GENDER EQUITY POLICY

In order to create an environment that supports, reflects and promotes gender equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices, it is crucial for our Service to examine our value and belief systems. We are committed to promoting confidence and self-esteem in all children and acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of each child.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed

LEGISLATION AND FRAMEWORKS
Australian Human Rights Commission (2013)   Disability Discrimination Act 1992   Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2006   Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 (2022)   Equal Opportunity Act 2010   Privacy Act 1988   Sex Discrimination Act 1984   United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy Additional Needs Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Code of Conduct Policy Educational Program Policy	Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy Orientation of Families Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Respect for Children Policy

PURPOSE

To ensure children are treated with respect and equality, our Service affirms the right for all children to have access to and participation in, the same experiences and activities irrespective of gender. To ensure that positive attitudes towards gender equity are encouraged and supported within our Service and community. Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of pride and self-worth, as they develop respect for each other's rights and responsibilities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Early childhood educators are in a unique position to influence children's development and create environments that encourage equal and respectful relationships. Gender plays a significant role in the lives of children as it defines masculinity and femininity. These are socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that society considers 'appropriate' for a person based on their sex. Breaking down gender stereotypes from a young age, helps stop the negative consequences of inequality and discrimination. Educators working with children need to observe the implication of gender in children's choice of friends, activities, language, interactions, group dynamics and behaviour. These observations can lead to valuable insight into children's understandings about gender and assist educators to promote challenges to gender stereotypes and embrace diversity.

The *Anti-Bias Approach in Early Childhood* suggests the following principles as a basis to challenge sexism and promote anti-bias behaviour:

- be prepared to challenge sexist attitudes and behaviours
- ensure that you protect the child or adult who has been treated unfairly
- explain what you think is unfair about their attitudes and behaviours and if appropriate, model anti-sexist attitudes and behaviours

- correct any incorrect and sexist assumptions a child has about gender

- plan a strategy for how to deal with a similar situation in the future.

Red Ruby Scarlet (Ed.). 2018

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT AND THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- provide families with information about the importance of a gender equity approach in achieving positive outcomes for all children

- provide information about the Service's gender equity work

- provide a positive, inclusive, respectful and safe environment for LGBTIQA+ parented families

- ensure all staff have access to professional development activities- promote inclusivity and representing all families in the community including LGBTIQA+ families

- engage staff in reflective practice about their own biases about gender

- foster an inclusive and gender equitable environment that focuses on acceptance and celebrates diversity

- promote a positive understanding of gender equity

- ensure educators and staff are aware of the Service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families

- ensure that any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice are dealt with in an appropriate manner

EDUCATORS WILL:

- be mindful and respectful of how activities and experiences provided may impact on the expectations, interests, and behaviours of all genders

- be mindful of the language used when addressing children- be inclusive and respectful when referring to LGBTIQA+ families

- provide a stimulating learning environment in which boys and girls are equally encouraged to explore a full range of experiences and emotions that aren't constricted by gender

- encourage children to express emotions and display affection and empathy

- act as advocates of children in dealing with other adults who act in a bias manner against a child due to their gender

- discourage the identification of particular skills, behaviours, and/or feelings as 'boys' and 'girls'

- encourage children to look upon both sexes as equal

- support the gender equity policy review by focusing on how children construct gender, and the effects of gender in curriculum, teaching and learning

child care
CENTRE DESKTOP

- be responsive and ensure their actions are relevant to the specific and changing gender dynamics that emerge from the different ways in which different children interpret gender
- monitor language, attitudes, and assumptions with regard to gender and anti-bias of themselves, other educators, and children.
- give positive messages about gender equity through their actions and words and avoid giving messages that promote traditional gender roles and gender bias
- critically reflect on their practices and environment and model a positive attitude towards gender equality
- encourage and support all children to participate in the full range of experiences and activities
- regularly review resources, equipment, materials, and images used with children to make sure they include gender diversity, non-stereotypical images, and non-traditional family lifestyles such as single or same sex parents
- encourage children to explore their own gender identities and the impact of gender relations in their play
- regularly review the book collection to ensure a range of different stories and experiences are depicted beyond stereotypical narratives

DEFINITIONS

Gender refers to the socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men.

Gender equity acknowledges that women and men have different access to resources, power, responsibilities and life experiences and different strategies are often necessary to address disadvantages and achieve equal outcomes of women and men, boys and girls.

Gender equality is the outcome reached through gender equity. It is the equal valuing by the society of the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play.

Gender inequality is the unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity, and value afforded to men and women in society due to prevailing gendered norms and structures. Gender roles are the functions and responsibilities expected to be fulfilled by women and men, girls and boys in a given society.

child care
CENTRE DESKTOP

Gendered norms consist of a set of dominant beliefs and rules of conduct, which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from boys and girls, men and women.

Inclusion involves taking into account all children and young people's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, capabilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in program decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children and young people's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children and young people have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.

Sex refers to biological and physiological differences between females and males.

Stereotype refers to a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

Sexism refers to gender discrimination. It is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender.

Violence against women is defined as 'any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life' (Council of Australian Governments, 2011; United Nations General Assembly, 1993).

Sourced from Our Watch (2015) in Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years: A Resource for Local Government and and EYLF (V2.02) (2022).

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Gender Equity Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, educators, staff and management.

SOURCE

Australian Human Rights Commission (2015) *Supporting young children's rights* Statement of Intent (2105-2018) Australian Human Rights Commission and Early Childhood Australia (ECA)
Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.*V2.0, 2022

Australian Government Department of Education *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022*

Australian Government. Australian Institute of Families Studies. (2022). *LGBTIQA+ glossary of common terms*.

Darebin City Council *Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years: A resource for Local Government*

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended ~~2020~~ 2023).

Red Ruby Scarlet (Ed). (2001). *The anti-bias approach in early childhood* (3rd Ed.). Australia

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations

Women's Health East (2017). *No Limitations. Breaking down gender stereotypes in the early years. A resource guide for early years educators. https://whe.org.au/what-we-do/gender-equity-for-health-outcomes/no-limitations-gender-stereotypes-early-years/*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	TRACEY DAVEY	OPERATIONS MANAGER	APRIL 2023
POLICY REVIEWED	APRIL 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2024
VERSION NUMBER	V11.04.23		
MODIFICATIONS	- annual policy maintenance - Disability Discrimination Act added to legislation - Inclusion definition added from EYLF - additional references related to inclusion and respect for LGBTIQA+ families - ELYF references amended to V2.0 - continuous improvement/reflection section added - link Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources'		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
	- policy maintenance - no major changes to policy - minor formatting edits within text - hyperlinks checked and repaired as required		
APRIL 2021	- Minor edits - sources checked for currency		APRIL 2022
APRIL 2020	Additions to purpose, implementation and management responsibilities based on current research Related legislation added Definitions added		APRIL 2021

	Additional sources added to ensure currency	
APRIL 2019	• Duplicated information deleted. • Sources checked for currency. • Irrelevant sources deleted. • Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised	APRIL 2020
APRIL 2018	• Included the list of 'related policies'	APRIL 2019
October 2017	• Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	APRIL 2018
APRIL 2017	• Minor changes made including terminology to ensure an inclusive environment.	APRIL 2018