to participate in inclusive early childhood settings, regardless of their circumstances, strengths, gender, capabilities or diverse ways of doing and being... Educators engage in critical reflection, challenge practices that contribute to inequities or discrimination and make curriculum decisions that promote genuine participation and inclusion.”

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0, p. 17

Inclusion in early childhood services

Inclusion is likely to be a word that you are familiar with because **equity, inclusion and diversity** underpin the National Quality Framework, under which every early childhood service in Australia operates. ACECQA identify inclusion as “an approach where diversity is celebrated. It requires educators to hold high expectations for the learning and development of all children, recognising that every child treads an individual learning path and will progress in different and equally meaningful ways” (ACECQA, *Guide to NQF*, 2023, p.10). In practice, inclusion means that “every child has access to, participates meaningfully in, and experiences positive outcomes from early childhood education and care programs (Early Childhood Australia, *Statement on the inclusion of every child in ECEC*, 2016, p. 2).

Questions to guide critical reflection

After the webinar, you may have questions about how the content could apply to your practice. Write these down so you can reflect on them and seek input from families and colleagues.

The following questions and prompts may also be useful in guiding your personal and team reflection on the practices that may either support or act as barriers to inclusion at your service. Take the time to record your reflections and plans for actions that results from these reflections.

1. How do you advocate for inclusion in your service and inform your community about your commitment to inclusion?	Reflections	Actions
<p>In what ways does your organisation communicate a commitment to inclusion, for example through the service's statement of philosophy, information posters, policies and procedures?</p> <p>Who is advantaged/included by your communications and messages concerning disability and inclusion? Who is disadvantaged, excluded or silenced?</p> <p>How do you include the perspectives of families, children and the community?</p> <p>Are there any different messages you would like to send about disability and inclusion?</p>		
<p>How does your service philosophy send messages to your community about inclusion?</p> <p>How do your policies and procedures support inclusion?</p> <p>What do you do in your day-to-day practice that reflects what is written about inclusion in your service philosophy, policies and procedures?</p> <p>Is it time to review your philosophy, policies, or procedures?</p>		

2. How can you overcome barriers to inclusion?	Reflections	Actions
<p>Do you consider your service to be “inclusion ready and welcoming”? Why or why not?</p> <p>What practical barriers to inclusion can you identify at your service? How might you overcome these?</p> <p>What changes could you make to the physical environment to make it more welcoming?</p> <p>Who can you partner with to help you overcome practical barriers to inclusion?</p>		
<p>What strategy or activity do you practice that makes children with disability feel like they belong in your service?</p> <p>What do you do to support families of children with disability to feel welcomed at your service?</p>		

2. How can you overcome barriers to inclusion?	Reflections	Actions
<p>Can you give examples of attitudes towards children with disability from other children, families or educators that may be barriers to inclusion? How could you overcome these attitudinal barriers?</p> <p>What challenges you when you think about enrolling a child with a disability? What would it take for you to overcome this?</p>		

Notes