



MSS & WAABINY OSHC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY



PURPOSE

Montessori Stepping Stones (MSS) aims to provide an early learning environment which is free from bias and prejudice in which children learn the principles of fairness and respect for the uniqueness of each person. We aim to involve the community to assist educators/employees and children understand and accept the range of cultures and abilities of members of the local community. Differences in backgrounds, culture and abilities are valued and families are actively encouraged to share their experiences with educators/employees, carers and other families. Where necessary MSS will ensure that appropriate inclusion support services are accessed and referred to families in order to support children's wellbeing and full inclusion into the program.

SCOPE

All people involved in providing a bias free environment for family and community involvement at MSS – including children, families, educators and employees who assist in the continuous improvement and implementation of relating quality practices.

DESCRIPTION/GENERAL

MSS has an important role to play in encouraging children and their families to feel part of their community and in supporting them to make a contribution to it. The principles relating to children's rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, and Federal as well as State Equal Opportunity legislation will guide MSS in determining diversity and inclusion policy. MSS believes all children have the right to have their culture acknowledged and respected and recognises the importance of valuing the diversity of experience, perspectives, expectations, knowledge and skills that any community of people will encompass, and will actively support the inclusion of all children including those with additional needs.

LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Federal Equal Opportunity Act, WA, 1984
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012
- Education and Care Services National Regulations

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

To feel accepted and valued for who they are and have their individual needs recognised and met. To recognise discrimination and prejudice and understand the value of diversity in order to be treated fairly and equitably.

Page	1	Review Date:	13/11/2019
P:\Centre Operation\MSS - New 2015\01 Policies\Word\MSS.P16 Diversity And Inclusion.Docx			
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MSS & WAABINY OSHC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY



FAMILIES' NEEDS

To be consulted about their own social and cultural backgrounds and feel confident that their culture will be reflected in our service and have opportunities to establish links with and make a contribution to their community. To feel a valued member at MSS and to know their child is valued and included.

EDUCATOR/EMPLOYEE NEEDS

Open communication with parents and knowing that all employees and families value diversity and support MSS' policy. That training and resources to support diversity and inclusion are made available through MSS.

MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Good communication between families and management. All employees support diversity and inclusion policy. To have relevant knowledge on community values and needs.

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

Educators, supervisors and employees will actively seek information from children, families and the community, about their cultural traditions, customs and beliefs, and use this information to provide children with a variety of experiences that will enrich the environment within the service.

Educators work in partnership with families to provide care that meets the child's needs and is consistent with the family's culture, beliefs and early learning practices. Specific requests will be honoured where practical to demonstrate respect and ensure continuity of care of the child.

Educators will obtain and use resources that reflect the diversity of children, families and the community and increase awareness and appreciation of Australia's multicultural heritage.

Educators, the nominated supervisor and coordinators will be sensitive and attentive to all children, respect their backgrounds, unique qualities and abilities, ensure that the service environment reflects the lives of the children and families using the service and the cultural diversity of the broader community, and ensure children's individual needs are accommodated at the service.

Children with special needs will be provided with support so they can be included as equals within the service. This may require the assistance of social, ethnic or special needs services which MSS will access in collaboration with the child's family, and/or adapting the environment, routines and/or educator/employees arrangements in order to facilitate inclusion.

Educators will treat all children equitably and encourage them to treat each other with respect and fairness.

Educators will role model appropriate ways to challenge discrimination and prejudice, and actively promote inclusive behaviours in children.

Page	2	Review Date:	13/11/2019
P:\Centre Operation\MSS - New 2015\01 Policies\Word\MSS.P16 Diversity And Inclusion.Docx			
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Children will never be singled out or made to feel inferior to, or better than others. Educators and children will discuss incidents of bias or prejudice in children's play or relationships with each other, to help children to understand and find strategies to counteract these behaviours.

Parents/guardians will be consulted in the development of holistic programs that are responsive to children's lives, interests and learning styles, and reflect children's family, culture and community.

Educators will create opportunities as an integral part of their daily programs for children to learn about, develop respect for, and celebrate the diversity that exists in the service and in the broader community by:

- encouraging all families, children and other educators/employees to share their experiences, skills, cultures and beliefs
- inviting community members to the service to share their stories, songs, experiences, skills, cultures and beliefs
- accessing and using a range of resources (including multi-cultural and multi-lingual resources) that reflect the diversity of children and families in the service and in the broader community

EDUCATOR/EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

MSS aims to recruit educators/employees from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds that reflect the cultural diversity of the community wherever possible.

All educators/employees are fully oriented to the service's code of conduct/code of ethics.

The nominated supervisor, educators and coordinators will attend professional development that builds awareness of their own cultural beliefs and values, increases their cultural competence and helps them to challenge discrimination and prejudice.

INCLUSION SUPPORT AGENCIES

MSS accesses the pool of bicultural support workers and employees to assist communication with families from diverse cultural backgrounds and/or telephone translation services when required.

MSS will access additional support, assistance and resources for children with additional needs including children from diverse cultural backgrounds, children with high ongoing support needs (including disabilities) and ATSI (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) children.

Educators will talk to the relevant child's parents/guardians about any concerns and offer the family links to other support services within the community such as Inclusion Support Agencies; Community Health Services etc.

Educators work with families, inclusion support agencies and other specialists working with the child to develop individual support plans for children with additional needs.

Page	3	Review Date:	13/11/2019
P:\Centre Operation\MSS - New 2015\01 Policies\Word\MSS.P16 Diversity And Inclusion.Docx			
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