

CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY

Date: April 2001, Revised 15/06/05, Revised 28/05/08, Reviewed 25/11/11, Reviewed 20-02-15, Reviewed 7/05/18

Signed by Management Committee _____ **Date** _____

Aims:

- To promote the principle of fairness for all.
- To value the individual and his/her ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds
- To acknowledge, value and promote the human diversity that exists within our families, Centre, community and the world in general.
- To develop programmes that support the child and adult's self-esteem and pride in family, community, ethnicity and linguistic heritage.

Objectives:

- To foster in each child and adult a confidence and knowledge of self-identity so they feel good about who they are.
- To foster a capacity to offer comfort and empathy to others in their interactions with a diverse range of people.
- To enable children to feel comfortable with similarities and differences in others.
- To foster acceptance of individuals as members of families within a wider cultural network.
- To provide opportunities for children to explore diverse cultural contacts as represented within the Centre and community through cultural aspects such as food, language and religious celebrations.
- To raise awareness of non-traditional work opportunities and gender roles through play and literature.
- To encourage positive interaction between children, families, staff and the community so that barriers can be recognised and counteracted.
- To assist children, staff and families to appreciate that racism, prejudice and discrimination act as barriers within the community

Explanation:

Australia is a multicultural society and as we recognise greater cultural and ethnic diversity, it is important we guide children in recognising and respecting similarities and differences in the cultures that are the fabric of our community. At University Preschool & Child Care Centre, we believe that the recognition and integration of cultural diversity into our daily programming will ultimately lead to the development of strong, caring and tolerant individuals who are capable of making a valuable contribution to society.

This policy is based on the following understandings of the term "culture":

- Culture is learned in families and communities
- Cultures belong to groups of people
- Culture is shared ways of knowing, doing and believing
- Culture is dynamic
- The ways people meet their material and non-material needs is influenced by culture
- Language is a vital element of culture

Related Policies & Documents

Mission Statement & Philosophy
Curriculum Planning & Review Policy
Anti-Bias Policy
Family Involvement & Communication Policy
Staff Code of Ethics
Staff Code of Conduct

Procedures and Guidelines

1. Awareness and Acceptance

Australia is a culturally diverse society composed of people with different languages, beliefs and values.

Therefore it is essential that our program should support:

- 1.1. The awareness, acceptance and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, languages and identities. As descendants of Australia's original inhabitants Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a special place in Australian culture. Therefore, special recognition and acknowledgment is to be given to Australia's indigenous cultures

- 1.2. Australia's cultural diversity through programmes and practices for Centre children and their families.
- 1.3. The concept that there are many ways of understanding childhood and child development and these will be supported within the requirements & realities of the child care environment.
- 1.4. The provision of opportunities for children and staff to develop positive attitudes towards others as well as themselves to ensure that our service is inclusive of the diversity of cultures, languages and identities regardless of the cultural composition of the service.
- 1.5. The fact that families have unique knowledge of their own child.

2. Access to University Preschool & Childcare Centre

The ability for different cultural groups within society to access our service is not equal. Therefore it is essential that:

- 2.1. We recognise that every child, family and staff member has a right to access our Centre and that we support their cultural identity and their community.
- 2.2. Our program is planned, implemented and evaluated through ongoing discussion with our families and the wider community to reflect the diversity of that community.
- 2.3. Information about our Centre is provided in a variety of ways, for example oral, visual and written.
- 2.4. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that information about the Centre is communicated effectively

3. Language, Acquisition and Learning

In recognition of the pivotal role of language in learning and that English is the primary language spoken at University Preschool & Childcare Centre it is essential that:

- 3.1. All children have opportunities to listen to, use and learn English in a supportive environment where resources, materials and people are used to scaffold their learning of English
- 3.2. A diversity of language, literacy and communication styles is recognised, valued and used within University Preschool & Childcare Centre.
- 3.3. A reasonable effort will be made to support children with languages other than English to extend their language within the Centre environment.

4. Bilingual/multilingual Staff

The presence of multilingual and bilingual staff is an asset to any children's service. Therefore it is essential that:

- 4.1. University Preschool & Childcare Centre employs staff from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds where-ever possible.
- 4.2. Our program should explicitly recognise and incorporate the linguistic and cultural skills of staff members.

5. Program development

Cultural diversity will be incorporated into the Centre Programmes for the benefit of children, families and staff. Therefore it is essential that:

- 5.1. Where possible programs provide opportunities for all children, staff and families to use of a variety of communication forms including languages other than English.
- 5.2. Programs reflect the diversity of cultures represented by the broader community and extend children's knowledge of their own culture and of cultures other than their own.
- 5.3. Programs, policies, practices and curricula are not only culturally inclusive but consciously work to avoid bias, combat racism and reject stereotyping.
- 5.4. Resources depict the diversity of contemporary cultures in Australia avoiding cultural stereotyping, ethnocentric attitudes, cultural dominance and gender-based discrimination and negative stereotyping.
- 5.5. Teaching and learning strategies reflect inclusive and multiple ways of knowing and expressing knowledge.
- 5.6. Where-ever possible programs represent a diversity of family forms/structures.
- 5.7. Staff will intervene where discrimination occurs to teach children how to advocate for justice and equity.

6. Staff development

Staff working in children's services potentially impact on children's developing attitudes towards cultural diversity more than any other people in a child's life other than their family. Professional development needs to support their ability to do this well.

Therefore it is essential that our staff have access to Professional Development that:

- 6.1. Reflects and responds to the diversity of cultures that make up Australia.
- 6.2. Places particular emphasis on the understanding of how children develop language.
- 6.3. Recognises and reflects the differing beliefs about childhood held by different cultures.
- 6.4. Enables them to examine their own values and assumptions in relation to race, culture, class and gender and the impact these may have on their practice.

Source Material

ACT Government, *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011*, and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (available from <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>)

Anne Stonehouse (2001) *NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services, the Practice of Relationships*, NSW Department Community Services – Office of Childcare

Australian Early Childhood Association, Inc., *Cross-cultural perspectives* Australian Journal of Early Childhood, Volume 21, No.3, September 1996

Australian Children's Education and Care Authority (2009) *The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Produced by the Australian Government Department of Education and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments 2009, Downloaded from http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

27/02/2018 **Pam Schurch & Elizabeth Hopson** (1989) *Exploring Diversity: Reflections 10 Years On*, Australian Early Childhood Association

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